

## SPORT



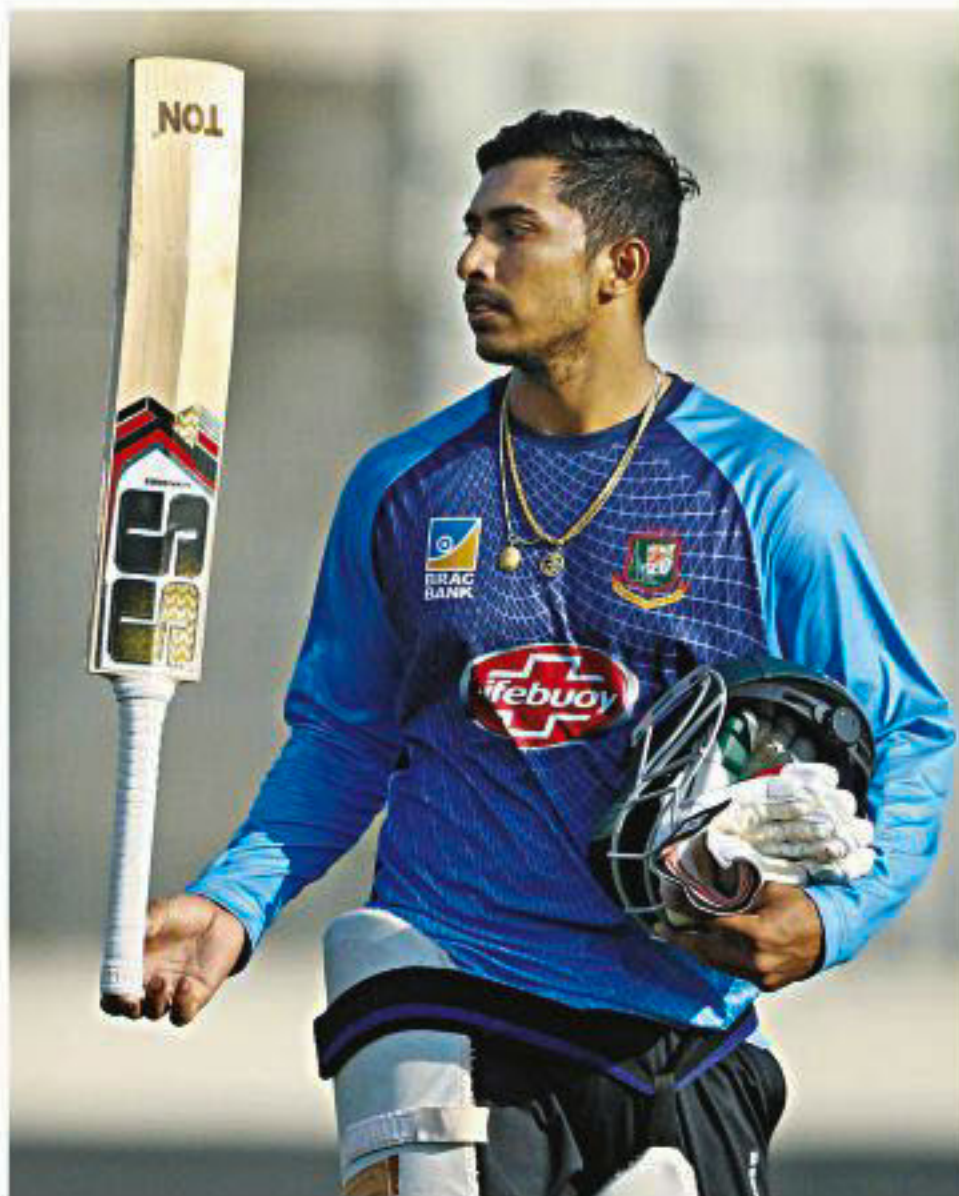
There are a few players we know who are capable of winning the game single-handedly such as Shai Hope, against whom we even struggled in Bangladesh. He is in good form and they have Dwayne Bravo and their pace bowling attack is really good.

MASHRAFE BIN MORTAZA  
BANGLADESH ODI CAPTAIN



With the slot for Tamim Iqbal's opening partner still up for grabs, Bangladesh's Liton Das (L) and Soumya Sarkar will be out to prove themselves when the Tigers take on West Indies in their ODI Tri-series opener in Dublin today. However, seeing as Soumya also bowls well, the all-rounder just might have the edge.

PHOTO: STAR FILE



## 'It's tactics, not technique'

SPORTS REPORTER



It is always a tough ask for any touring team from the Indian subcontinent to adjust to the kind of chilly weather which is prevalent in Ireland. Therefore, it would not be farfetched for Bangladesh to blame the cold for the batting debacle which saw the Tigers suffer an 88-run thumping at the hands of Ireland Wolves in a practice match on Sunday, ahead of their ODI tri-series opener against West Indies in Dublin today.

However, following the defeat Bangladesh batting coach Neil McKenzie insisted that the chilly weather in Ireland was not to blame but instead it was the unfamiliar surface they were made to play on.

"We have obviously come back from New Zealand, but it wasn't as cold there, the experienced guys know whatever it takes to play in different conditions so I don't think it's the cold, it's mainly the surfaces," McKenzie told reporters after the match. "Your lines change, lengths change and also your scoring opportunities change. It's not the weather it's more the surface, the pitch condition and the various type of bowlers you will be facing."

With Bangladesh set to play in the ICC Cricket World Cup in the United Kingdom following the tri-series, which was intended to be a part of their preparations, McKenzie mentioned that it is not the technical aspects but rather the tactical ones that the team need to fine tune ahead of the quadrennial mega event.

"They all sort of back their own abilities, you know the wickets in England aren't as quick in comparison to South Africa and Australia. So I don't think it's the technical side that we have to worry about. When bowling in England tactical aspects like bowling slower bouncers, there is a bit of grip so they [batsmen] try to hit it square of the wicket. Note that when you play in England, you have to use different scoring areas unlike in Bangladesh where we can just throw our hand to the ball to get it slightly on the leg-side while in England you [the batsmen] try to get to the pitch of the ball, try to get on top of it, try to hit it as late as possible. There are the different technical aspects that we touched on," said the batting coach.

Moreover, McKenzie emphasised that while the team management will be there to support the Tigers any way they can, the onus will be on the players to understand the conditions in England and formulate their own tactics.

"Steve Rhodes [Bangladesh head coach] is from England and he knows the conditions there really well, he knows the county pitches and conditions as well. Courtney Walsh played in England for many years, I played in England for five years so we will try to access the different wickets and conditions and plan accordingly," McKenzie said. "We will try to prepare the guys as best we know how and give them what we think is the best formula but they will have to figure things out as well. We just came from New Zealand we have the tri series and some of the warm up games to prepare ourselves, so we will prepare our best in the next three weeks and I am sure we will be fine."



# Tigers seek to shake off the cold

## Tri-series opener against West Indies today

SPORTS REPORTER

Following the comprehensive 88-run defeat in the warm-up match against Ireland Wolves, Bangladesh will begin their tri-nation ODI series campaign by taking on the West Indies at the Clontarf Cricket Club ground in Dublin today. The day game is scheduled to begin from 3.45 pm Bangladesh time.

Bangladesh's tour of Ireland could be totally different from their ICC World Cup campaign in the United Kingdom but it will play a huge role in terms of forming the best playing eleven for Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and to test players before heading into the mega event. At the same time the Ireland tour will

BANGLADESH				V				WEST INDIES			
M	W	L	NR	M	W	L	NR	M	W	L	NR
17	6	10	1	17	10	6	1				

**Last meeting in ODIs:** Sylhet, December 14, 2018. Bangladesh won by eight wickets.

also help the Tigers to gel as a unit, which will be crucial for such a long tournament.

It was a pretty similar scenario when Bangladesh toured Ireland back in 2017 ahead of their ICC Champions Trophy campaign in the UK, where the Tigers went on to reach the semifinal of a major tournament for the first time.

There are a few concerns with the likes of Mustafizur Rahman, Rubel Hossain and Mohammad Saifuddin, who are recovering from injuries. At the same time, the chilly weather in Ireland will also play a big role as, hailing from warmer climes, it will be a challenge for the Tigers to cope. It will also be a great opportunity for the likes of pacers Taskin Ahmed and Abu Jayed to showcase their worth before the World Cup.

"I think we weren't able to adjust with the cold weather here as even the locals also struggle. There is no scope to adjust as we have to be mentally tough and it will only be an excuse after the game, so ultimately, we have to deal with it and play," Mashrafe told reporters ahead of their first tri-series encounter against the West Indies in Dublin yesterday.

West Indies, on the other hand, started the series against hosts Ireland in style with a crushing 196-run win, riding on a world record 365-run opening stand between Shai Hope and John Campbell, with both batsman striking centuries.

"There are a few players who we know are capable of winning the game single-handedly, such as Shai Hope, against whom we struggled even in Bangladesh. He is in good form and they have Darren Bravo, and their pace bowling attack is really good. They had a good outing in the first game, while we lost the warm-up match. But I think it's important that we are able to execute when we face them," he said.

But Bangladesh, who won the last two ODI series against the Caribbean outfit in 2018, will be oozing with confidence but the Tigers will be wary of the batting department after being bundled out for just 219 against Ireland Wolves the other day.

Once again, it will be the likes of Tamim Iqbal, Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiquir Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad who will have to take the responsibility in the batting department while skipper Mashrafe will lead the bowling department.

## Khelaghar, Kalabagan notch wins

SPORTS REPORTER

Nigar Sultana and Mukta Magri stitched together an unbeaten 82-run partnership to help Khelaghar Shamaj Kalyan Shamity reach a seven-wicket victory over Rupali Bank Krira Parishad in a Premier Division Women's Cricket League encounter at BKSP-3 in Savar yesterday.

Batting first, Rupali Bank posted 203 for nine with opener Shuktara Rahman top scoring for the side with a 54-ball 41.

In chase of the mediocre total, Khelaghar opener Rubaiya Hayat stuck a fine 50 before Joty and Mukta remained unbeaten on 49 and 43 respectively to see the side through.

In the day's other game, Abahani Limited registered a comfortable eight-wicket victory over over Kalabagan Krira Chakra at BKSP-4, courtesy of a three-wicket haul from Jerin Tasnim.

Despite an unbeaten 51 from Sabekunnahar Chaity, Kalabagan could only manage 106 in 43.4 overs with Jerin picking up three wickets for 20 runs. It took Abahani just 18 overs to chase down the paltry total and seal victory.

## Mumbai take on Chennai in Qualifier 1

AGENCIES

In what would go down as one of the closest and most open IPL league stages in history, Mumbai Indians, Chennai Super Kings, and Delhi Capitals are going into the playoff with 18 points each. Sunrisers Hyderabad are the lucky losers over Kings XI Punjab and Kolkata Knight Riders, all tied at 12 points each. The table toppers Mumbai Indians are the most versatile in the contest and given their upper hand over Chennai Super Kings this season, they will be the favourites to be the first team in the final this year after Qualifier 1.



## Close matches are great practice for us: Morgan

ICC

Eoin Morgan, the England limited-overs captain, feels the hard-fought victories against Ireland and Pakistan serve as good match practice in lead-up to the ICC World Cup 2019.

England stuttered in chase of 198 in the one-off one-day international against Ireland on Friday before Ben Foakes rescued them from 101/6. On Sunday, in the T20I against Pakistan, it went down to the final over, with Morgan guiding his team to a seven-wicket victory. Both wins were far from comfortable, but that does not worry Morgan.

"Two close matches are great practice for us [going into a World Cup]," he told Sky Sports. "The guys are learning from this as we go on. They were two different challenges in the space of three days."

"Given we have a fixture in Cardiff during the World Cup, it is very important we get back into the habit of knowing the dimensions of the ground, feeling comfortable with either chasing or setting, and getting our plans right when we are bowling."

Morgan also spoke of the importance of playing a young side. "We made a lot of changes today, three guys coming in [Jofra Archer, Ben Duckett and Foakes], and making their debuts, so getting over the line for the guys coming in, and playing a young team, is important."

"It makes it easier for them to learn and assess their own performance and the team performance in the right way, as opposed to looking inwards and blaming themselves for losing a game."

Morgan was lavish in his praise of Archer, who returned 2/29 in his four overs and put the brakes on Pakistan with the dismissals of Haris Sohail and Babar Azam in the 15th over. They were both set batsmen, who had put on a century stand, and Pakistan were able to add only 39 runs in the remaining 25 balls.

"I thought Jofra came on from the game in Ireland," Morgan said. "Hopefully he'll have an opportunity throughout the series [the five ODIs against Pakistan] to do the same."

England and Pakistan will now clash in a five-match ODI series, beginning on Wednesday in London.



Ahead of their departure for a series against England and Scotland in the United Kingdom, the Sri Lanka team prayed for success during a ceremony in Colombo yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Maxwell ready for floater's role

ICC

Glenn Maxwell, the Australia all-rounder, is ready to assume the floating role he executed to great effect in the past at the ICC World Cup 2019.

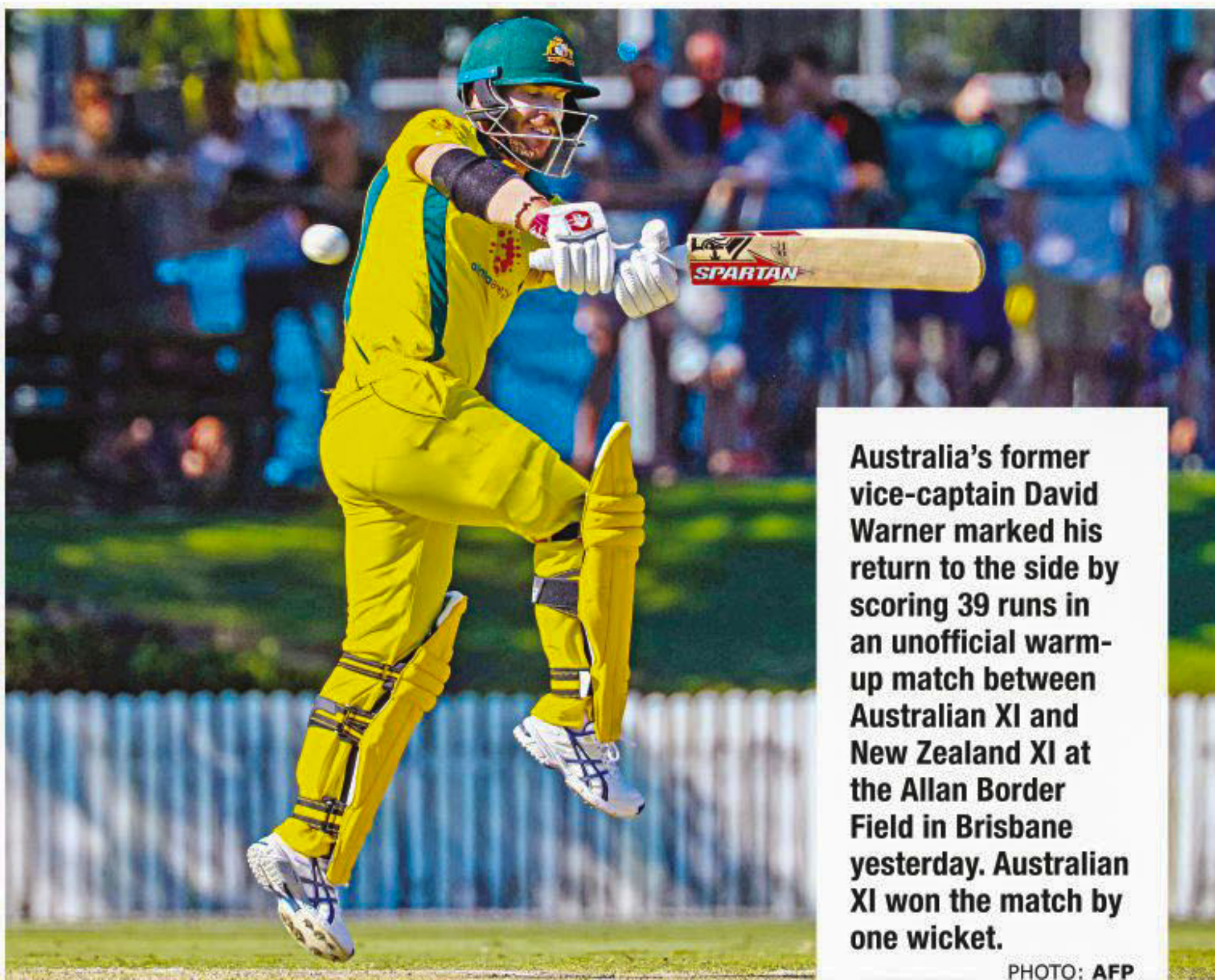
Maxwell was Australia's third highest run-getter in the 2015 World Cup, accumulating 324 runs in eight

matches at 64.80, and even scored his maiden, and so far only, one-day international century in the tournament. Maxwell performed a key floating role during that campaign, and in the build-up to this year's tournament, he has been doing something similar.

He was slated as low as No.7 by the Australian think-tank earlier

in the year, but he has since batted at every position in the middle order, helping the side win eight consecutive away ODIs.

"I joked about this, but as soon as it gets past about the 15th over and we're none down, I put them [his pads] on and just wait there," he said on the sidelines of a training camp in Brisbane.



Australia's former vice-captain David Warner marked his return to the side by scoring 39 runs in an unofficial warm-up match between Australian XI and New Zealand XI at the Allan Border Field in Brisbane yesterday. Australian XI won the match by one wicket.

PHOTO: AFP

## Sabina flies for Gokulam Kerala

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh women's national team captain Sabina Khatun flew to India yesterday evening to play for Gokulam Kerala in the third edition of Indian Women's League, which got underway on Sunday in Ludhiana.

Sabina was initially offered a stint in women's league in Chinese Taipei, but the 24-year-old striker failed to obtain work permit for the country, and in the meantime, she had refused an offer from Sethu FC, an Indian Women's League outfit where she played last season.

Sabina had scored seven goals to power Sethu FC to the semifinals last year. The striker from Satkhira had also previously plied her trade in a futsal tournament in Maldives. But after she was refused a visa for Chinese Taipei, it seemed as if her overseas exploits would not be possible this season, only for a last-ditch offer from Gokulam Kerala, who posted a 5-0 win against defending champions Rising Student Club in the opening match.

"I want to improve the country's image by playing good football for Gokulam Kerala, who offered me the opportunity at the last moment," Sabina told



reporters before her departure.

"I could not avail the opportunity to play in Chinese Taipei due to visa issue and I thought the chance of playing in a foreign league this year was over as I had also refused an offer from Sethu FC, who have already filled their foreign players' quota by signing two Nepalese players. But then suddenly, I got the offer from Gokulam Kerala and accepted it," added Sabina.

A total of 12 teams, split into two groups, will play the round-robin league and top two teams from each group will advance to the semifinals. The final will take place on May 22.