

‘Never thought of giving up despite several injuries’

Rubya Haider Jhelik was a surprise inclusion in Bangladesh’s 15-member squad for the ongoing ICC Women’s World Cup. Having never represented Bangladesh in the 50-over format and only featuring in six T20Is, she made an instant impact in their opener against Pakistan in Colombo on Thursday. On her ODI debut, the 28-year-old scored an unbeaten 54 off 77 balls, guiding the Tigresses to a commanding victory. Speaking to The Daily Star’s Samsul Arefin Khan over the phone from Guwahati on Friday, Jhelik reflected on her debut, her struggles with injuries, and Bangladesh’s World Cup ambitions.

The Daily Star (DS): Congratulations on your debut innings. What did it mean to you?

Rubya Haider Jhelik (RHJ): Receiving the debut cap on such a big stage was a different kind of feeling. I was excited, but I knew I had to make it memorable by contributing to the team’s victory. I didn’t take any pressure, didn’t overthink, and stayed focused on finishing the game.

DS: Chasing 130, what was going through your mind?

RHJ: We knew the wicket had movement, and they had two quality pacers. So, [Farzana Hoque] Pinky apu and I planned not to lose our wickets in the first 10 overs and aimed to score 30-35 runs in the Powerplay. Unfortunately, she got out, soon followed by [Sharmin Akhter] Supta apu. When their spinners came on, skipper [Nigar Sultana] Joty and I decided to target different bowlers. I told her I would take on the left-arm spinner [Nashra Sandhu], and she would go after the off-spinner [Rameen Shamim]. In two overs, we hit three boundaries each, and that’s what helped us.

DS: Being a surprise inclusion, picked mostly as a backup opener and wicketkeeper-batter, did you feel pressure on such a big stage?

RHJ: If it had happened earlier, I might have felt pressure. But now I just enjoy the game a lot. I don’t want any kind of negativity, and I think I’ve built the



confidence to overcome such challenges. My focus is simply on doing my job.

DS: Bangladesh women’s team haven’t had many left-handed batters. Why did you choose to bat

left-handed?

RHJ: When I started playing cricket, I naturally batted left-handed. I admired [Kumar] Sangakkara’s batting and followed him a lot. I also like Shakib [Al Hasan] bhai’s batting.

DS: Few players make their debut at 28, especially in our country. What kept you motivated to push for the national team after so long?

RHJ: I faced several injuries in different stages of my career, and that put me on the backfoot. I was selected for the 2016 T20 World Cup but missed out due to injury. During an Emerging team series in Hong Kong, I tore my ACL and couldn’t play for over a year. Despite the injuries and setbacks, I always thought that I wouldn’t give up and try my level best to fulfill my dream of representing the national team.

DS: What’s your goal for this tournament? And how is the dressing room atmosphere after the victory?

RHJ: The dressing room environment is very positive. Everyone supports each other, regardless of performance. We are preparing match by match and not overrating opponents, so we don’t feel dominated. I think we need to be calm before facing our next opponents. Inshallah, our target is to reach the semifinal. As for my personal goal, I want to keep it to myself.

Liverpool seek response in tricky Chelsea trip

AGENCIES

If Arsenal secure all three points against West Ham earlier in the day, Liverpool could be knocked off the top of the Premier League table before they kick off against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge on Saturday.

Liverpool will seek a response as they arrive in London reeling from back-to-back defeats for the first time under Arne Slot. After winning their opening five league matches, the champions were undone by Eddie Nketiah’s late goal in a 2-1 loss at Crystal Palace last weekend, before suffering a 1-0 Champions League defeat at Galatasaray in midweek. With none of those early-season wins being entirely convincing, their current stumble has opened the door for rivals to close the gap.

Chelsea, meanwhile, are also seeking a turnaround. Enzo Maresca’s side have collected just one point from their last three league matches and are already seven points adrift of the leaders in eighth place. Trevoh Chalobah’s red card shifted the momentum in a 3-1 home defeat to Brighton last weekend, while goalkeeper Robert Sanchez was sent off early in the recent loss at Manchester United. Since the start of last season, the Blues have collected 118 cards – the most in the division.

Injuries have compounded the problems, with defenders Levi Colwill, Wesley Fofana and Tosin Adarabioyo all sidelined alongside Dario Essugo, Liam Delap, Cole Palmer and Andrey Santos. Despite the setbacks, Chelsea did edge Benfica 1-0 in midweek, a result that kept morale alive.

Maresca insisted Liverpool remain “the best team in England,” while stressing that Chelsea “will be there and close” once the squad regains stability.

Liverpool are also winless in their last four league visits to Stamford Bridge, adding another layer of intrigue to Saturday’s clash.

Flawed constitution leaves BCB polls open to interference?

What is happening around the Bangladesh Cricket Board elections is not unexpected because the flaws lie in the very constitution of the board. It contains all the provisions that allow for government interference. To ensure a truly democratic election, free from political influence and with the participation of genuine organisers, the constitution must first be democratised. Only then can we talk about a functional board. The mindset of cricket’s key stakeholders also needs to change – to move away from club dominance and centralise power. The current interim government had the best opportunity to bring about such reforms. But the hope of realising that now seems far-fetched. The Daily Star’s podcast Pitch Perfect sheds light on the issue during an extensive discussion ahead of the BCB’s much-talked-about polls, set to take place on October 6.



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SHORT CORNER

Three tons put India in command against WI

Dhruv Jurel and Ravindra Jadeja hit attacking centuries to put India in total control with a lead of 286 against the West Indies in the first Test on Friday. KL Rahul led the batting show with his 100 before Jurel, who made 125, and Jadeja piled on the agony for the opposition bowlers on day two in Ahmedabad.

FIFA reveals official ball of 2026 World Cup

FIFA has unveiled the official match ball for the 2026 World Cup, combining high-tech refinements and design details celebrating the three co-host countries -- the United States, Mexico and Canada.

Foden, Grealish, Bellingham left out of England squad

England boss Thomas Tuchel left out Phil Foden, Jack Grealish and Jude Bellingham when he announced his squad on Friday for an international friendly against Wales and a World Cup qualifier against Latvia in the upcoming international break.

Read full stories on The Daily Star’s website.



England’s Tammy Beaumont (L) and Amy Jones celebrate their 10-wicket win against South Africa in a group stage fixture of the ICC Women’s Cricket World Cup at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium in Guwahati on October 3, 2025. Beaumont scored 28 not out while Jones remained unbeaten on 40 as England chased down South Africa’s paltry total of 69 in 14.1 overs.

PHOTO: AFP

Women’s football team ‘enjoying’ KEPZ camp

SPORTS REPORTER

Seven days into their preparations for next March’s AFC Women’s Asian Cup in Australia, Afeida Khandokar and her teammates are relishing the opportunity to train in a new, refreshing environment at the Korean Export Processing Zone (KEPZ) in Anwara, Chattogram.

Having spent years training at the crowded BFF dormitory, the women’s team now enjoys better facilities following their historic qualification for the Women’s Asian Cup. The new setting offers fresh air, open space, and home-grown food – creating an ideal atmosphere for focused preparation.

“The girls are really happy to be in such an environment – open air, spacious surroundings, fresh food, clean accommodation, and a good practice ground. They were getting bored of staying at the BFF dormitory for so long,” assistant coach Mahabubur Rahman Litu told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.

“It’s a wonderful place – perfect for mental and physical refreshment. The players have been training attentively and are enjoying every bit of it since the camp started on 27 September. Today is their day off, and they’re scheduled to visit a mandarin orange garden inside the KEPZ,” he added. The team trains twice a day for



three consecutive days, followed by a single session on the fourth.

Korea-based Youngone Corporation has generously provided its own facilities after the BFF reached out to around 30 government organisations, including all EPZs and BEPZA, seeking training venues for the women’s team.

BFF President Tabith Awal, vice-President Fahad Karim, and other officials visited the KEPZ on Thursday to meet the players and coaching staff and expressed their gratitude to Youngone Corporation’s Chairman and CEO, Kihak Sung.

“The girls are thrilled. They told me they never imagined training at such a wonderful place. The food is excellent – milk, chicken, meat, fish, and vegetables are all grown inside the KEPZ. They said they’ve never had such fresh meals before. The accommodation is also hygienic, with rooms cleaned twice daily,” said Fahad, adding that head coach Peter Butler was initially hesitant about moving outside Dhaka but is now pleased with the facilities.

Of the 30 organisations contacted by the BFF, only four – Youngone Corporation, Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Air Force, and the Jashore IT Park – expressed interest in supporting the team’s training.

“The Chairman of Youngone told us they represent Bangladesh globally through garments, and the women’s football team is also creating a powerful image of the country abroad. That’s why they wanted to contribute to this journey,” said Fahad.

The team is scheduled to return to Dhaka on 17 October to continue training with the 10 players returning from Bhutan on the same day before departing for Thailand on 21 October, where they will play two friendly matches later in the month.

Fahad also confirmed that Bangladesh will host a tri-nation series in November, featuring Azerbaijan and Vietnam, who have already confirmed their participation.

Saving three penalties on the trot is rare and unique -- and that’s what Lille goalkeeper Berke Ozer did against AS Roma in the Europa League on Thursday. The 25-year-old Turkey international pulled off a stunning hat-trick of saves in stoppage time to secure Lille’s 1-0 victory, following an early Hakon Haraldsson goal in Rome. After twice denying Artem Dovbyk, who was forced to retake due to the goalkeeper’s infringements on both occasions, Ozer thwarted Matias Soule on Roma’s third attempt, and that save finally stood. “It was like being in a dream,” said Ozer, who had promised his fiancée a clean sheet. Coach Bruno Genesio called it something he had “never seen before.”



PHOTO: REUTERS