

'To see myself in big positions, I must think big'

Ruba Haider Jhelik hit a match-winning half-century on ODI debut to help Bangladesh start their 2025 ICC Women's World Cup campaign with a win. But Jhelik's form and the Tigresses fortunes, dipped from then on. Jhelik is now undergoing specific drills to improve her footwork with an eye on the upcoming T20 World Cup qualifiers. *The Daily Star's* Abdullah Al Mehdi recently caught up with her. The excerpts are as follows:

DS: How special was it to make your ODI debut in a World Cup and what did you take away from the experience?

Ruba Haider Jhelik (RHJ): I was very excited to go to a stage like the World Cup, knowing I and I was very excited that my debut would happen there. I got to see so many good players up close, and learn about them. Seeing them, it felt they thought differently about cricket; they have totally different dreams. Seeing them I realised that expectation should be more on one's own shoulders because if I want to see myself in a big position, I must think big.

DS: Can you share a bit about your journey in cricket?

RHJ: The journey started when I was very young. A press release was published in a

individual training routine. What's the thinking behind it?

RHJ: I think footwork and using the crease are the most important things for us. I saw that players of all the big teams excel at going down the track, or at using the crease to play various shots. Quick use of feet, body reaction, and movement are also very important. I think I will benefit from working on that. I am currently working on footwork and reaction movement. The drill from Shajib bhai [batting coach Nasiruddin Faruk Shajib] focuses on batting skills, footwork, bat swing and how one can shift one's body movement towards the ball along with footwork.

DS: Is there a separate plan for batting in T20 World Cup qualifiers?

RHJ: We must focus on big shots. Strike



Mushfiqur Rahim appears in good spirits with Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Mominul Haque and newly appointed batting coach Mohammad Ashraful during a practice session at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium ahead of the first Test of the two-match series against Ireland, starting on November 11. The series holds special significance for the 38-year-old Mushfiqur, as he is set to become the first Bangladeshi cricketer to reach the 100-Test milestone if he features in both matches. The second Test will be held in Mirpur from November 19.

PHOTO: STAR

Women's cricket in decline in JASHORE

MOHSIN MILON, Jashore

Once a promising hub for women's cricket, Jashore is now witnessing a gradual decline of the sport among female players. The district suffers from a lack of dedicated playgrounds, qualified female trainers, coaching centres, and basic facilities – all contributing to the fading dreams of aspiring women cricketers. Yet Jashore's legacy in Bangladesh's women's cricket remains impressive. Rubya Haider Jhelik, a dependable opening batter in the Women's World Cup, hails from Arshingripur village in Chowgacha but grew up in the Kharki area of Jashore town. Another proud product of the district, left-arm spinner Sanjida Akter Meghla, caught the eye with her spell against New Zealand, while off-spinner Sultana Khatun was named among the standbys for the same tournament.

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local newspaper in Jashore that a practice session for girls was going to take place. My maternal uncle was the first to suggest that I should play. My father really wanted his first born, if it were a boy, to learn cricket. But I was his first born, a girl. So, my father said, "Okay, let her try, let's see what happens." I couldn't play much because of academic pressure, as family always put that first. I studied and couldn't play during my SSC and HSC exams. But slowly I first made it to divisional cricket in Khulna, and then NCL and after that the Premier League. When I was new in the divisional team, I carried water for the team for 2-3 years. Then, I slowly thought that, "No, I think I can achieve something better if I pursue this professionally, especially since I had good skills from a young age." So, that's how I started taking cricket more seriously.

DS: After seeing them up close, what do you think makes them special?

RHJ: They have been playing cricket for many years, and experience matters a lot. Match scenarios and practice scenarios are different. I think as they have played more, they are more mature than us.

DS: After the World Cup, what do you think you need to do to be more successful?

RHJ: Fitness is a big issue. Secondly, consistency in scoring runs. In all the big teams, almost all the players consistently make runs. After I started very well in the World Cup in my debut match, I was confident that I would score runs consistently. Somehow, I couldn't manage that. But I feel I have gathered a lot of experience from the World Cup.

DS: Reflex exercises are part of your

rotation too, of course. And footwork usage is definitely a factor. I am thinking about focusing on these areas.

DS: Bangladesh came close to winning against England, South Africa and Sri Lanka, but couldn't. What did you personally feel about those matches?

RHJ: I was very sad when we lost matches after coming close to winning. The most heartbreaking defeats were against South Africa and Sri Lanka. After losing to South Africa, we couldn't sleep for 2-3 nights.

DS: What is the team's assessment of the World Cup?

RHJ: We had eight fifties this time in the World Cup. We were hoping for a century, but it didn't happen. At the 2022 World Cup, we hit just one half-century. Overall, we were very happy that at least we could perform better in some areas than before.

SHORT CORNER

Chapol wants to take Bangladesh archery to unprecedented height

Kazi Rajib Uddin Ahmed Chapol vowed to take Bangladesh archery to an unprecedented height after being elected as the president of World Archery Asia (WAA) yesterday. "I want to take Bangladesh to a level no one has ever imagined -- and I also want to raise the standard of Asian archery to a global level," said Chapol after his emphatic win in the continental body's presidential election.



Shamima, Dilara hit big as women's NCL begins

Shamima Sultana stole the show on the opening day of the Women's National Cricket League T20, scoring an unbeaten 87 to guide Sylhet to an 18-run win over Mymensingh at BKSP Ground Three, Savar, yesterday. In the afternoon, Dilara Dolarai's 78 off 44 went in vain as Khulna suffered a five-wicket defeat.

Paran, Amite fall in nervous 90s on NCL Day 1

Shah Paran and Amite Hasan narrowly missed out on centuries in their National Cricket League 2025-26 fixtures yesterday. In Chattogram, the home side recovered from early setbacks to reach 340 for eight against Khulna, with Paran scoring a brisk 91. In Cox's Bazar, Amite Hasan fought a lone battle for Sylhet, scoring 91 off 110 balls, as they finished on 172 for seven.

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Matthijs de Ligt rescued a 2-2 draw for Manchester United at Tottenham in a frantic finale as both sides missed the chance to go second in the Premier League on Saturday. Spurs looked to have secured a dramatic victory, having trailed with six minutes to go, as Mathys Tel equalised before Richarlison headed home in the 91st minute. However, De Ligt powered in a 96th minute header to extend United's unbeaten run to five games. Both sides now sit on 18 points from 11 games, with goal difference placing Spurs third and United seventh.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Pep faces Liverpool in 1000th test

For the first time in several seasons, Sunday's high-stakes showdown between Manchester City and Liverpool may not be the defining fixture in the Premier League title race. Arsenal currently sit comfortably at the top after 10 matches, leaving City and Liverpool trailing by six and seven points respectively, and, unusually, both doing the chasing.

○ The match also marks a historic milestone for Pep Guardiola, who will take charge of the 1000th match of his managerial career. Guardiola's journey began with 42 games at Barcelona B, before taking charge of the Barcelona first team for 247 matches. He later oversaw 161 matches at Bayern Munich, and has so far managed 549 games for Manchester City.

○ Across his 999 matches, Guardiola has earned 715 victories, collected 39 major trophies, and suffered just 128 defeats – a remarkable 71.57% win rate. However, Liverpool have often proved one of his toughest opponents. Guardiola has been beaten 10 times by the Reds – the joint-most he has suffered against any club – and his teams have conceded 38 goals against Liverpool, second only to matches against Real Madrid (39).



*City, however, lost both league encounters to Liverpool last season, including a 2-0 defeat at home. Yet Guardiola's side have been the Premier League's most in-form team since April, collecting 42 points by winning 13 of 19 games. They have also won nine of their last 10 home league fixtures.

○ At the other end, Liverpool arrive under pressure away from home, having lost their last three Premier League matches on the road -- they have not lost four straight away league games since April 2012.

○ Erling Haaland has scored 98 goals in 107 Premier League appearances, and could become the fastest player to reach 100 goals, surpassing Alan Shearer's record of 100 in 124 games.

○ Mohamed Salah's (188 goals, 88 assists) goal against Aston Villa saw him match Wayne Rooney (183 goals and 93 assists) for most goal contributions for a single club. Against City alone, Salah has been particularly lethal. He has nine goals and six assists against them in the league, contributing to 15 of Liverpool's last 20 Premier League goals in this fixture.