

15-year-old Vizagite makes it to India U-19 women's cricket team

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She is barely 15 and she has been selected for the India U-19 women's cricket team.

She is the first from Visakhapatnam to get selected for the women's U-19 team.

Meet Md. Shabnam, a budding right-arm medium pacer, who will be writing her Class X examination in 2023.

Idolising Indian medium pacer great Jhulon Goswami, Shabnam is already clocking 110 kmph speed and she aspires to touch 'Jhulon didi's' pace of 125 kmph.

Speaking to *The Hindu* on Monday, Shabnam said that she took to cricket at the age of eight, after seeing her father Md. Shakeel, who was a medium pacer himself.

"I would go to local league matches and see my father bowl. It was then that I decided that I would play cricket and make my mark as a medium pacer,"



Md. Shabnam has been selected for the India U-19 women's team that will play five T20 matches against the New Zealand U-19 team.

says an excited Shabnam.

With encouragement from her parents, Shabnam practises over seven hours daily and she never misses her training sessions.

A dedicated cricketer, Shabnam has all potential to make it big, says K. Parthasarathi, secretary of Visakhapatnam District Cricket Association.

"She is a strong girl. She is quick through the air and has a good inswinger and a surprise bouncer,"

says fitness coach Vanka Murali. She has been very consistent in the last season and probably that has earned her the cap, adds Mr. Parthasarathi.

Shabnam has been selected to play for India U-19 in five T20 matches against the visiting New Zealand U-19 team.

The series is set to start from November 27 and she will be reporting in Mumbai on November 24.

Speaking about her idols in cricket, she says, "In the women's cricket, my idol is Jhulon didi and on the men's side, it is Jasprit Bumrah."

Thanking *The Hindu* for playing a key role in her career, Shabnam says that she had been a part of every *The Hindu*-VDCA summer coaching camp for the last several years.

"I practise for three hours in morning and another three hours in evening, followed by about a one-and-half-hour fitness session. My dream is to play for India," she adds.