

KKR releases Bangladeshi cricketer Mustafizur Rahman amid tensions

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

GUWAHATI: Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman has been released by IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders after being instructed to do so by the Indian Cricket Board (BCCI) amid heightening diplomatic tensions between the two neighbouring countries.

KKR had acquired the services of the 30-year-old left-arm for Rs 9.20 crore from a base price of Rs 2 crore after an intense bidding war with Chennai Super Kings and Delhi Capitals at the players' auction last month.

The BCCI said KKR will be allowed to name a replacement player if required for the event scheduled to start on March 26.

"The BCCI has asked Kolkata Knight Riders to release Mustafizur Rahman from its squad. They can ask for replacement, if needed. And upon request, BCCI

will allow a replacement player," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia told PTI here on Saturday.

Asked why the BCCI has asked Kolkata Knight Riders to do so, he replied, "Because of recent developments all across."

In a statement, the franchise said it has released the player as instructed by the BCCI.

"Kolkata Knight Riders confirms that BCCI/IPL as the regulator of IPL has instructed it to release Mustafizur Rahman from the squad ahead of the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) season.

"The release has been carried out following due process and consultations, upon the instruction of the Board of Control of Cricket in India," KKR said in a statement.

In Sylhet, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) President Aminul Islam

Bulbul announced an emergency meeting of the body to discuss the issue later tonight.

"...we have arranged to call an emergency meeting at 9:30pm (10pm IST) to know about the matter in detail. Then, we will get a clear overview and may issue a media release.

"...we don't have the full information. That's why, we have called the emergency meeting," Bulbul said.

The pressure had been mounting on the BCCI over Rahman's participation after recent killing of a Hindu man in the country and India's expression of concern for the safety of minorities there.

The criticism has also extended to KKR co-owner and Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan with some politicians from the ruling BJP questioning the call to include the bowler in the current scenario.

Rahman has featured in eight IPL editions since 2016, missing the tournament only in 2019 and 2020.

He has played for teams such as Sunrisers Hyderabad, Mumbai Indians, Delhi Capitals, Chennai Super Kings and Rajasthan Royals. The upcoming edition was going to be his first for three-time IPL winners KKR. Neither him, nor the Bangladesh Cricket Board have reacted to the development yet. Rahman was allowed to register for the auction by the Indian Board but the Indo-Bangladesh ties have grown more tense amid political unrest in that country. With Rahman's ouster, it remains to be seen if Bangladeshi players would be excluded from the IPL the same way their Pakistani counterparts have been for the past several years owing to political tensions.

Doon International School Jammu achieves global recognition

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Doon International School, Jammu has brought immense pride to the region by achieving international recognition on the global stage. The school has been conferred with the International School Award in recognition of its excellence in education, innovation, and global engagement at the vibrant city of Bangkok, Thailand.????

Adding to this prestigious achievement, the Principal of the school, Dr. Vikesh Kaur, was also honoured with the International Principal of the Year Award at Bangkok.

The awards were presented during an International Educational Conference for Educators centered on the transformative theme of "Artificial Intelligence in Education: Ethics,



Principal DIS Jammu, Dr. Vikesh Kaur receiving International School Award.

Opportunities, and Global Perspectives."

This event was organised by an incredible organisation namely Centre For Educational Development (CED) in collaboration with Niti Aayog India and recognised by MSME.

This international conference witnessed participation from leading educators, policymakers and

academic institutions from across the world, making the recognition all the more significant.

Notably, only three schools from India were selected for this honour and Doon International School Jammu stands as the only school from Jammu & Kashmir under the invaluable leadership of the Chairman G.

N.Tantray, Vice Chairman M.A.Tantray and the Founder Principal Dr. Vikesh Kaur to receive this prestigious global accolade.

The awards acknowledged the school's commitment to progressive education, innovative teaching practices, ethical integration of technology and its strong focus on global learning perspectives. Dr. Vikesh Kaur's leadership was especially recognized for fostering a future-ready educational environment that blends academic excellence with technological advancement and global values.

This remarkable achievement marks a proud moment not only for Doon International School Jammu but also for the entire region of Jammu & Kashmir, reinforcing its growing presence on the global educational map.

Valley Stars Ganderbal, Royal Goodwill CC enter semi-finals of BIG JKPL 2025-26

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Quarter-Final stage of the HexaMed BIG Jammu Kashmir Premier League (BIG JKPL) 2025-26, organised by 92.7 BIG FM, delivered high-intensity cricket at the University of Jammu Ground, as Valley Stars Ganderbal and Royal Goodwill Cricket Club registered emphatic victories to storm into the semi-finals of the prestigious tournament.

The league is being conducted with the support of HexaMed Diagnostics as the Title Partner, CT University as the Powered By Partner, Kanwal Spices and Oxford Hospital as the Associate Partners, JK Sports Time as the Live Streaming Partner, and Pepsi as the Beverage Partner.

In the first Quarter-Final, Valley Stars Ganderbal produced a commanding all-round performance to defeat Kanwal Tigers Cricket Club by 84 runs.



A player receiving Player of the Match award.

Batting first, Valley Stars posted an imposing total of 201/7 in 20 overs.

Ishtiyaz Elahi Robby was the standout performer, hammering a blistering 76 runs off just 32 balls, studded with five boundaries and seven towering sixes. He received solid support from Bhagmender Lather, who

contributed a composed 49 off 34 balls. Despite Ishfaq Bhat claiming three wickets, Valley Stars crossed the 200-run mark comfortably.

In reply, Kanwal Tigers failed to match the required run rate and were bowled out for 117 runs in 14.2 overs. Mohammad Umar top-scored with 40 off 20

balls, but disciplined bowling from Valley Stars ensured a comprehensive victory. Ishtiyaz Elahi Robby was deservedly adjudged the Player of the Match.

The second Quarter-Final saw Royal Goodwill Cricket Club register a dominant 62-run win over Nice Gems Cricket Club. Winning the toss and opting to bat first, Royal Goodwill posted 189/9 in 20 overs.

Imtiyaz Lefty led from the front with a brilliant 54 off 36 balls, smashing five fours and four sixes. He was well-supported by Aaqib Mir (45 runs), while Jehangir Lone added late momentum with a quick 30 off 13 balls.

Chasing 190, Nice Gems struggled against a disciplined bowling attack and were bundled out for 127 runs in 16.5 overs, despite a fighting 54 off 31 balls by Samer Singh. Imtiyaz Lefty capped off a memorable outing with figures

of 3/22, while Aaqib Mir claimed 3/36, and Rouf Bashir delivered an exceptional economical over, conceding no runs.

The matches were witnessed by Sohail Kazmi, Editor-in-Chief, Daily Taskeen, and Vivek Shekhar Sharma, SP North Jammu, who appreciated the standard of cricket and lauded the organisers for promoting competitive sports in the region. Also present on the occasion were Vikrant Sharma, Cluster Head North, 92.7 BIG FM, RJ Juhie, Morning Show Host, along with Ahmer Ikhlaiq and Sahil Choudhary, who thanked the teams, officials, media and spectators for their continued support as the BIG JKPL heads into its decisive semi-final stage.

Bandipora Taekwondo Championship from Jan 6

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Taekwondo Association of District Bandipora shall organise two-day District Bandipora Championship, under the aegis of J&K Taekwondo Association and J&K Sports Council at Ali's Sports Academy, Nowgham from January six under 'My Youth My Pride'.

The event shall feature exciting competitions across Sub-Junior, Cadet, Junior, and Senior categories in different weight groups.

Those interested participants must possess mandatory JKTA Athlete License, Black Belt Certificate (seniors) and Registration Form complete in all respects (signed by parents/guardians).

The necessary documents also include Aadhaar Card, JKTA License, Date of Birth Certificate (issued by Municipality or the concerned Sarpanch), a handout issued by the Association here today informed.

Earlier, a meeting of the organising committee took place under the chairmanship of president, Faisal Ali Dar. For further information, players may feel free to contact the organisers (+91 9797116151).

IIMC launches Ph.D Programme, extends admissions to Jammu Campus

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), Deemed to be University, has formally launched its Ph.D. programme, marking a historic milestone in its six-decade-long academic journey. The launch opens a new chapter in advanced research and scholarly engagement in the fields of media and communication. Admissions will be offered for the academic year 2025-26, and the programme will be extended to Delhi as well as regional campuses, including Jammu.

The launch event was held in hybrid mode from New Delhi, during which Dr. Pragya Paliwal Gaur, Vice Chancellor, IIMC, inaugurated the Ph.D. admissions portal. Addressing the gathering, Dr. Gaur said that the primary objective of the Ph.D. programme is to make a meaningful contribution to research aligned with the vision of a resurgent India.



She emphasized the importance of innovative, out-of-the-box research that addresses contemporary societal challenges and contributes to national development.

The event witnessed the participation of Shri L. Madhu Nag, Registrar, IIMC, all Regional Directors including Dr. Dilip Kumar, Regional Director, IIMC Jammu, along with faculty members and staff from various campuses.

The online application process, which began on January 1, will remain open until January 30 for both full-time and part-time candidates. Applicants with UGC-NET qualification will

be directly shortlisted for personal interaction, while part-time candidates without UGC-NET eligibility will be required to appear in an entrance examination scheduled for February 15.

The list of selected candidates will be announced on February 23, followed by interviews starting from March 9. The admission process will conclude by March 27, and coursework will commence from April 1.

The Ph.D. programme aims to provide a rigorous academic environment, encourage interdisciplinary research, and enrich scholarship in journalism, mass communication, digital media, strategic communica-

tion, film studies, political communication, development communication, advertising, public relations, and media industry management.

It is noteworthy that IIMC has its main campus in New Delhi and five regional campuses at Jammu, Aizawl, Amravati, Dhenkanal, and Kottayam. The Northern Regional Centre at Jammu, established in 2012, shifted to its permanent campus in December 2022. The foundation stone of the campus was laid by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on February 3, 2019.

For further details, candidates can refer to the Ph.D. programme prospectus available on the IIMC website.

Tiger Martial Art Academy wins 6 medals at Jammu District Jujitsu Championship

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Tiger Martial Art Academy put up an impressive performance by winning six medals at the 13th Jammu District Jujitsu Championship, which was organized by the District Jammu Jujitsu Association under the banner of the Jujitsu Association of Jammu & Kashmir. The championship was held on 30th December 2025 at Bhagwati Nagar Stadium, Jammu.

The medal winners included Kyra Thakyal, Iyana, Bhagya Jamwal, Ashvika, and Saksham Bhatia, who all secured gold medals, while Alisha Shokat won a silver medal. The athletes displayed excellent technique,



Medal winners Tiger Martial Art Academy team posing with official.

confidence, and sportsmanship throughout the competition.

All the players were trained by Coach Suresh Kumar, whose guidance and commitment played a vital role in the academy's success. The

achievement has brought great pride to Tiger Martial Art Academy, and the players were congratulated by well-wishers for their remarkable performance, with best wishes for future championships.

Yasha Mudgal reviews progress of works under SASCI projects



Commissioner Secretary YSS, Yasha Mudgal chairing high level review meeting.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Commissioner Secretary, Youth Services & Sports (YSS), Yasha Mudgal, today chaired a high level review meeting at the Civil Secretariat Jammu to assess the progress of works being executed under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) projects by Directorate of Youth Services & Sports and the J&K Sports Council.

The meeting was attended by Director General, Youth Services & Sports, Anuradha Gupta; Director Finance, YSS, Ashok Khajuria; Secretary, J&K Sports Council, Nuzhat Gul; Additional Secretary, Narayan Dutt besides senior officers of the department and concerned Executive Engineers.

During the meeting, the Director Finance presented a detailed status report on the ongoing and newly approved works under SASCI.

The Commissioner Secretary was apprised of major ongoing working including development of

Khel Gaon at Budgam, construction of a synthetic football turf at Migrant Camp Jagti, construction of an indoor multipurpose hall at Khel Gaon Nagrota and construction of a synthetic hockey field at Bandhuraakh.

It was further informed that construction of a water sports facility at Manasbal, procurement of equipment for the Gymnastics Hall at Gindun Rajbagh, construction of an indoor multipurpose stadium at Khour and establishment of Centres of Cricket Excellence at Srinagar, Jammu, Anantnag and Udhampur are among the new projects approved under SASCI.

The meeting was apprised that an amount of over ₹2182 lakh has been allotted against the approved project cost of ₹3834 lakh, while more than ₹2493 lakh have already been released under SASCI.

Taking a comprehensive review of all the ongoing works, the Commissioner Secretary directed the officers to ensure timely completion of SASCI projects for

strengthening the sports infrastructure across infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir. She instructed that both physical and financial progress must be achieved within stipulated schedules, with maximum expenditure to be realised by 15th March 2026 to avoid last minute closures.

Yasha Mudgal further emphasized regular weekly monitoring of projects at the Directorate level and called for better inter-departmental coordination to achieve set targets within timelines. She also directed that in next financial year, the department shall take up only those projects that are completely free from land or other encumbrances.

Reaffirming the department's commitment, the Commissioner Secretary underscored continuous focus on infrastructure development, asset consolidation and nurturing of young sporting talent, ensuring that Jammu and Kashmir continues to witness rapid strides in sports development.

District Poonch Hockey meet begins

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

POONCH: The District Poonch Hockey Championship, being organised under the aegis of Hockey J&K and sponsored by the J&K Sports Council, got underway today at Hockey Astro turf here on Saturday.

The championship was formally inaugurated by Neeraj Sharma, DySP HQ Poonch, who was chief guest in the opening. Mushtaq Ahmed, Incharge Manager, Sports Stadium Poonch, was guest of honour.

Speaking to the participating teams, the chief guest appreciated the Hockey J&K for providing rural youth platform to perform and excel while encouraging the participants to uphold the spirit of sportsmanship and stay away from drug abuse.

He also remembered Late Sham Lal Sharma (Retd SAI Hockey coach) for his immense contributions in the field of Hockey, especially in district Poonch.

Prominent among those present included Mukesh Kumar, Pawan Kumar, Kewal Krishan, Nirdosh Kumar, Ravinder Singh,



Neeraj Sharma, DySP HQ Poonch interacting with players.

Gurdev Singh, Ram Prakash, Imran Shah, Vishal Sharma, and Ranveet Singh, along with local sports enthusiasts. The proceedings of the opening ceremony were conducted by Imran Shah.

Earlier, Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Hockey Club won the opening match beating Power House Hockey Club 4-3 in a nail-biting contest. Harpreet Singh struck twice in the 27th and 48th minute while Mohd Faizan (10th) and Bisharat Mir (25th) were other scorers from winning side. Rydha (eighth) and Kanish (22nd and 49th) scored for Power House.

In other scheduled match

of the day, Sham Lal Hockey Club outplayed Hockey Centre (PMDP) Sports Stadium 2-1. Prabal (ninth) and Manpreet (39th) scored for winning side while Intkhab (56th) reduced the match in the dying minutes.

The championship is being conducted under the guidance of Gurdeep Singh (president) and Manpreet Singh (general secretary) of Hockey J&K.

The event is being technically supervised by Sanjeev Kumar (senior vice president, Hockey J&K) while the technical penal included Harmik Singh, Vikas Sharma, Sunil Raina, Navjot Singh, Saval Ahmed, Ritika Sharma, Jaspreet Kour, and Sanjana Yadav.