

Manchester: Pakistan Cricketer Suspended Over Rape Claim

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Pakistani international cricketer Haider Ali has been provisionally suspended by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) following confirmation that he is under criminal investigation in the United Kingdom about an alleged sexual assault. The 24-year-old was reportedly arrested by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) earlier this week and later released on bail as inquiries continue.

Haider Ali had recently toured England as part of the Pakistan Shaheens, the country's 'A' cricket squad, which plays second-tier international fixtures. While the PCB did not initially disclose details, British authorities later confirmed that the player is accused in connection with a rape case believed to have taken place in Manchester.

According to a police spokesperson, GMP officers arrested a male suspect following a report of sexual assault earlier this week. He was questioned and has since been released pending further investigation. While police have not named the individual, PCB and multiple independent reports have identified the suspect as Haider Ali.

In a statement released on Thursday, the Pakistan Cricket Board announced that Haider Ali had been suspended from all cricketing activities while the case remains active. "The PCB has been informed of the matter and, in line with its policies, has provisionally suspended the player until the legal process concludes," the statement read.

The board also confirmed that it will be offering legal assistance to Haider during the proceedings, ensuring his right to due process and representation. "As a national sports body, we are committed to upholding both the law and the rights of our players. Any disciplinary action will be taken based on the outcome of the investigation," the statement added.

Haider Ali, a right-handed batter and occasional bowler, has featured in international fixtures for Pakistan and was previously hailed as a promising talent. He made his international debut in 2020 and has since played across formats, including T20s and ODIs.

The reported incident occurred shortly after the Pakistan Shaheens completed their UK tour, which involved several matches against English county sides and second-tier national players. It is unclear whether the alleged offence took place during or immediately after official team duties.

The Greater Manchester Police have not released further details regarding the timeline or the specific nature of the alleged incident. They confirmed, however, that investigations remain ongoing and that the individual involved has not been formally charged at this stage.

Legal experts in the UK highlight that under British law, individuals arrested in connection with serious offences such as sexual assault retain full legal rights, including the

presumption of innocence until proven guilty. Police bail does not imply guilt but allows officers to continue investigations while imposing certain restrictions on the suspect.

The case has attracted media attention in both the UK and Pakistan, with cricket authorities and commentators urging that the matter be handled sensitively and without presumption. Human rights advocates have also underscored the importance of a fair and transparent process, not only for the alleged victim but also for the accused, in line with UK legal standards.

This incident comes amid broader discussions about professional sports, player conduct, and the responsibilities of governing bodies when athletes face serious allegations abroad. The PCB's decision to suspend Haider Ali pending inquiry reflects a more cautious and policy-driven approach seen in recent years among global sporting institutions.

No date has yet been set for a court appearance or formal hearing. The PCB stated it will closely monitor the legal developments and take further action as required based on the outcome of the UK investigation.

Haider Ali has made no public statement since news of the suspension emerged.