

KASHMIR OBSERVERTM

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Spurious Medicines

The central and state regulators have conducted joint inspections at 76 pharma companies across 20 states and Union territories in the past 15 days. They have cancelled licenses of 18 pharma companies for manufacturing spurious and adulterated drugs and for violating good manufacturing practice (GMP). Additionally, 26 firms have been given show-cause notices. This action is a part of a special drive against the manufacture of substandard drugs, and as part of this drive, regulators have identified 203 firms, with the majority of the companies being from Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Madhya Pradesh. Recently, there have been concerns over the quality of drugs manufactured by India-based companies, with a Tamil Nadu-based company recalling its entire lot of eye drops allegedly linked to vision loss in the US in February. Incidentally, the states and the regions where inspections were carried out included also Jammu and Kashmir which is regarded as one of the hubs of spurious medicines in the country.

Several years ago, the then J&K health minister Bali Ram Bhagat told the then Assembly that he had found 83 drugs to be sub-standard and misbranded in the then state. He admitted that nexus between “doctors and the private pharmaceutical companies in the state, has led to medicos prescribing medicines of a particular company with whom they have tacit understanding”

Kashmir, as was pointed out once also by India's leading cardiologist Naresh Trehan at a seminar in Srinagar a decade ago was the hunting ground of the spurious pharma companies in the country. How do these companies survive in the region? This is because their products are prescribed in Kashmir. And doctors – a section of them, at least – are culpable for it. At the same time, the successive governments can hardly absolve itself of its dubious role in the process. And if spurious drug companies find the Valley as an easy target, isn't Drug Controller Department responsible for it? And once these companies are allowed a toehold in the region, it is but natural they will try to sell their products and in pursuit of this goal build dubious relationships with medical professionals.

It is incumbent upon the heads of health institutions in J&K to check the practice and conduct intermittent prescription audit. As for the doctors' associations, they should formulate voluntary guidelines and sensitize their tribe. To begin with, what is needed is a wider public awareness about this menace so that the doctors involved in the practice feel a sense of accountability towards the society.

OTHER OPINION

All Over Again

Bail may be the rule and jail the exception, but this principle does not seem to have sunk in among some of the judiciary in the lower courts yet. Had it been otherwise, Indian prisons would not have been crowded with under-trial prisoners, many of whom have neither the money nor the social reach to arrange for bail. The Supreme Court, which reiterated the principle regarding bail many times, reportedly asked high courts to withdraw judicial work from those judges in the lower courts who send the accused to custody without a thought as to whether the cases warrant such action. The effect was double: it sent people unnecessarily to custody and thus forced them into further litigation. In some courts, the accused could be sent off to be locked up as soon as they appeared in response to summons. Such judges should be sent to judicial academies to be 're-oriented' regarding the law of the land.

The order to high courts came in response to a survey that gathered data about compliance with the Supreme Court's July 2022 guidelines regarding arrest and bail. In that set of instructions, the police had been asked not to make arrests routinely if the alleged offence carried a penalty of less than seven years' imprisonment, and judges were asked to apply their minds in deciding custody. Bail should be disposed of within two weeks after application and anticipatory bail in six weeks. Courts in Uttar Pradesh, including the one in Hathras, noticeably lacked compliance with the Supreme Court's order. As the state is not famed for its even-handedness, this was telling. The Supreme Court also required that the Gauhati, Orissa and Madras High Courts be made aware of the non-compliance among their lower judiciary. The latest order underlined the importance of the first stage of the justice process: the number of under-trials and the paucity of bail indicate that the process is failing at some level in spite of repeated instructions. But an understanding of non-compliance would have to include the increasing attempts at political intervention in the justice process and the undermining of institutions, such as the police. The attempts are most obvious at the lower levels of the system. Following the Supreme Court's guidelines strictly would be the single most effective way of countering such interference.

Telegraph India



Getting Comfortable With Gender Equality

Danish Shafi

“This Repugnance against the idea of feminism and the idea of gender equality should concern us all. It indicates that there is a lot more needed to be done to make our society free and just for its members. It thus becomes important to know how these atavistic ideas about women spread and where the sustenance to these ideas comes from

The recent gruesome murder of a woman in district Budgam is not the first case of violence against women in Kashmir, but the severity and nature of crime is quite unusual and unheard of. The incident has triggered a public outrage in the form of protest demanding justice and has generated fresh discussion, in and outside households as well as on social media about women's safety and violence against women in Kashmir.

However, these conversations gradually die down only to resurface again when another tragic incident happens. Women in Kashmir have been at the receiving end of conflict as well as patriarchy in Kashmir. Due to persistent conflict, Kashmir has come to become a place of utmost uncertainty; one of our individual and collective lives. In this atmosphere, the top-down approach, to address the issue of women safety, from the state has a very limited scope in its effectiveness particularly in the absence of an elected representative government. The overwhelming dominance of the security discourse on governance undermines the democratic process and hinders democratic decision making and participation of people in issues that concern them.

Should women continue to suffer until political stability arrives and there's potential to hold the government more accountable?

Perhaps not. It is time that society takes it upon itself to adopt a bottom-up approach to address this problem and make society safe and just for women. The discussions around the issues of women, occasionally caused by incidents of harassment and violence against women, reflect the recognition of the problem in the society by its members irrespective of

the outcomes of these decisions. However, the real significance of these conversations lies in whether they enrich and expand our understanding of the problem. And how are these conversations helping in making the lives of women better and safe around us? What matters is the way we discuss and whether these discussions challenge or affirm the status quo.

The common problem with these discussions is they are repetitive in their content and predictable in their arguments. The substances of our conceptions of gender equality largely come from the public sphere dominated by men and absence of gender equality thereof. A large section of our society continues to believe in the subordination of women and have been extensively deploying cultural and re-

gendered bias and sometimes facilitate the oppression. Religion and religious pulpits have also sometimes been misappropriated in this direction.

It is thus imperative that we hold people who preach objectionable ideas about women accountable in our society and inculcate in our children the values of freedom and gender equality. Our conversations about women are often in relation to men as mothers, sisters, daughters and partners. Can we change the contours of our conversation about women by treating them, first and foremost, simply as human beings who deserve to be treated justly and as equals just by virtue of being one? It is not to strip the women of her overlapping religious and social identities impacting their lives but to set the basic terms

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ligious arguments in the service of male hegemony.

It is surprising that although there is no prominent feminist movement in Kashmir, there is no dearth of outrage against feminism. This repugnance against the idea of feminism and the idea of gender equality should concern us all. It indicates that there is a lot more needed to be done to make our society free and just for its members. It thus becomes important to know how these atavistic ideas about women spread and where the sustenance to these ideas comes from.

Besides the easy access to misogynistic and patriarchal ideas and ready-made explanations available online enforce

ment of conversation right. In order to truly uproot the subordination of women it is necessary to re-think the ways we think and talk about women. Other identities should be used to further the cause of freedom of women rather than to restrict women and our imagination of free and just society. What good is society if it refuses to take the freedom and safety of half of its members seriously unless its conscience is jolted by the gruesome murders like that of Budgam?

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer



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South's Staple

Every year, March 30 is observed as World Idli Day. The celebration of the day started some years ago when an enthusiastic idli lover from Chennai decided to dedicate a day to this South India's most popular staple food. The reputation of the humble Idli is really a phenomenon in the

20th century. Steamed, puffy and delectable, idli doused in sambhar and chutney, easily makes one of the nation's much sought after nutrients for breakfast. Idli, for long has been making the South-Indian cuisine proud across the sub-continent. This popular, yet simple food is not oily or greasy, and is considered to be

one of the most delicious and intelligent nourishments in the South. Idli is also a 'street food', yet it shares no infamous reputation of being unhealthy or calorie-laden. Idli may have originated elsewhere, but it was in the South that the process of making it from a painstakingly ground fermented batter of urad dal and rice

was perfected. For all South Indians, who are common eaters of Idli, this day is the opportunity to commemorate this unassuming and easy-to-digest food, as, for ages it has been giving us all the good feelings while eating it.

Ranganathan Sivakumar

In A Rut: How Ali's Agony Has Become Kashmir's Career Problem

An inside story of how young talents are being rendered redundant in Kashmir.

Muskan Yousof

Days changed, changed seasons, and years changed nonetheless, Ali perched on his room porch—mooning over the Civil Service Examinations (CSE) he appeared for three years back—remains unabated and unchanged.

With the day breaking and the break-in of Ali's erratic slumber, most of the dailies await to be greeted by Ali's stale sighs, suffused with the annotations of what went wrong two years back.

Waking up to the English, Urdu, and Kashmiri greetings of all these dailies is Ali's daily dealing. Yester blotches of blue ink unwashed, slouched on his table, flicking quickly through pages with unsettling haste, Ali yanks on the page with job advertisements — overwriting, underlining, and highlighting all the vacancies and posts as if affirming not to him and haw at any opportunity coming by.

Routinely puckering with the same concoction of emotions, this affirming attitude was nothing new. Scribbling information on a notepad amassed from all the adverts till midday was a routine task. Sitting out on the iron balustrade of his balcony at noon with eyes peering at the skyline scrabbling for unfound answers in the waving clouds and soaring birds makes the other half of his day.

Critique of Pure Reason, which he was laureled with after winning an essay competition, was his resort to escapism. He would've it by his side—the last of his darlings, or perhaps a relic of his dreams.

Chin wagging with the neighbouring ladies, Ali's mother had aired that every night before hitting the pillow, Ali reads the same book over and over. Perhaps baying the pent-up qualms in the guise of small talk of the fateful morning of June last year—when she had unintelligibly junked her son's long kindled flambeau of existence lighting glee in the eyes of the ragpicker.

Critique of Pure Reason, always tucked away in his closet got saved as a splinter of solace for Ali, hence the last of his darlings, the relic of his dreams. Flustered in a flood of emotions, Ali's first response was to run helter-skelter looking for the ragpicker only to know that his trove of philosophy books was at a far-off factory being read with a new fate. Ali had been away for two days collating an important dossier for a job interview. Returning to the unfurled mishap, Ali confined himself to his room for a week, stifling his family with his silence and leashed anger.

Times, when the student populace of Jammu and Kashmir are flocking into the rut of a handful of career avenues, an impertinent question regarding their proclivity arises. How practical and pragmatic does it sound that scholars are exponentially diving into not more than just three or four conventional career paths? Needless to mention of kinds being alluded to.

Is there a genuine disposition towards these professional choices, many wonder — or, are they just wrought to plow into the herd adducing the success stories of the formers? What's the framework students stand on to decide about their careers? For a long, it's believed, this has been an unattended lurking shadow, and people are mindlessly turning a blind eye.

The fact that Kashmir has been producing only a few select luminaries repeatedly in more or less the same spheres, that too long gaps after should



serve enough food for thought.

Philosophy and Ali were like water to the ocean. With an uninhibited spark for philosophy, Ali had read everything from Confucius to Plato to Tao and on and on. Otherwise a timid lad, Ali would be the first one to partake in debates throughout his school and college years. He was the go-to person for anyone wanting to have a striking monologue written for an oration competition, or for a critical analysis of a literary piece. Much of Ali's persona shone with the fountaining light of a philosopher. As much as he wanted to tune into the innate opera of philosophy within him, so much was he drawn away by the hum of CSE that had been looming large ever since he was a kid.

Ali was in grade 6 when all three daughters of his uncle got through the much-coveted CSE. Huge pomp and show followed that feat and also followed an unsatiated current of desires. Beguiled, Ali's parents were no exception and fell in the line of desires. Desirous of hosting such glittering gathering when their son also cracks CSE, they drew the curtains of oblivion to what the son desires.

Ali was too young to even know the meaning of CSE but was being fed on the fantasies of a civil officer. While he was being lulled with the lullabies of becoming an officer, his parents called the shots on his part that he would pursue his graduation in Arts and Humanities. Complying with the popular fallacy that 'Arts and Humanities' is a walk in the park and that it would provide ample time for Ali to prepare for the exam and appear for it soon after completing his graduation.

Growing up, Ali came to realize his calling to philosophy and could not stop stoking the embers inside of him. Oval square face with pronounced profound eyes, Ali's peculiar persona holds one's sight either tenaciously or goes completely unnoticed. The uncanny placid expression and the slow fast gait make Ali look like a calm soul in a restless body. Throughout his time in school, he downed like an elixir, a plethora of books diverse in themes and content. More philosophical than anything. Wrung the nectar out of those books and soaked himself in.

Getting to college and exultant thinking about having phi-

losophy as one of his subjects, Ali had a departure from reading to writing. Ali found himself ardently critiquing several essays, commenting on several philosophers, and drawing parallels between their belief systems. While many would slip away, only a couple of his peers would attend the philosophy class, and at times he would be the only one. Often his professor would not show up. All the things that Ali worked on were largely due to his own interests and in part to his annual project submissions.

While Ali was so invested in philosophy, his parents were busy engineering his future with the machine of their own dreams. Perhaps, his dreams with the machine of their own eyes. But Ali had found such a realm in the firmament of philosophy, that he was riding on the moon, rubbing against the stars.

While Ali was all aware of what he had fed on ever since he was in grade 6, he found himself in an atrocious dilemma. He lulled himself to sleep every night with the reverberations of the hum his parents harped on at dinner. He knew how his parents were so swayed by this customary routine of reminding their son of what the future shall hold for him. He consumed more reaffirmations, more unattuned knowledge, and tasted more of others' success stories. At times, he would also see his father sneering about him spending more time reading books that were aberrated for him.

Ali knew it all and also knew the drive of philosophy that enraptured every bit of his existence. Whenever faced with prolonged spells of anxiety about the same, he would set himself right by writing down his favorite excerpts of all the books he had read — a defense mechanism that he would escape into.

Going by the roadmap designed by his parents for preparing for CSE throughout the term of his graduation, Ali was at the helm of hopes, aspirations and dreams that were not his own. He knew his parents were diminutive of the degree he was pursuing and they had asked him to enroll just for the sake of it and were unaware of Ali's smoldering amour. Whenever at the study with a scatter of current affairs, general knowledge, history, pol-

ity, and much more, Ali would keep yanking himself out of the musings of the assignment he submitted, the book he has been reading, or his counteractive thoughts to popular beliefs. Toward the end of the day, Ali would be left feeling treacherous. Treacherous toward his time, his parents, his zeal, and of all towards himself.

Ali seemed to lose his sanity to this dire state of affairs, fixed in a disputing state about his existence. Unable to muster together the courage to reveal to his parents, his love affair with philosophy and his strong desire to pursue it further, he was now hatching plans on how to get it across to his parents. He was now in the final year of his degree and, per the script, was supposed to appear for CSE the following year. Knowing that the aspirants of CSE would get dropped or selected by the skin of one's teeth, Ali's parents had decided for him, that if not this year, he shall keep trying and re-appear. Reassured that one fine day, Ali shall crack it, and hence was not a big deal for him to re-appear as he was young.

The craze for civil services in Kashmir is astounding. After doctor and engineer, the pursuit of becoming a civil servant is engaging several students in a grueling coaching every year. But in this blind pursuit driven by "career glorification", many students are losing their proactive calls and are being rendered redundant. Since the rate of absorption in these exams is very limited, many aspirants find themselves at the crossroads after the results. What's further adding to the aspirants' anxieties are the poor results from Kashmir.

In the recent CSE results declared by Jammu & Kashmir Public Service Commission, Kashmir performed poorly. Though the administrative service has historically not attracted Kashmir youth, the latest result is said to be one of the lowest performances of the Kashmir division in recent years.

Out of the 187 selected candidates, 90 candidates were selected in Open Merit, while the rest of the successful candidates fall under different reserved categories. Only 31 candidates from Kashmir made it to the finals and Ali wasn't among them.

Unaware of his parents' planning, Ali was still busy hatching

the plans, having dismissed a number of them already. Quite sure of not making it through, Ali finally decided that he would sit for the exam. In his head, he thought that his parents would be naturally disappointed in him for not faring well and would make peace with the fact that CSE is not his cup of tea. Consequentially, Ali thought of budging with his prospect of philosophy and showing his parents how well he could do in it. He wanted something substantial to present to his parents that could drive them away from the melancholy of CSE.

To Ali's mind, getting a funded research scholarship from a well-ranked university abroad would elate his parents, and they would concede, though he was not too interested in moving so far to pursue his interest. He wanted to fuel his passion for philosophy by living in his homeland and doing some pioneering work in line with his culture and heritage. Nonetheless, his higher motive had now become to appease his parents.

It was the day of CSE, and Ali went for the exam after his mother performed all the credulous utopian rituals for abating all that could go wrong. Unscripted, all went wrong. Ali flunked the exams big time. Back home, there was a breeze of anticipation about how good he must have done. The house was reeking of burnt chillies and sacred rue so that any evil eye would choke and ward off, choking Ali as well as he returned.

As Ali looked at his parents, whose gaze was fixated on him, waiting to hear the words of glory, he went mute. The shine of hope gleaming in his parents' eyes pained him deeply. Waiting for his parents to understand the circumstances without him having to speak, Ali as if hypnotized kept staring at his parents. Perhaps, he felt that they too would read the language of his eyes. After a short, deep, and screeching silence, all Ali could utter was 'Mmm Hmm' moving his head in negation from side to side. The elicited response of his parents was 'Ah, it's okay... not at all a problem'.

This response was no less than an unprecedented astonishment to Ali. He could not fathom that his parents were not disappointed in him and even if they were, it was not

even an iota of what he had imagined. He was curtailed about the reason behind such a mild reaction. This was the same day that he was going to get the outcome of the research scholarship test. Deep down, he had been sure he will be getting his hands on the scholarship.

While Ali could not contain the joy of not seeing his parents that disappointed, in the fit of the moment, he decided to brush aside the scenario with the news of his scholarship. He assumed that the stage was set perfectly. Quickly jumping to his feet with excitement surprising his parents, he blurted out that he has a funded research scholarship in Philosophy at a great university abroad. Ali departing from the surprise, sent his parents into one, not necessarily a pleasant one.

Unable to make anything out of his words, Ali's parents had an expression that yearned for details. Things, Ali had never revealed to his parents were now at their disposal. He could not believe the moment, could not believe that he can talk about philosophy to his parents, could not believe his dream becoming a voice. Thus, began Ali's tracing of all the anecdotes. He told his parents of his long-found love.

After Ali was done with his long-awaited monologue, he found his parents cloaked in different emotions altogether. Different from what he had imagined. Ali had missed the flashing change of emotions and expressions because he was too lost in his world, delivering a monologue. No sooner Ali had realised the intensity and gravitas of the scene, his parents unleashed.

Ali not faring well in the exam was immediately attributed to his frivolous love of philosophy. He was hurled with jeers for being deceptive. He could no longer keep his calm and let his long-held rant lose. Ali was furious about not knowing what and when his parents decide about the life that he was living. He felt cramped that his parents had made peace with him reappearing for the CSE without even consulting him. After a distasteful and disdainful altercation, Ali's parents asked for his scholarship letter. Enraged Ali, quickly turned to his phone, and opened the mail inbox, only to arrest himself in debilitation. Ali had not gotten the scholarship. His only laxity was the grade of A+.

The rotten system of marks, grades, and merit scarred Ali's unsurpassable pool of creativity. He was benumbed while presenting a garland of reassurance to his parents that they were right in engineering his dreams with their eyes. Ali was not able to decide what he should be angry about, it was not his great aspiration to study abroad but was his escape.

Ali's parents were proven right but in the wrong way. They were concerned about his future and stability but compromising on his peace and solace. While plunged into himself roving his boat hysterically through the tides of emotions, his parents were busy putting together the bits and pieces of him to sit in the CSE next year. In their mind, that was the only right way to set their son's future right, the future that no one knows, the future that no one has seen, and the present that is slipping away like sand from the fist.

Two years have passed, and Ali is still not an officer after two failed attempts. He lost his father to cardiac arrest a month back, but has long forgotten to live. Caught in Kashmir's career problem, Ali has already lost his call.



J&K Women Lose 5-0 In Senior National Opener

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: J&K senior women's football team suffered a 5-0 drubbing at the hands of Football Delhi (Delhi Soccer Association) on Wednesday in their opening game of the 27th Senior Women's National Football Championship 2022-23.

The match was played at Pant Stadium in Bihilai, Chhattisgarh and saw the Delhi side take the lead in the 18th minute. The Delhi women then doubled their

lead in the 50th minute, before adding the third in 55th minute. The fourth goal was scored in the 85th minute, while the fifth came in added time of 90+4 minute.

Led by Head Coach Fayaz Ahmad Shah, the J&K women's team would rue their second half performance which saw them concede four goals. J&K will next play hosts Chhattisgarh on April 1 at the Pant Stadium.

In another match, debutants Ladakh lost 4-0 to Jharkhand.

Kremlin Calls IOC Rules On Russian Participation 'Discriminatory'

Agencies

The Kremlin said on Wednesday that the International Olympic Committee's guidelines that allow Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete in international competitions as neutrals contain "elements of discrimination".

Athletes from Russia and Belarus, Moscow's ally, were banned from most international competitions last year over the Ukraine war, but guidelines issued by the Lausanne-based IOC on Tuesday seek to allow for their gradual return to world sport.

The guidelines have infuriated Russian authorities, however, who say any move to deprive athletes of their national symbols is discriminatory.

"Such recommendations



were characterized as containing elements of discrimination, which is unacceptable," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on a conference call.

"We will continue to defend the interests of our athletes in every possible way."

IOC President Thomas Bach said on Tuesday that it would be up to international sports federations to decide which athletes from Russia and Belarus can compete as neutrals, meaning without their national flag or country's anthem.

No Formal Discussions On Pakistan Playing 2023 WC Games In Bangladesh: ICC



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: ICC sources on Wednesday dismissed speculations about Pakistan playing their World Cup matches in Bangladesh instead of India due to the political tension between the two countries, terming it a "figment of imagination".

The rebuttal came after reports that discussions were held during the recent ICC board meeting in Dubai about Pakistan possibly playing their league games in Bangladesh.

"No one knows if PCB chief Mr Najam Sethi has had any informal discussion with his Bangladeshi counterpart Najmul Hasan Papon but this can be said with a degree of certainty that no such discussions happened officially that Pakistan will play in Bangladesh," an ICC board source privy to the developments told PTI on the condition of anonymity.

The source did point out that

procurement of visas was an issue that was discussed and, contrary to conjectures made from the PCB's part, the Indian cricket board has assured of all assistance.

"The BCCI has categorically said that there will be no problems with procurement of visas. One of the main points for a host country is that all participating nations will be given visas on time. From ICC's part, Bangladesh is not even in its scheme of things as a co-host as of now," the source said.

"Suppose Pakistan reach the semi-finals or win to play the finals, do they expect the matches to be played in Bangladesh. This is not a theatre of absurd happening," the board member added.

The top brass in BCCI circles understands that this is a pressure put by the PCB to host the entire Asia Cup in Pakistan, which isn't being looked upon as a feasible solution.

"We understand that this is a kind of pressure tactic applied by PCB because of the Asia Cup issue. But let me tell you, ultimately, Asia Cup will also be played in UAE or Qatar and probably Pakistan will also have to play its matches in one of these countries," a BCCI source said.

Asian Cricket Council (ACC) chairman and BCCI secretary Jay Shah has already made it clear that India is not travelling to Pakistan for the Asia Cup and that it will be held at a neutral venue.

"As far as Pakistan playing its Asia Cup games in Pakistan is concerned, the budget for the tournament is passed by the Asian Cricket Council. If ACC says that it's not a commercially viable proposition to hold Asia Cup in two countries, how can Pakistan play its games at home. ACC, for all you know, might not pass the budget," a board source said.

Indonesia Stripped Of U-20 WC Hosting Rights: FIFA

Agencies

Indonesia has been stripped of the right to host the under-20 soccer World Cup, global governing body FIFA said on Wednesday. The decision to remove Indonesia as host of the May 20-June 11 tournament was taken after its football federation (PSSI) said it had cancelled the draw after the governor of the largely Hindu island of Bali refused to host Israel's team.

"FIFA has decided, due to the current circumstances, to remove Indonesia as the host of the FIFA U-20 World Cup 2023," a FIFA statement said. "A new host will be announced as soon as possible, with the dates of the tournament currently remaining unchanged. Potential sanctions against the PSSI may also be decided at a later stage."

FIFA added that the decision had been taken following a meeting between the world soc-

not be allowed to participate. Indonesia's population is predominantly Muslim. Most Indonesian Muslims practice a moderate version of Islam, but there has been a rise in religious conservatism in recent years that has crept into politics.

Earlier this week, the PSSI said losing hosting rights would harm Indonesian football teams' chances of taking part in other FIFA tournaments, while the economic losses would amount to "trillions of rupiah". On Wednesday, FIFA said that it was committed to aiding the PSSI following a deadly stampede last year that led to the deaths of 135 spectators at a stadium in East Java in October.

"Members of the FIFA team will continue to be present in Indonesia in the coming months and will provide the required assistance to the PSSI, under the leadership of President Thohir,"



cer governing body's President Gianni Infantino and PSSI Chairman Erick Thohir. PSSI officials did not immediately respond to Reuters' requests for comment.

Earlier this month, protesters marched in the capital Jakarta waving Indonesian and Palestinian flags and demanding Israel

FIFA said in the statement. "A new meeting between the FIFA President and the PSSI President for further discussions will be scheduled shortly."

As host, Indonesia automatically qualified for the Under-20 World Cup, but it has not played in the tournament since 1979.

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