

Pakistan retained on 'grey list' of anti-terror financing watchdog

Pakistan has been retained on the '**grey list**' of the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** for another four months, with a stern warning from the global watchdog that met in Paris (February 19-21) to complete the 27-point action plan it has been given by June 2020 or face being put on the '**black list**'.

Delegations of security and diplomatic officials from the 39-member body, which includes India, attended the meeting.

"All deadlines in the action plan have expired. While noting recent and notable improvements, the FATF again expresses concern, given Pakistan's failure to complete its action plan in line with the agreed timelines and in light of the terror financing risks emanating from the jurisdiction," said a statement issued by the FATF's plenary session. According to the FATF summary report, Pakistan needs to continue to work on eight specific areas, including demonstrating it is "identifying and investigating" all terror-financing activities in the country, freezing the funds of all designated terrorists and its prosecutions result in "effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions" against all terror entities.

Pakistan was given a September 2019 deadline to complete the tasks that included shutting down all access to funding of United Nations Security Council-designated terrorist groups, including the Taliban, al-Qaeda, the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammed and prosecuting their leadership for any access to finance, as well as tightening laws and banking security norms.

In November 2019, after Pakistan was judged to have complied with only 4 points of the plan, the FATF extended the deadline to February 2020, where its statement noted it had been cleared of 14 points.

The FATF urged Pakistan to "swiftly complete" the remainder of the list.

The "black list" refers to countries for who there has been a "call to action" or strict banking and international finance sanctions, a list which at present includes Iran and North Korea.

Pakistan is one of the 12 countries on the "grey list" or "other monitored jurisdictions" that are being reviewed for actions to stop terror financing and money laundering.

Pakistan has been lobbying to get off the grey list, citing actions already taken, and reportedly has the backing of Turkey to be removed from the list entirely.

Significantly, even Indian government officials said placing Pakistan on the black list might prove counter-productive, as it would not be incentivised to complete the action plan under a deadline.

30 squats for a free platform ticket at this railway station



Thirty squats in front of a machine can now get passengers at the Anand Vihar railway station in Delhi a free platform ticket.

They can also avoid long queues.

In a first-of-its-kind scheme aimed at promoting the 'Fit India' campaign, the Railways has set up a 'Fit India Squat Kiosk' near the entry point of the station.

The machine will generate a free platform ticket after a passenger performs 30 squats.

The Railways has also opened a 'Dawa Dost' store at the station, which will offer generic medicines for passengers at up to 80% discount, according to an official release.

Additionally, a pulse health machine which can measure health and wellness parameters, such as body composition and blood pressure, has also been placed at the station.

It will, in minutes, generate a detailed report on indications of a potential lifestyle disease, with personalised recommendations for improving one's health and wellness.

"The most advanced body massage chairs, which have 3D massage rollers with longer massage track line giving the maximum massage coverage, are also available in the concourse area of the station," the statement said.

The Railways said there would be an 'Eat Right Station' with certification mandated by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.

Baahubali's Kiliki language evolves online

Remember Kiliki, the language of the Kaalakeya tribe in Rajamouli's superhit film Baahubali? Now, an effort is on to popularise it.

Marking International Mother Language Day on February 21, the filmmaker and Madhan Karky, the man behind the language, launched a website to help anyone learn the "world's easiest language".

The website (www.kiliki.in) has a 3,000-word English-Kiliki-English dictionary, a tool to convert names, videos and vocabulary games.

Army to get offices under one roof

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh laid the foundation for a 'Thal Sena Bhawan' of the Army in Delhi cantonment that will bring various pockets of the Army Headquarters spread across Delhi under one roof.

There was movement of about 3,000-4,000 vehicles every day from the various Army establishments in the city. This would be not required once 'Thal Sena Bhawan' comes up and would significantly reduce fuel consumption, expenses and pollution.

The newly created Department of Military Affairs (DMA), headed by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), would work from Thal Sena Bhawan.

Army chief Gen. Manoj Naravane said the **proposed Thal Sena Bhawan** would bring all Army Headquarters offices under one roof, thereby improving the working efficiency, while reducing the carbon footprint and logistics requirements.

It would also allow more family time for all personnel who are all on peace posting in Delhi, he noted.

The Army chief would continue to sit in South Block in close proximity to the Defence Minister and Sena Bhawan, the present Army HQ, will continue to exist, though some functions will be shifted to the new complex.



Gold jumps to 7-year high on fears virus will hit global growth

Gold rose 1% to its highest in seven years as the spread of the coronavirus intensified concerns about its impact on economic activity and global growth, increasing the metal's safe-haven appeal.

“There is a rise in risk aversion again due to fears that the COVID-19 disease will spread further. The virus poses a major risk for the global economy,” an analyst said.

Among other safe havens, the U.S. government bonds gained as the benchmark 10-year treasury yields fell to its lowest since September 2019.