

February 14th and 15th news:

International:

Pakistan amends anti-terror law

Keen to avert international sanctions, Pakistan has quietly amended its anti-terror laws to include Hafiz Saeed-linked Jamaat-ud-Dawa and Falah-i-Insaniat Foundation and other militant outfits on the list of UN proscribed groups

A major impact of a new ordinance promulgated by Pakistan President Mamnoon Hussain would be the proscription of Saeed-linked JuD and FIF along with the UN listed outfits of Al Akhtar Trust and Al Rashid Trust

Hafiz Saeed, the mastermind of the 2008 Mumbai terror attack, heads the charity JuD, believed to be a front for Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror group.

The move to amend the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997 ends an old discrepancy between the UN sanctions list and the national listing of terrorist groups and individuals

It has come ahead of the crucial Financial Action Task Force (FATF) meeting in Paris, scheduled to be held from February 18 to 23.

The US and India are spearheading an effort to get Pakistan included in the watchdog's international money-laundering and terror-financing 'grey list'. Pakistan was last placed on FATF's grey list in February 2012 and stayed on it for three years, the report said.

Pakistan's top civil-military coordination forum had reviewed the steps taken by the federal and provincial governments for compliance with FATF requirements in view of the upcoming FATF plenary meeting, which will take up a report to be submitted by Pakistan on actions taken to choke funding of JuD chief Saeed and the organisations linked with him.

The intergovernmental body had at its plenary in Buenos Aires held in November last year had asked Pakistan to furnish a compliance report on actions taken against the Lashkar-e-Taiba and JuD at the Paris meeting.

The UNSC sanctions list has Al-Qaeda, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation (FIF), Lashkar-e-Taiba (Let) and others.

A UNSC 1267 sanctions committee's monitoring team visited Pakistan in January to review the compliance, but analysts fear that the FATF review could be tougher for the country. It is feared that the international body can take some punitive action against Pakistan

The FATF maintains grey and black lists for identifying countries with weak measures to combat money laundering and terror financing. The watchdog does not have the powers to impose sanctions on a country found not meeting the required standards.

However, its listing can affect international transactions from the country concerned as those would then become subject to greater scrutiny.

This will increase the cost of doing international transactions and ultimately higher cost of doing business locally.

Venezuela, Libya Lose UN Vote for Third Time in 3 Years

Venezuela and Libya have been suspended from voting in the U.N. General Assembly for the third time in three years because of millions of dollars in unpaid dues to the world body.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres informed the General Assembly in late January that 14 countries including Venezuela and Libya were in arrears, and Assembly spokesman Brenden Varma confirmed on 13th February that Venezuela has lost its vote in the 193-member global organization as a result. Libya did as well.

According to a letter from Guterres to the Assembly president, Venezuela must pay a minimum of \$25,200,296 to restore its voting rights, and Libya must pay at least \$6,594,842.

Venezuela is engulfed in an economic and political crisis and Libya has two rival governments, each backed by an array of militias.

The other countries that lost their voting rights are Central African Republic, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Marshall Islands, Surinam and Yemen. Equatorial Guinea, which is on the Security Council, also lost its vote.

In a resolution, the General Assembly decided that Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe and Somalia would be permitted to vote despite being in arrears.

Tanzania withdraws from UN refugee programme

Tanzania announced its withdrawal of United Nation's "Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework" citing security reasons and lack of funds. Tanzania considered a safe haven for refugees, particularly from conflict-hit Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi. Earlier, United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) granting Citizenship for some refugees and their applications.

The main specification New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (also known as New York Declaration) calls upon UNHCR to develop and initiate the application of CRRF. According to the framework, once refugees get access to education and right to work legally, they can develop their own skills and be more self-reliant.

International Conference on Unani Medicine held in New Delhi

The International Conference on Unani Medicine was held in New Delhi. It was organized by Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM), under Ministry of AYUSH is organizing as part of the celebration of Unani Day.

The Various national level eminent personalities and stakeholders from academia, industry, regulators, and researchers in the field of Unani Medicine participant.

National:

Twelfth International Conference On CSR Held In Bengaluru

The Institute Of Directors organized it's 12th International Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility in Bengaluru, Karnataka. In the conference, the Prestigious Golden Peacock Award 2017 were presented. The leadership award for philanthropy and social change was presented to Mr. Vineet Nayar, Founder Chairman, Sampark Foundation.

Economy:

Government Of India Makes Amendments In Small Savings Act

In order to remove existing ambiguities due to multiple Acts and rules for Small Saving Schemes, the Government of India has proposed a merger of Government Savings Certificates Act, 1959 and Public Provident Fund Act, 1968 with the Government Savings Banks Act, 1873.

With a single act, relevant provisions of the Government Savings Certificates (NSC) Act, 1959 and the Public Provident Fund Act, 1968 would stand subsumed in the new amended Act without compromising on any of the functional provision of the existing Act.

All existing protections have been retained while consolidating PPF Act under the proposed Government Savings Promotion Act. No existing benefits to depositors are proposed to be taken away through this process.

The main objective in proposing a common Act is to make implementation easier for the depositors as they need not go through different rules and Acts for understanding the provision of various small saving schemes, and also to introduce certain flexibilities for the investors.

Apart from ensuring existing benefits, certain new benefits to the depositors have been proposed under the bill.

Sports:

India clinch series after defeating South Africa in 5th ODI

Team India created history as they clinched their first ever bilateral ODI series win on South African soil by beating Proteas by 73 runs in the fifth One-day International (ODI) at St George's Park on 13th February

India are now only behind West Indies' 14 successive bilateral ODI series wins. Kohli's team has nine series wins on the trot.

India have cemented their number-one ranking. The visitors had entered the six-match series in second position on 119 points, two points behind leaders South Africa. After taking a 4-1 lead, India have moved to 122 points, while South Africa have dropped to 118 points.

This is the first time since October 2017 and fifth time overall that India have finished on top of the ODI rankings following the conclusion of a series since rising to the top for the first time in January 2013.

Persons in news:

Kannada litterateur Chandrashekar Kambar elected as president of the **Sahitya Akademi** in the election held for the post.

He replaced Vishwanath Prasad Tiwari.

Hindi poet Madhav Koushik has been elected as vice-president.

This is the second time election was held in the history of Sahitya Akademi, after Ananthamurthy's election to the post.

Prof. Kambar has served as the member of the Akademi executive board for over 10 years and was vice-president for 2013-18.