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J&K at ...

individual—it concerns the future of the youth of Jammu and Kashmir. Painful incidents are being reported almost every day, which are truly heartbreaking," he said.

Urging people to actively join the initiative, Sinha added, "This is not merely a march, but a journey with a purpose—to make Jammu and Kashmir drug-free and to ensure effective action against drug traffickers."

He said the administration has prepared a comprehensive strategy involving all departments, along with the police and security forces, to carry forward the campaign.

"I will also make efforts to reach every district of Jammu and Kashmir, to energise this campaign through padayatras and to appeal to people directly," he added.

2,700 Sikh...

Khalsa Sajna Diwas to be organised at Gurdwara Panja Sahib at Hasanabdol.

He said the jatha will also pay obeisance at Gurdwara Nankana Sahib (the birthplace of Guru Nanak) and Gurdwara Sacha Sauda Sahib in Pakistan's Punjab province. For the most part of the visit, the jatha will stay at Gurdwara Panja Sahib where they will participate at the main congregation.

Thereafter, the jatha will visit Gurdwara Dehra Sahib in Lahore, Gurdwara Rori Sahib in Eminabad, and Gurdwara Sri Kartapur Sahib.

Following a stay at Gurdwara Dehra Sahib on April 17, the Sikh jatha will return to India on April 19, the official said.

The official said the SGPC has sent copies of holy Gutka Sahibs of Gurbani, 'kanghas' (comb), 'karhas' (iron bracelet), 'kirpans' (sacred dagger), shawls, and tea, with the jatha.

He said on the day of the main congregation on the occasion of Baisakhi, 'Amrit Sanchar' (initiation ceremony) will be organised at Gurdwara Panja Sahib.

The official said for convenience of pilgrims, the SGPC facilitated filling of entry forms and other necessary documentation at the Attari border, and special buses were arranged for transportation of pilgrims.

The SGPC also arranged 'langar', tea and water for the pilgrims at Attari border, he added.

India's biggest ...

Students and parents are increasingly facing confusion regarding subject choices, language pathways and alignment with competitive examinations. If students are not guided to develop deep subject mastery, the larger goal of increasing research output and academic excellence may also remain unfulfilled.

Clear and uniform guidelines are needed on language transition. Students should be encouraged to learn in their mother tongue in early years, gain proficiency in Hindi as a national link language, and acquire English for global engagement. This balanced approach can reduce confusion and strengthen national integration.

Students must be encouraged to go beyond surface-level learning and develop deep expertise in chosen subjects. Universities should incentivise research, innovation and interdisciplinary studies. Increased enrolment must translate into higher quality research output, not just higher numbers.

Uniform benchmarks must be introduced to evaluate conceptual clarity, application skills and learning outcomes across the country. This will ensure that educational standards remain consistent, regardless of region.

Moreover, a real-time monitoring system is essential to track implementation, identify gaps and enable timely corrections. Data-driven policy adjustments can ensure that reform remains dynamic and responsive.

The gap between vision and reality lies in implementation discipline, clarity of direction and institutional strength. At a deeper level, the policy must also reinforce the idea that education is a tool for national integration. Nationalism, in this context, does not negate regional identities—it harmonises them within a larger national framework.

To make NEP 2020 succeed, India must now move decisively from vision to verification, from intent to impact, and from reform to results. Only then can the promise of a stronger, more unified and knowledge-driven nation truly be realised.

Illegal construction ...

the pathways, reportedly in use for nearly five decades, are now being obstructed due to the ongoing construction activities.

A government functionary, requesting anonymity, alleged that the construction of shops is being allowed under official watch, facilitating encroachment on government land worth crores of rupees.

It was further alleged that the illegal construction is continuing under the watch of the local administration.

"Officials at the tehsil level are said to frequently pass through the area but have not taken action, raising concerns about administrative apathy or selective enforcement", he added.

When contacted by The Earth News, SDM Akhnoor said that the matter has come to his notice and that he has directed Tehsildar Akhnoor to examine the issue and submit a report for further action..

The matter now warrants investigation by the J&K Revenue Department to ascertain how construction was allowed on government land without requisite permissions, including change of land use (CLU).

Moreover, it is high time for the higher-up in the Government to take timely action to carry out the proper demarcation of the land to establish ownership and to prevent the further encroachment of the land in Ambarana village near the Chenab bridges.

JD Vance...

"As @POTUS said, if the Iranians are willing to negotiate in good faith, we're certainly willing to extend the open hand. If they're going to try to play us, then they're going to find that the negotiating team is not that receptive," Vance said before

boarding the plane.

There was no word about when the Iranian delegation would arrive, but social media was abuzz with reports that Pakistan had set up a special security corridor to escort the delegation from Iran.

The talks are now scheduled to be held on Saturday, according to official sources, a day later than the date set by Prime Minister Sharif.

Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency reported that Tehran has threatened to withdraw from the Islamabad talks if Israeli attacks on Lebanon do not cease.

In a post on X on Friday, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, who is likely to be part of the high-profile delegation, said that two conditions must be met before the start of negotiations.

"Two of the measures mutually agreed upon between the parties have yet to be implemented: a ceasefire in Lebanon and the release of Iran's blocked assets prior to the commencement of negotiations. These two matters must be fulfilled before negotiations begin," he said.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who held a telephone call with the country's ambassador to Lebanon Mohammad Reza Shiban, asserted that the US must live up to its ceasefire commitments, which he said included ensuring the truce covers Lebanon.

Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan, Reza Amir Moghadam, on Thursday confirmed that a 10-member Iranian delegation would arrive in Islamabad.

"Despite skepticism of Iranian public opinion due to repeated ceasefire violations by the Israeli regime to sabotage the diplomatic initiative, invited by Hon PM Shehbaz Sharif, Iranian delegation arrives tonight in Islamabad for serious talks based on 10 points proposed by Iran," he said on X on Thursday.

Hours later, he deleted the statement amidst the deteriorating situation in Lebanon, which was subjected to aerial attacks by Israel, calling it a violation of the ceasefire agreement.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian had said that the Israeli attack on Lebanon blatantly violated the initial ceasefire and would render negotiations meaningless.

Officials have not provided any timeline for the arrival of delegates due to security reasons, adding to the mystery.

Despite uncertainty, Pakistan geared up to host the two sides.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Friday announced "Visa on Arrival" for delegates and journalists travelling to Pakistan for talks. This facility, extended for the duration of the talks, does not cover third-country nationals.

"Pakistan welcomes all delegates, including journalists from participating nations, travelling in relation to the Islamabad Talks 2026. To this end, all airlines are requested to permit boarding to all such individuals without a visa. Immigration authorities in Pakistan will issue them Visa on Arrival," Dar posted on social media Friday morning.

A thick security blanket covered the capital, Islamabad, which was on 'red alert' ahead of talks.

More than 10,000 police and security personnel have been deployed to ensure multi-layered security for the visiting delegates, officials said.

The Red Zone, housing key buildings, is being protected by the army and the Rangers, and only authorised officials and residents are allowed to go through it.

The upcoming negotiations are being closely watched globally, as their success or failure could have far-reaching implications for West Asia's security, global energy markets, and international diplomacy.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi reviewed the security arrangements in Islamabad ahead of the arrival of the Iranian and US delegations.

Naqvi directed that all possible measures be taken for the security of the incoming delegations.

He was told that the Red Zone had been sealed, and a control room had been established in the ministry to monitor the situation.

Police also set up special checkpoints at the entrances and exits of the city, while all patrol units and special squads are patrolling throughout the city, and police are taking all possible measures to protect the lives and property of citizens.

Box fitted ...

Search operations were launched in the surrounding areas to rule out the presence of any additional explosive material. Officials said security has been heightened in the region and movement is being closely monitored. The recovered material is suspected to have been planted to target security forces or civilians, they added.

Meanwhile, security forces today detained a "suspicious" person at an Army formation in Jammu and a probe into his activities has been launched, official sources said.

"A suspicious individual has been detained. The matter is under investigation," a source said.

The sources added that further details are awaited.

Reports, however, claimed that a driver of a van belonging to an Army Public School near the Sunjwa formation was found to have three Pakistani contacts on his mobile phone.

Census 2027 ...

real-time insights. Contrasting it with the manual and time-consuming 2011 census, he highlighted the shift to a technology-first, citizen-centric framework using mobile-based enumeration, artificial intelligence and cloud technology to ensure accuracy, transparency and speed.

He said data will be the "key driver and fuel" of economies in the AI-driven future, adding that India's vast demographic diversity offers a strategic advantage in building globally competitive data systems.

Dulloo also underlined that integration of trusted national datasets with the JAM trinity -- 'Jan Dhan' (human resource), Aadhaar and Mobile -- has enabled targeted delivery of benefits, significantly reducing leakages.

He said the evolving data ecosystem will allow micro-level scientific planning for urban and rural areas, strengthening health, education and employment infrastructure tailored to local needs.

The chief secretary directed deputy commissioners and district administrations to ensure seamless execution at grass-roots level, including completion of training for census officers and enumerators. He said self-enumeration will begin on May 17, followed by house-to-house fieldwork from June 1, 2026.

Highlighting the importance of census data, he said it plays a crucial role in determining financial allocations to states and Union territories and shaping development policies for the next decade.

Earlier, Chief Principal Census Officer Amit Sharma outlined the two-phase structure of Census 2027. The first phase will include house listing and housing census with a self-enumeration period from May 17 to May 31, followed by fieldwork till June 30, 2026.

The second phase -- population enumeration -- will begin in September 2026 for snow-bound areas and in February 2027 for non-snowbound regions, he said.

Sharma said the exercise will be fully paperless, with enumerators using a dedicated mobile app, while citizens can opt for self-enumeration through a secure multilingual web portal. A Census Management and Monitoring System will enable near real-time tracking of field operations, he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Andrea M Wojnar, Representative for United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) India, said digital and self-enumeration-based census practices are being adopted globally and expressed confidence in India's preparedness.

She stressed that an accurate and inclusive census is essential to ensure no section of society is left out of welfare schemes and policy decisions, calling it fundamental to equitable and evidence-based governance.

CAG: Over ..

The CAG report on conservation and management of lakes in the Union Territory for the year ended March 31, 2024, said there was a decrease in vacant land with or without vegetation from 0.40 to 0.36 square kilometres (0.17 per cent) due to dredging of some acquired land. The decrease in open water area was at the cost of other land use changes.

The CAG said the shifting land use pattern reflects growing pressure on the lake ecosystem, with shrinking open water and expanding human-induced activities altering its ecological balance.

The CAG observed that no concrete measures were taken by the Lakes Conservation and Management Authority (LC&MA) to regulate land use, nor were reasons for such changes adequately analysed.

Audit findings attributed the deterioration to non-acquisition of land from Dal lake dwellers, malfunctioning STPs, failure to arrest pollution inflows, improper de-weeding, and weak monitoring.

As a result, the inflow of nutrients increased, leading to excessive weed growth and further shrinkage of the lake's open water area, the report said, adding that encroachments in areas such as Mir Behri, Lati Mohalla and Nandapura contributed to expansion of floating gardens and habitation.

The audit also flagged serious deficiencies in the implementation of conservation programmes under the National Lake Conservation Programme (NLCP) and the Prime Minister's Reconstruction Programme (PMRP).

"Key activities such as installation and upgradation of STPs, solid waste management, sewer networking, relocation of houseboats and hotels, catchment management, and rehabilitation of Dal dwellers were either delayed or inadequately executed," the report stated.

Despite an expenditure of more than Rs 45 crore on STPs, the audit found that sewage was not treated as per prescribed standards, resulting in continued deterioration of water quality. "Untreated waste from households, houseboats and hotels continued to flow into the lake due to incomplete sewer networks and delays in connecting households and houseboats to treatment systems."

The report further highlighted underutilisation of funds, ranging between Rs 48.63 crore and Rs 280.68 crore during 2017-22, and pointed to delays caused by stalled board meetings, lack of project management consultants, and failure to prepare detailed project reports for pending works.

Efforts to relocate Dal dwellers and houseboats also fell short, with only a fraction of targeted land and structures acquired and no significant dredging carried out on acquired land. Similarly, shifting of hotels and establishment of effective surveillance mechanisms remained incomplete, it added.

The CAG noted that catchment management works were inadequate, with only four out of 15 identified micro-watersheds taken up, also flagging shortcomings in structural and vegetative measures, training programmes and monitoring systems.

Describing the lake as the "liquid heart" of Srinagar, located at an altitude of 1,583 metres, the audit warned that continued delays and inadequate conservation efforts have hindered restoration of its water expanse and ecological health.

The CAG recommended periodic monitoring of water spread, a robust lake management policy, effective functioning of STPs, improved sewage and solid waste treatment, and expedited implementation of key conservation measures.

It also called for public awareness campaigns to curb unauthorised construction and better monitoring of nutrient inflows into the lake.

The audit said unless systemic gaps in planning, execution and monitoring are addressed, restoration of Dal lake's shrinking water body would remain a challenge.

CDS calls ..

service are better attuned to the pace of change in warfare. The CDS said the deliberations examined critical issues, including force design, organisational structures and the adequacy of existing hierarchies in a battlespace that no longer respects domain boundaries.

According to him, discussions also focused on intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), where "the bottleneck is not information, but the speed and quality of its interpretation."

Highlighting the growing role of emerging technologies, General Chauhan said artificial intelligence and data analytics are poised to transform decision-making cycles and operational superiority.

Referring to the classical OODA loop conceptualised by John Boyd, he said, "Whoever completes this particular cycle faster than the adversary will win a combat."

However, he pointed to a paradigm shift driven by predictive technologies.

"Today, because of the predictive nature of AI, you should be able to orient yourself first before you can even observe," he said.

On the evolving nature of warfare, the CDS emphasised that conflict is no longer confined to the physical domain. "All warfare till now has been in the physical domain. Then for us to imagine that warfare will move into a new kind of reality, synthetic in nature and cognitive in nature, is actually difficult to understand," he said.

He argued that warfare must also be viewed at the political level, where outcomes are shaped beyond battlefield victories.

"If you can achieve your political objectives without actually firing, then of course, it's a different kind of reality," he said,

noting the increasing role of information manipulation and influence operations.

General Chauhan introduced the concept of multi-dimensional warfare, expanding beyond traditional domains.

He said that in addition to land, sea and air, new dimensions such as time, cyber, electromagnetic spectrum and cognition are shaping modern conflict.

"We are maybe moving into an era of not only multi-domain, but multi-dimensional warfare," he observed.

He also highlighted the convergence of kinetic and non-kinetic means, manned and unmanned systems, and traditional and emerging domains.

"It's not destruction, it's actually a paralysis of the adversary," he said, explaining that the cumulative effect of such convergence could disrupt and incapacitate adversaries at multiple levels.

The CDS stressed the importance of institutional architecture, including networks, standard operating procedures and shared understanding, in enabling effective multi-domain operations.

He said the seminar had provided valuable insights into the level of jointness among the three services, as well as gaps that need to be addressed.

Referring to the broader implications, he said the security challenges do not respect borders, underlining the importance of collaboration and dialogue among like-minded nations.

Announcing the next edition, General Chauhan said the 2027 'Ran Samvad' will be hosted by the Indian Navy, focusing on "high-intensity operations in a transparent and expanded battle space," with greater participation expected from younger and mid-level officers.

ISI backed ...

real time". The module, busted by the Special Cell of the Delhi Police in a coordinated operation, led to the arrest of 11 accused involved in espionage, arms smuggling and reconnaissance activities.

The accused have been identified as Manpreet Singh, a resident of Tarn Taran in Punjab; Anmol and Sahil of Firozpur in Punjab; Atul Rathee, Rohit and Ajay from Delhi; Gurjeet of Kapurthala; Rimpledeep of Fazilka; Salwinder alias Kalu and Boota Singh of Fazilka in Punjab; and Harpreet of Moga in Punjab.

Investigators said the network was operating under instructions from Pakistan's intelligence agency, with operations on the ground tasked with installing surveillance equipment and relaying sensitive visuals.

The use of solar-powered CCTV cameras ensured uninterrupted surveillance even in remote or low-access areas, making detection difficult and allowing the network to function continuously without relying on conventional power sources.

"The cameras were fitted with SIM cards procured using fake identities and were linked to mobile applications, enabling seamless real-time transmission of footage across the border," Additional Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah said.

The police said the accused had conducted detailed reconnaissance before installing the devices, carefully selecting vantage points that offered clear visibility of Army cantonments, border roads and movement routes of security forces. The footage was then analysed by handlers in Pakistan to map patterns, assess vulnerabilities and potentially plan further activities.

"The intention was not just passive surveillance but strategic monitoring of defence movement patterns over a period of time," the officer said, adding that such inputs could have been used for planning terror strikes or facilitating cross-border operations.

"The crackdown was carried out in two phases. In the first operation, six accused were arrested from Punjab and Delhi, with the recovery of nine CCTV cameras, four pistols, including three foreign-made weapons, and 24 live cartridges. The second phase, based on inputs from military intelligence, led to the arrest of five more operatives actively involved in reconnaissance and data sharing," the Additional CP said.

"One of the key accused, Manpreet Singh from Punjab, was found to be in direct contact with Pakistan-based handlers and played a central role in coordinating communication and facilitating the movement of illegal arms. Others, including field operatives, were responsible for physically installing the cameras and maintaining the network on the ground," the officer said.

The police said the bust has potentially averted a major security threat, as inputs suggest that the module was also exploring plans to target security establishments using explosives and other means. The integration of espionage with arms trafficking and terror planning points to a larger and well-coordinated conspiracy backed by external elements.

Security agencies are now analysing digital evidence, including mobile phones and data retrieved from the CCTV systems, to identify further links, handlers and sleeper cells.

The probe is ongoing, with officials not ruling out more arrests in the coming days.

Sharing the profile of the accused, the officer said that Manpreet Singh has completed BCA. He came in contact with the Pak handlers through an encrypted app.

Anmol, a 10th pass, is engaged in wallpaper pasting work. He installed CCTV cameras at nine locations with the help of his associate Sahil.

Sahil is a 12th pass, engaged in wallpaper pasting work. He assisted Anmol in fixing cameras.

Atul Rathee, with a master's degree in business from New Zealand, received four foreign-made pistols from Manpreet and three country-made pistols from an arms trafficker.

Rohit holds a master's degree in business. He accompanied Atul Rathee to receive arms from Punjab.

Ajay, a graduate, received a country-made pistol from Rohit.

Gurjeet Singh, who has studied up to the 12th standard, established contact with Pak-based handlers through his cousin who was engaged in cross-border narco smuggling. He conducted reconnaissance of Army Cantt and shared photos and videos with the Pak handler.

Rimpledeep Singh, who has studied up to the 12th standard, collected and shared sensitive information, including images and videos of Army and BSF Camps.

Harpreet Singh alias Happy, who completed his education up to 10th standard, acted on the instructions of the Pak handler to facilitate drug trafficking across the international border and planned installations of the solar-powered CCTV cameras.

Salwinder Singh alias Kalu, who has studied up to the 10th standard, is presently working as a DJ operator. He accompanied Rimpledeep Singh in conducting reconnaissance and assisting in sharing photos and videos of the Army and paramilitary installations.

Boota Singh has passed 12th and was involved in cross-border smuggling of narcotics.