

Vande Bharat train completes trial run in J-K

JAMMU BULLETIN NEWS
SRINAGAR, JAN 25:

Years of hard work and dedication, and some engineering marvels later, the dream of Kashmir to be connected by rail finally came to fruition after a specially-designed Vande Bharat Express train arrived in the city on Saturday, completing its trial run. The train, on its maiden trial run, arrived at Srinagar station in the Nowgama area on the city's outskirts from Katra in Jammu. It reached Jammu on Friday.

Slogans and praises for the Indian Railways greeted the orange-and-grey-coloured Vande Bharat train as it reached the station at 11:30 am. A large number of people and rail officials waited since morning, many of them carrying garlands, to welcome those aboard the train. After a brief half at the station, the train moved to Budgam station to complete its trial run.

Northern Railway's Chief Area Manager (Srinagar) Saqib Yousuf said the trial run's completion marked a historic moment. "This is a

historic step. It reflects the vision of our prime minister to connect Kashmir with the rest of the country," he said. Yousuf said the trial was also to ascertain the time the train would take on various sections.

The successful completion of the trial run is a result of the fast-paced hard work over the past 10 years that was put in to complete the line, he added. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to flag off the train from Katra, as the commissioner of railway safety has given the green signal for running the service on the Katra-Baramulla section.

The date for the flag-off ceremony is yet to be announced. The Railways completed 272 kilometres of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project last month. According to rail officials, the Railway Board, on June 8 last year, unveiled a Vande Bharat Express train specially designed to operate in Jammu and Kashmir's challenging winter conditions for

the Katra-Srinagar route. The train incorporates special climate-related features.

Compared to the other 136 Vande Bharat trains running in different parts of the country, this train has several additional features to meet operational challenges and passengers' needs in Jammu and Kashmir's extreme weather conditions. It includes advanced heating systems that prevent the freezing of water in pipes and bio-toilet tanks, provide warm air for the vacuum system and ensure optimal functioning of the air-brake system for smooth operations, even in sub-zero temperatures.

The train also features embedded heating elements in the windshield to automatically defrost the driver's front outlook glass, ensuring clear visibility in harsh winter conditions. Additionally, it features all other amenities of the existing Vande Bharat trains - fully air-conditioned coaches, automatic plug doors and mobile charging sockets, among others. "The train has been provided to run special-

ly through the mountainous terrain of Jammu and Kashmir and made to withstand sub-zero temperatures and snowy conditions," Yousuf said. "It has heating units to withstand sub-zero temperatures, heating pads to avoid the freezing of water in pipes and tanks, and an ambient temperature control system in the driver's cab. All these facilities have been designed to deal with the snowy and cold conditions," he added. The commissioner of railway safety's approval marked a significant step towards completing the USBRL project, which aims at connecting the Kashmir valley to the broader Indian Railways network.

Over the past month, the Indian Railways conducted six trial runs on various sections of the track, including crucial milestones such as the country's first cable-stayed rail bridge -- the Anji Khad bridge -- and the arch bridge over the Chenab river in Kauri. The Anji Khad bridge -- a critical part of the USBRL project -- is an engineering marvel, featuring a single

pylon rising 331 metres above the river bed. The pylon, which took several years to complete, now rises 191 metres above its foundation level.

With a total length of 473.25 metres, the Anji Khad bridge is one of the two highest railway bridges in the world, alongside the Chenab bridge -- which holds the title of the world's highest railway bridge at 359 metres above the river bed, 35 metres taller than the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Sharma Rama Rao, a tourist from Hyderabad, said starting Vande Bharat services to Kashmir was a very good step.

"It should have happened much earlier. It will increase tourist footfall and also lead to higher business," Rao said. People face some difficulties while travelling via road, and the road remains closed sometimes, he said. "That problem will now be over with the train." Another tourist from Hyderabad, Chakrapani, said it would be easy and comfortable to travel from Delhi to Srinagar.

"It is a very good move. It is easy to commute now from Delhi to Srinagar. The economy will be developed by this train. The journey will be entirely different. Vande Bharat is a luxury train, people want to travel comfortably and rail transportation is a very good option," he added. A tourist from Kerala said the train would be very helpful for the tourists and the locals. "It is a very good initiative," she said.

Mudasir Ahmad, a local, said the train would not only provide all-weather and comfortable travel but also give an impetus to tourism and economy in Kashmir. Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha described it as a historic moment and a dream come true. "A historic moment and a dream come true! Trial run of Vande Bharat Express train from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Railway Station, Katra, to Budgam has been successfully completed. Congratulations to Indian Railways officials and the team working on the ground," he said in a post on X.

Leaves of Doctors, paramedics cancelled to deal with mysterious deaths in Rajouri

JAMMU BULLETIN NEWS
RAJOURI, JAN 25:

Authorities have cancelled all leaves of doctors and paramedics in the wake of a medical alert following the deaths of 17 people from Badhaal village in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district due to a mysterious illness. The number of people sent to quarantine has risen to 230. Union minister Dr Jitendra Singh said the initial investigation conducted by the toxicology laboratory in Lucknow concluded that the cause was not any infection, virus or bacteria but a toxin.

Principal of Rajouri Government Medical College (GMC) Hospital, Dr Amarjeet Singh Bhatia, on Friday addressed a press conference in Rajouri and announced that all leaves of doctors and paramedic staff have been cancelled. "The winter vacations have also been cancelled to deal with the medical alert situation after 17 people from three families died under mysterious conditions in the last one-and-a-half months," he said.

He further said the Jammu and Kashmir government has deputed 10 additional medical students to GMC Rajouri to aid the medical setup amid the ongoing health situation. The health condition of three persons undergoing treatment at GMC Hospital in Jammu and PGI Chandigarh is being monitored, officials said. Four people, including three sisters, were shifted to hospitals, with three airlifted to a hospital in Jammu on Wednesday.

More persons, including relatives who had come in contact with the victim families, were sent on Friday to quarantine as a precautionary measure. As a precaution, more individuals, including close relatives of the deceased, have been relocated to the Nursing College quarantine centre in Rajouri, increasing the number to 230, the officials said. Strict security has been put in place at the Nursing College quarantine centre in Rajouri, which has been heavily secured and fenced, they added.

CONTD. FROM P-1...

LG Sinha's address...

Government will focus on increasing MBBS, PG and Nursing seats and will add new tertiary care services and advanced courses for strengthening the health care facilities at tertiary level. Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) screening initiatives shall be further strengthened for early detection and treatment of diseases. 10 districts are expected to be TB free by the end of year 2025.

The Government of India is implementing a Whole of Government Approach to eliminate co-terror networks and drug syndicates, ensuring that future generations are freed from the vicious cycle of drug addiction. For this purpose, the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) and the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan have been implemented. To make J&K NashaMukt, various initiatives are being taken up through monitoring and counselling to combat drug menace which includes Aadhaar-based dispensing systems, enhance surveillance, and ensure strict enforcement to prevent misuse of medicinal preparations in coordination with NGOs & other stakeholders. Drug De-addiction infrastructure has been created in all 20 districts with availability of anti-drug treatment facilities. 377 Panchayats have been made NashaMukt. Drug awareness camps are being organized in villages, schools and colleges. Strict action is being taken against drug peddlers and contraband substances are being seized, FIRs registered and property of peddlers seized.

Recognizing Telemedicine as a solution to geographical challenge, Government aims to integrate Telemedicine services across various medical specialties, enhancing health care access for residents. Government will create a Chief Minister's Medical Trust for providing financial assistance to the needy for terminal diseases.

Under the School Education, the government is promoting collaboration for research and quality education by embracing technology and digitization. Key initiatives include the establishment of smart classrooms, tinkering labs and the integration of digital resources to enhance the learning experience. To improve teaching standards and educational outcomes, there is a strong focus on capacity building for teaching faculty. The "School Complex" System will be implemented across 746 schools, fostering collaboration and better resource sharing.

Under the PM Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) Scheme, 396 schools have been approved for upgradation, aimed at enhancing educational infrastructure across Jammu & Kashmir. 45 Tinkering Labs and 159 STEM Labs are nearing completion. 600 ICT Labs, 2000 Smart Classrooms, and 500 Atal Tinkering Labs are being further set up to enhance the educational ecosystem and promoting innovation.

The government has prioritized the higher education sector to transform Jammu & Kashmir into an educational hub that attracts investment and provides employment opportunities. Key developments include operationalization of IIT, Jammu and IIM, Jammu. Jammu University has been granted A++ status, while the Islamic University of Science and Technology is emerging as a leader in skill development and innovation. Faculty from University of Kashmir have been recognized among the top 2% of global scientists by Stanford University, and institutions like Cluster University of Jammu and Islamic University of Science and Technology have secured patents which have contributed to high-impact research.

67 degree colleges have received NAAC accreditation, and efforts are being made to ensure that all colleges achieve this standard for quality education. Two architecture colleges are under construction in Jammu and Srinagar, enhancing higher education options.

Under the Rashtriya Uchcharat Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), 44 infrastructure projects are underway for degree colleges and universities, and 17 new college buildings are being constructed to accommodate the growing student population. As part of the 'Beti Padhao Beti Bachao' programme, 91 female students underwent a month-long internship at IIM, Rohtak, promoting women's education and empowerment.

Under the Smart City Mission, Jammu & Kashmir has successfully completed 260 projects, focusing on key urban infrastructure like the Lal Chowk redevelopment, Jhelum Riverfront and Polo View High Street. Development of Tawi Riverfront, Ranbir Canal Walkway and Heritage Market Upgrades are also underway.

Intelligent Traffic Management System has been established for better traffic control and road safety, with features like surveillance, e-Bill Pay, e-challans for violations, GIS-based digital door numbering, etc. To promote green transport initiatives, the government has introduced 200 e-buses which are being supplemented with additional 200 e-buses for better eco-friendly public transport facility. E-rickshaws have been also introduced to provide last mile connectivity.

Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) has been established to regulate the real estate sector, and land has been identified for mass housing colonies, including Shahjar Heights and Satellite Township at Rakh Gundaksha. Under PMAY, 27,793 housing units have been completed, with PMAY-II registration underway for EWS/LIG/MIG families.

33 Urban Local Bodies have been made Solid Waste Management friendly whereas Solid Waste Management Centers are being established in 45 Urban Local Bodies. 153 projects have been taken up under AMRUT 2.0 for improving water supply, sewerage, and water body rejuvenation, benefiting 2.24 lakh households. Pollution abatement projects for Dal Lake, River Devika, Tawi, Jhelum, and Banganga are progressing.

2.68 lakh houses have been completed under the Pradhan

Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) Scheme whereas work on 68,000 houses sanctioned is under progress. 1.50 lakh works are likely to be completed this year under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Act (MGN-REGA). 487 deserving landless families have been allotted 5 marlas of land to support their housing needs. Rs 1,300 crore resource envelope has been made available to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) annually.

25 lakh families (about 99 lakh individuals) are being provided ration under NFSA. Under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), free ration is being provided to 16.62 lakh households, encompassing 66.51 lakh beneficiaries. Pensionary benefits (Old Age, Widow, Specially abled) are being provided to 9.09 lakh beneficiaries. About 8.77 lakh individuals (Pregnant Women, Lactating Mothers, Adolescent Girls and 0-6 yrs. old children) are provided supplementary nutrition. Under Ladli Beti, 33,591 girls and under Marriage Assistance 25,900 women have been covered during 2024-25, with mandatory Aadhaar authentication. One Stop Centers have been established in all districts of the Union Territory.

Jammu and Kashmir has pioneered the establishment of 20 Hubs for Empowerment of Women, which serve as vital centers for supporting women's empowerment by offering comprehensive information on a wide range of women-centric schemes. More than 550 disabled persons have secured employment in the government sector due to change in reservation policy and notification of posts suitable for various bench mark disabilities. 357 SC dominated villages have been selected for development under PM Anusuchi Jati Abhyudaya Yojana (PMAJAY) to provide various basic services so that the minimum needs of all the sections of the society are fully met and disparities are reduced to a minimum.

For providing transit accommodation to Kashmiri Migrants employees, 6,000 flats have been sanctioned out of which 2,832 have been completed and 2,016 are at various stages of development. 33,636 displaced persons from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) and Chhamb from the conflicts in 1947 and subsequent years have been provided financial assistance of Rs 1,452 crore. 3541 West Pakistani refugees have been allocated a financial support of Rs. 89 crore.

The prestigious J&K Tribal Research Institute at Khimber, Srinagar, a think tank in the field of socio-economic development, capacity building and research for the welfare of the tribals has been completed. 26 new ST/G&B hostels are at different stages of construction and are expected to be made functional during the year 2025-26. Currently, six Eklavya Model Residential Schools are functional in various districts, with aim to provide quality education to Scheduled Tribe (ST) children in remote areas. Smart Class rooms have been set up in 64 schools and 164 additional smart classrooms are being set up during current financial year.

The Government has provided transport facility to the tribals along with their livestock for their migration from one place to another. Government has approved a project to establish transit accommodations at 8 places which will cater to the needs of trans-human tribal Populations. Government is in the process of recommending 604 new villages under Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA) aims to fill critical gaps in social infrastructure, health, education, and livelihood.

Urban youths are being provided self-employment opportunities under various self-employment programmes which include National Urban Livelihood Mission, National Rural Livelihood Mission besides creation of Self Help Groups and Skill Development/Training under HIMAYAT. Government plans to transform 40,000 Potential Lakhpati Didi's (PLDs) into Lakhpati Didi's which shall promote the livelihood and empowerment of rural women.

Government is working on Mission YUVA, which aims to establish Jammu & Kashmir as a hub of entrepreneurial excellence and employment generation. Designed to address the region's educated unemployment, particularly among youth and women, the initiative envisions creating a dynamic ecosystem for enterprise development. This comprehensive strategy capitalizes on the region's socio-economic potential and cultural heritage, driving a transformative journey towards inclusive prosperity.

The program aims for fostering nano-entrepreneurs, with a special focus on first-generation entrepreneurs, women, and youth from remote areas; establishing new MSMEs in growth and sunrise sectors; scaling existing businesses towards sustainable growth; and promoting innovative startups and knowledge-based enterprises. The initiative seeks to create over 1,37,000 enterprises and generate about 4,25,000 jobs over five years.

The administration has also taken necessary steps for fast-track recruitment in government jobs. In the past four to five years, 40,000 appointments were made based on transparency and merit. The process for compassionate appointments has also been expedited. A total of 10,616 positions have been referred to JKPCS and JKSSB, out of which notifications for 7,376 positions have been issued. Examinations for 6,090 positions have already been conducted. This year, 1,116 cases under SRO-43 have been approved, while 150 cases are under review.

4500 children have been provided free training at 92 Khelo India Centers, who are now shining on national podiums. 15,000 sportspersons represented J&K in National & Zonal level competitions in different disciplines during this year. Special focus has been given to women's participation, with our women athletes winning medals and earning accolades at national and international levels. One of our crowning achievements is the revival of international cricket through the Legends League, hosted in J&K for the first time since 1988,

drawing global attention and massive crowds. Water Sports Academy at Nehru Park in Srinagar and the Fencing Academy at MA Stadium, Jammu have been established. Prestigious Khel Gaon in Nagrota, a multi-sports hub with world-class facilities, will soon be completed.

High-Performance Training Centers shall be developed in every district in phased manner to enhance athlete training and performance. Gymnastics Academy shall be established at the GINDUN Stadium in Rajbagh, Srinagar for providing specialized training to the aspiring gymnasts. After successfully hosting 4th editions of Khelo India Winter Games at Gulmarg, we look forward to host the 5th Edition in February, 2025. The digitization of revenue records and maps is currently in the finalization stage, having achieved 100% scanning of legacy data. The digitization of Jamabandi records stands at 99.84%. As we look to the future, let us pledge to work together for a prosperous Jammu and Kashmir. Our focus remains on sustainable development, fostering innovation, and empowering every citizen to realize their potential. The essence of democracy lies in the participation of its people, and your involvement is vital in shaping a brighter tomorrow.

Seven J&K Police...

of Republic Day, played a key role in averting a possible terror attack on the Amarnath Yatra three years ago, officials said. The Medal for Gallantry recipients also included Humayun Bhat, a deputy superintendent of police who was one of four officers to lay down their lives during an encounter with terrorists in south Kashmir's Kokernag in September 2023.

Bhat had been honoured with the Kirti Chakra for extraordinary bravery on the eve of last year's Independence Day. In addition to the 15 gallantry medals, Anand Jain and Nitish Kumar - two additional directors general of police-rank officers - received the President's Medal for Distinguished Service while 10 other officers were awarded the Medal for Meritorious Service.

During his tenure in Kashmir as inspector general of police, Kumar generated an input that a group of terrorists were planning to carry out an attack on the annual Amarnath Yatra in June 2022, the officials said on Saturday. On June 14, a small police party headed by Rakesh Balwal, the then Srinagar senior superintendent of police, under Kumar's supervision, stopped a vehicle at Bemina on the outskirts of the city, leading to an encounter.

The officials said two hardcore terrorists, including a Pakistani, were eliminated during the operation that was conducted without the assistance of the Army, the Central Reserve Police Force, and intelligence agencies. Kumar, who was later promoted to additional director general of police and recently transferred to the AGMUT (Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territory) cadre's Delhi segment, Balwal and five other police personnel, received the gallantry medal for their bravery.

Kumar, a standout officer whose service record includes a unique combination of expertise in anti-terrorist, anti-Maoist and law-and-order operations within and outside Jammu and Kashmir, has played a significant role in the fight to counter terror threats and maintain peace post the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019. Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha congratulated the officers on their achievement.

"Congratulations to police personnel and officers who have been conferred with the Medal for Gallantry, President's Medal for Distinguished Service and Medal for Meritorious Service on the occasion of Republic Day 2025," Sinha said in a post on X. He also paid tribute to selection-grade fireman Satish Kumar Raina, who was posthumously conferred with the Medal for Gallantry for sacrificing his life while performing his duties during a fire incident in Jammu's Prem Nagar area.

Raina, posted at the Shaheedi Chowk fire station in Jammu city, lost his life during a fire fighting operation in January 2023. The Medal for Gallantry is awarded for a rare conspicuous act of gallantry and a conspicuous act of gallantry, respectively, in saving life and property or in preventing crime or arresting criminals, the risk incurred being estimated with due regard to the obligations and duties of the officer concerned. The President's Medal for Distinguished Service is awarded for a special distinguished record in service and the Medal for Meritorious Service is awarded for valuable service characterised by resource and devotion to duty.

J&K to celebrate...

Vigil has been heightened along the International Border (IB), Line of Control (LoC), and in sensitive hinterland areas of various hilly and border districts in Jammu region," the official said, adding, "Army and BSF are keeping a close watch on IB and LoC to foil any infiltration attempts."

In Kashmir region high level security arrangements are in place to ensure that Republic Day celebrations pass off peacefully. Barricades have been erected at both the gates of Bakshi Stadium in Srinagar, main venue of the Republic Day function in J&K's summer capital, where Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary will take the salute. J&K Policemen and personnel of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) have been deployed in Srinagar city, including the City Centre Lal Chowk, to prevent any untoward incident.

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri has extended an open invitation to the public to attend the Republic Day celebrations in Srinagar. "The Republic Day is the function of people. Entry is free for all. No passes are required. Anyone can come and be a part of the event." Referring to the enthusiasm shown by people during last year's Republic Day function held at Bakshi Stadium in Srinagar, Div Com Bidhuri had said, "Preparations have been made to ensure that spirits of participants remain high."

According to the officials drones and spotters have been

made a part of the elaborate security arrangements put in place across the ten districts in Kashmir. "Proper and secure arrangements have been made for those who want to participate in the function. Surveillance is being maintained to ensure that function passes off peacefully," IGP Kashmir V K Birdi had told reporters.

Meanwhile, four cabinet ministers Javid Ahmad Dar, Sakina Ito, Satish Sharma, and Javed Rana will take the salute at functions in Baramulla, Anantnag, Kathua, and Udhampur districts, respectively, as per an order which was issued by the General Administration Department earlier this week. In the remaining 14 districts of J&K, respective District Development Council (DDC) chairpersons will take the salute at the main functions to be held at the district headquarters.

CS administers oath...

in the electoral process independently without any fear or favour on the basis of religion, race or language. Moreover, 25th January is the foundation day of the Election Commission of India (ECI) which came into existence in 1950 and 2025 marks the 75th year of its existence. This day was first celebrated in 2011 to encourage young voters to take part in the electoral process. The Election Commission's main objective is to increase the enrolment of the voters especially the youngsters who had recently attained eligibility at the age of 18 years or more.

Historic voter turnout...

congratulated the Chief Electoral Officer J&K and his team for the prestigious Best Performing State/UT Award from Election Commission of India. He expressed his deep gratitude to the people of J&K, officials of the National Election Commission and Election department, Police & security forces, officials and all the stakeholders for the fair, transparent and successful conduct of Lok Sabha and J&K Legislative Assembly elections.

"Historic voter turnout in Lok Sabha and Assembly elections reflects strong faith of people of J&K in democratic values and a renewed spirit of civic participation and hope for a new era wherein democracy is taking root more profoundly than ever before, driven by the will of people," the Lieutenant Governor said. Highlighting the valuable contribution of the Election Commission, the Lieutenant Governor said the meticulous planning and constant vigil by the election commission and their officers have ensured that the J&K elections this time have been smooth and streamlined, with no reprints.

All political parties unanimously accepted that this was the most fair, transparent, peaceful and spectacular elections in Jammu Kashmir, he added. "Our cultural ethos focuses on democratic values of freedom, equality and inclusiveness and gives its common citizens an opportunity to live a quality and dignified life. Will of the people in our country is an age-old concept and that's why India is called the 'Mother of Democracy'," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He said the theme for this year's National Voters' Day "Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure" underlines the power of every vote and emphasizes that voting transcends all barriers, reflecting the true spirit of voting rights. "Indian democracy is truly a festive proclamation of cooperation, collaboration, peace and collective strength of the people. India is among the select few countries where democratic ideals are strongest and foremost. I am proud that today many countries in the Global North and Global South are learning from India the ways of conducting fair and transparent elections," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor appreciated the efforts of the Chief Electoral Office for successful summary revision of electoral rolls, after delimitation and preparing the voters list of 89 lakh voters and ensuring that transparent and fair voting took place at all 11,838 polling stations. He said the significant increase in the voter turnout during these elections is testament to the dedicated efforts of the election machinery of the Union Territory.

He further emphasised that awareness campaigns should continue to make all sections of the society aware of the power of their vote. He said the biggest objective of the celebration of National Voters' Day is to motivate the eligible youth to participate in the voting process. The Lieutenant Governor also congratulated Sh. Harvinder Singh, Deputy Commissioner Doda and Ms PD Nitya, SSP Pulwama who have been awarded for best electoral practices. On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor administered the National Voters' Day pledge to the officials and the people.

The Lieutenant Governor felicitated Ms Sara Rizvi, DIG IR Jammu; Sh Minga Sherpa, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla; Sh Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Deputy Commissioner Jammu; Sh Rajesh Kumar Shavan, Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar; Sh Devansh Yadav, Commissioner JMC, Sh Sahil Sarangal, SSP; Sh Randeep Kumar, SSP; Sh Anil Salgotra, Joint CEO and senior officials of Police and other stakeholder departments with the UT-level awards for their contributions in successful conduct of Lok Sabha and J&K Legislative Assembly elections.

The Lieutenant Governor flagged off a mobile vehicle "Democracy on Wheels", which will serve as an innovative tool to educate students about the importance of voting and the election process. He inaugurated Regional EVM warehouse at Jammu and also felicitated the newly registered voters. Enthralling performances by the artists of Natrang, members of NGO Muskaan, Jigar Foundation, School for Blind and college students, highlighting the importance of casting vote, received special appreciation from the Lieutenant Governor.

Rajiv Kumar, Chief Election Commissioner of India congratulated the people on the occasion, through a video message. Sh B R Sharma, Election Commissioner, J&K, Sh Shaheen Kabra Additional Chief Secretary; Sh Chandraker Bharti, Principal Secretary, Home, senior officials, heads of departments and prominent citizens were present.