

Rajnath asks J&K to review cases of child protesters

As part of Centre's bid to reach out to people of the State

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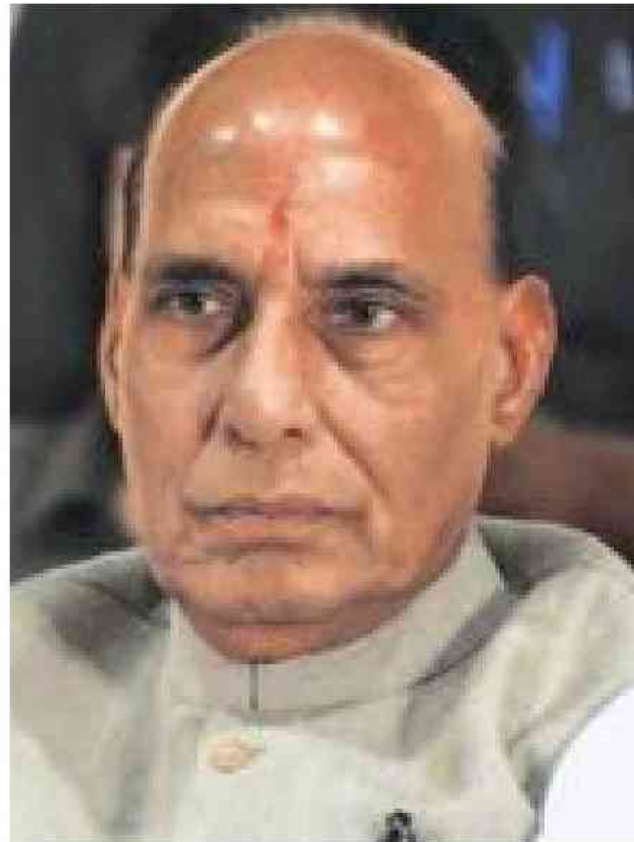
Home Minister Rajnath Singh has asked the Jammu and Kashmir government to move all juveniles, arrested for throwing stones and other unlawful activities, from jails to remand homes and review their cases sympathetically, officials said.

The decision is considered to be an attempt to reach out to the people of the State by the Centre after the appointment of Dineshwar Sharma as Special Representative to initiate talks with all stakeholders.

An olive branch

The key issue was discussed in detail at Wednesday's meeting of the core group on Kashmir, chaired by the Union Home Minister and attended by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, where it was decided to ask the Jammu and Kashmir government to work on the cases of juveniles.

After the core group meeting, the Jammu and Kashmir government had been asked to shift all juveniles, arrested for pelting



Rajnath Singh

stones and other crimes, to remand homes and review their cases sympathetically, a Home Ministry source, privy to the development, said.

The State government is expected to take the initiative to shift the juveniles to remand homes and review their cases soon, the official said.

Top officials of the Ministries of Home and Defence, chiefs of intelligence agencies, besides Mr. Sharma, also attended the meeting.

Mr. Sharma also briefed the group about the first round of talks he had with various sections of society

there last week.

He will again visit the State soon.

Counter-terrorism

Though the Centre has initiated dialogue with all stakeholders as part of its effort to bring lasting peace in Jammu and Kashmir, the anti-militancy operations in the State against violence by Pakistan-based groups is likely to go on.

Director-General of Police of Jammu and Kashmir S.P. Vaid recently said that around 170 militants were gunned down by the security forces in Jammu and Kashmir this year.

Two Army soldiers were killed and a CRPF jawan suffered injuries in an encounter in Pulwama district of the state on November 2.

Three militants were gunned down in Pulwama in an encounter in which an Army jawan was also killed on November 6.

Three militants, including the nephew of Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Maulana Masood Azhar's, were gunned down by security forces in Pulwama district on November 7.