

# Will change fate, face of Kashmir: Rajnath

*Targets Pak for obstructing return of peace in J&K*

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Union home minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday reiterated the Modi government's resolve to find an amicable solution to the Kashmir imbroglio through talks with all stakeholders and assured the people that the Central government is keen to change the destiny of the people of the state by ensuring its development on par with the rest of the country. He also highlighted the need to protect and nurture children of the state misled into stone-pelting by the separatists.

"There is extreme love in the heart of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for Jammu and Kashmir. I assure you, our government will change the *tasveer* (face) and the *taqdeer* (destiny) of the state. I assure you also that we will do all that we can and even do a bit extra to ensure that our brothers and sisters in Jammu and Kashmir progress with the rest of the country," he said while speaking at a sports conclave at Srinagar's



Union home minister Rajnath Singh with J&K CM Mehbooba Mufti wave during a 'Sports Conclave 2018' in Srinagar on Thursday.

— PTI

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— Rajnath Singh, Union home minister

Sher-i-Kashmir Indoor Stadium.

The home minister, who arrived in Srinagar for a two-day visit to review the security situation in the state, recalled how Prime Minister Modi, in his last Independence Day

speech at Red Fort, said, "*Na goli se, na gaali se, Kashmir ki samasya suljhe gi gale lagaane se* (Kashmir problem will not be solved by bullets or abuses but only by embracing the people)".

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# Will change J&K fate

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Mr Singh urged the youth of the Valley not to tread the path of destruction. "I want to appeal to the youth that they should take the path of development. They should not go on the path of destruction."

Reiterating that it was the government's responsibility to provide a secure future to the youth of the state, he said that this can only be achieved with "taleem ki taqat (the power of education) and sports ki karamat (the miracle of sports)."

While lauding the state government for carrying out works for improving the sports infrastructure, he said that funds will not be a problem for promoting sports in the state. "There is no problem of funds... funds will be provided for promotion of water sports at Mansar and Pahalgam. Funds will be arranged for development of sports infrastructure," he assured.

He asked the people of the state to come forward and supplement peace efforts. "Talks can be held with everybody. But talks should be for peace. For talks, you need not to speak to like-minded people but it is important to talk to right-minded people," said Mr Singh.

The home minister said that the Centre appointed former IPS officer Dineshwar Sharma as a special representative last year for this purpose only.

"He has been meeting people and is willing to meet all stakeholders. He has visited the state as many as 11 times," he said.

The home minister also took a dig at Pakistan for obstructing the return of peace and development. "There are some powers which are directly or

indirectly abetting terrorism in the state. Terrorism has no religion. No one knows who will be swallowed by it and when," he cautioned. "I don't know what has happened to our neighbour (Pakistan). We have already said we want to talk to everyone. Our neighbour should stop encouraging terrorism. They say they themselves are suffering from terrorism. The least they can do it to stop it there," he said.

The home minister said that the Centre decided to withdraw cases against first-time offenders in stone pelting last November as it was concerned about their future. "We understand and acknowledge this reality that some children were misled into stone-pelting," he said.

Lashing out at separatists, without naming them, he said that pushing the children of Kashmir to violence and hide the truth from them in order to deceive them is but "criminal".

"There are some powers which are misleading the youth of Kashmir into stone-pelting. Children are children... don't exploit their innocence. How long will you continue to play this game of fire and stones?" asked Mr Singh.

He appealed to the separatist leadership not to spoil the future of Kashmiri youth. "You may play whatever political game you want to play but don't play with the future of Kashmir's children. They are the future of not only J&K but the entire country."

"I make an appeal from core of my heart to you to treat the children of J&K as your own. You ensure your own children should excel in various field including education but give stones in the hands of those of others. Is this justice... is this humanity?" asked Mr Singh.