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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

**A group of 50 school children from J&K meet the Union Home Minister
and MoS Dr. Jitendra Singh**

New Delhi: August 30, 2018

The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh met a group of 50 school children from Jammu and Kashmir under the Youth Exchange Programme “Watan Ko Jano” 2017-18, here today. The children from Kathua district, including seven girls, are on an excursion, organised by the J&K Police, to New Delhi, Agra and Jaipur. The Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh was also present.

Addressing the youth, the Union Home Minister expressed happiness that these children have visited various landmark and historical sites in the National Capital and witnessed the rich cultural and historical heritage of the country. Shri Rajnath Singh said India has a rich culture and religious and ethnic diversity. Rather than choose to be a theocratic state, India has emerged as the world’s largest secular democratic Republic. He said that unity in diversity is the unique value of the country and we will also see the role of unity in the process of development. With this tour, the children will be able to see the development of modern India, he added.

Shri Rajnath Singh urged the children to share their experiences with their friends and relatives when they are back and they should spread the message of peace and spread goodwill when they return to the state. The Home Minister wished the youth a prosperous future.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Jitendra Singh mentioned that the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has mentioned Kathua on two occasions in his monthly “Man ki Baat” radio programme about the remarkable strides made towards development in the district, - first with reference to ‘Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao’ scheme and on the second occasion wrt ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’. Dr Jitendra Singh said Kathua district now boasts of a medical and engineering college and the hill district has also been brought on the rail map. The district will soon have a Seed Processing Plant and a Biotech Park.

Senior officers of the MHA were also present on the occasion.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has been organising the programme “Watan Ko Jano” to give exposure to the youth and children of J&K about the cultural and socioeconomic development taking place in other parts of the country. Youth and children hit by militancy and from weaker sections of the society have been identified for the purpose.

The Government has planned to sponsor around 6,000 children for a tour of various cities across the country under this programme. This is a significant rise against around 1,500 children who went on the Bharat Darshan excursion last year.

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