J&K GOVT OKAYS WITHDRAWAL OF 9730 CASES AGAINST STONE -PELTERS

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JAMMU, Feb 3: Jammu and Kashmir government has approved withdrawal of cases registered against 9,730 people involved in stone-pelting incidents, including first-time offenders, between 2008 and 2017, Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti said today.

The government action to withdraw 1,745 cases is subject to "certain conditions" and is based on recommendations of a committee constituted to look into the matter, Mufti said.

She said her government has also recommended to give amnesty to more than 4,000 people, who are said to be involved in minor incidents of stone pelting over the past two years.

In a written reply to a question in the Assembly, Mufti did not disclose the particulars of first-time offenders due to security considerations for them and their families.

However, she said 3,773 cases were registered in 2016 and 2017, leading to the arrest of 11,290 people, of whom 233 remained untraced.

Seven cases were not admitted and 1,692 were chargesheeted, while 1,841 cases were under investigation, Mufti, who hold the home department portfolio, said.

Intense clashes had rocked Kashmir Valley in 2016 following the death of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani in July that year, resulting in the death of over 85 people.

The chief minister said while 2,904 cases were registered and 8,570 people were arrested in connection with stone- pelting incidents in 2016, the number of such cases in 2017 dropped to 869 in which 2,720 people were arrested.

The highest 2,330 people were arrested in Srinagar followed by 2,046 in Baramulla, 1,385 in Pulwama, 1,123 in Kupwara, 1,118 in Anantnag, 783 in Budgam, 714 in Ganderbal, 694 in Shopian, 548 in Bandipora, 547 in Kulgam and two in Doda districts during 2016 and 2017, she said.

She said 56 government employees and 16 Hurriyat Conference activists were among the 4,949 people found involved in stone-pelting incidents, while 4,074 were not affiliated with any separatist or militant group.

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