

Union home minister Rajnath Singh recently gave a nod to the proposal for 744 vacancies of CRPF

NEW DELHI: The Centre has approved raising of a 'special battalion' of Central Reserve Police Forces that will comprise only tribals, in its bid to bring down Maoist violence in Chhattisgarh.

Union home minister Rajnath Singh recently gave a nod to the proposal for 744 vacancies with relaxation in recruitment in terms of weight and height for tribal men and women, said officials.

Despite a decline of Maoist violence in other states, Chhattisgarh has shown an upward trend where security forces and vital installations have come under constant attacks. A senior home ministry official, however, told ET, "the situation has also improved in Chhattisgarh. The battalion being raised will be permanently stationed for 5 years in Chhattisgarh and will be called "Bastariya battalion" (named after the Bastar district)."

Officials familiar with the plan told ET that CRPF will recruit jawans and officers from four worse Maoist-affected areas, including Narayanpur, Bijapur, Sukhma and Dantewada.

The recruitment drive will be started by CRPF soon through advertisements and is likely to be completed by the yearend, following which the battalion will be trained to handle Maoist affected areas.

Government officials feel that an all-tribal battalion will not only help provide employment to many but may help them generate better local intelligence and aide security agencies to plan operations effectively.

The Centre's roadmap may, however, face stiff resistance from the red brigade who in the past has issued warnings to locals joining CRPF or state police forces.