

## Maharashtra ATS Chief KP Raghuvanshi Removed

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Additional DGP K P Raghuvanshi was today summarily removed as Maharashtra ATS chief, just days after he came under fire from the Centre for giving out 'more than sufficient' information on the arrest of two terror suspects with Pakistan links.

In a top level shake-up in the police department, the 55-year-old Additional Director General of Police has been replaced by Rakesh Maria, Joint Commissioner of Mumbai Police (Crime), who has been promoted as ADG from the post of Special Inspector General (IG).

Raghuvanshi, a 1980-batch IPS officer who became the head of the Anti Terrorism Squad for the second time on June 11 last, has been transferred as ADGP (Law and Order).

"Raghuvanshi has been relieved of the responsibilities of the ATS chief. Joint Police Commissioner Maria will take over the charge as the ATS head," Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Chandra Iyengar told *PTI*.

Iyengar said JCP (Law and Order) Himanshu Roy will be the new JCP (Crime) in place of Maria, while Rajnish Seth, DIG (Prisons), will take over as JCP (Law and Order) on promotion.

Maria (53) met Home Minister R R Patil after the transfers were effected by the state government.

The Union Home Ministry had come down heavily on Raghuvanshi for revealing "more than sufficient" information to the media after the March 13 arrest of two terror suspects, who police said, were plotting to attack ONGC and shopping centres in the metropolis.

The disclosure resulted in a central investigative team losing out on a vital Pakistan link to the terror module, according to the Home Ministry.

Raghuvanshi had revealed the two arrested men were receiving directions from a Pakistani handler, who they referred to as "Chacha" (Uncle), after which the trail to the man, whose calls were being intercepted, went cold.

The Maharashtra government had last week said it would discuss possible action against Raghuvanshi.

Though Chief Minister Ashok Chavan had said the state government had not received any directive regarding shifting Raghuvanshi, he admitted that the Centre was unhappy with the way certain information was given away to the media soon after the arrests.

Raghuvanshi was appointed the ATS chief on June 11 last year after the Bombay High Court pulled up the authorities over the crucial body remaining headless since the killing of Hemant Karkare in terror attacks in Mumbai in November 2008.

A 1980-batch IPS officer, Raghuvanshi was the first to head the ATS when it was formed in 2004 after a brief stint with the CBI.

The Centre was also reportedly not happy with the ATS probe into February 13 Pune German Bakery blast which had left 17 dead with no breakthrough made in the case.

A 1981 batch IPS officer, Maria was a key figure in the Mumbai attack trial. He had also cracked the 1993 serial blasts case.

He had also headed August 25, 2003 Gateway of India and Zaveri Bazaar blasts probe.

Chandra Iyengar sought to dispel the impression that Raghuvanshi was shunted out of the key post of ATS chief.

"Raghuvanshi's new post is the second most senior post in the state. It is a good transfer," she said.

On his part, Raghuvanshi said he was happy at his transfer.

"I am happy. I have been seeking a transfer for a few months now. I am happy that the government has given me an opportunity to serve under departments and take over a challenging position," he added.

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