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Karkare's missing jacket theory a 'cover-up': social activist

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Mumbai, Dec 23 (IANS) A social activist who sought a probe into slain top cop Hemant Karkare's missing bullet-proof jacket Wednesday said he would challenge Mumbai Police's claim that the jacket was mistakenly sent to a garbage dump around Nov 27 last year. His lawyer termed the explanation a "blatant cover-up".

Two months ago, Santosh Daunkar filed a complaint after Karkare's widow Kavita revealed that the jacket was missing. Mazagaon Magistrate R.K. Malabade then ordered the J.J. Marg police to lodge a first information report (FIR) and probe the issue by Dec 8.

Karkare was killed in a gunbattle with terrorists during the 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai.

On Tuesday Dinesh Lalji Gattar, a sweeper working in the government-run Sir J.J. Hospital, told a court that he had mistakenly put the bullet-proof jacket in some non-medical waste bags that were later sent to the Deonar garbage dumping ground.

"This is nothing but a blatant cover-up operation to protect police officers who were involved in the bullet-proof jackets purchase scam. We will challenge the police version before the court," Daunkar's lawyer Y. P. Singh told IANS.

He said it is "incredulous" to even think that the jacket weighing over 8 kg could just have been put into a waste basket and sent to the dumping ground.

"We suspect that there's something more to this and the sweeper may have been 'managed' to give such a statement," said Singh, a former police officer-turned-lawyer.

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The sweeper said in his statement recorded before 23rd Esplanade Court Metropolitan Magistrate A.D. Kshirsagar that on Nov 27, 2008, he saw some bio-medical wastes and a jacket, believed to be the one worn by the slain ATS chief, lying in the operation theatre.

After Gattar's revelations, a police team rushed to the dumping ground to trace out the jacket but returned empty-handed.

Singh said they would challenge this "unbelievable concoction" theory of the missing bullet-proof jacket put forth by the police till the truth is unravelled.



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