

Ashish Bhatia is new state police chief as Shivanand Jha retires

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ASHISH BHATIA, IPS officer of 1985 batch and current police commissioner of Ahmedabad city, has been appointed as the Gujarat Director General of Police (DGP) by a notification order from the state Home department on Friday. Bhatia replaced Shivanand Jha, who has retired from service.

A notification order issued by Sangeeta Singh, additional chief secretary in the Home department of the Gujarat Government, on Friday stated, "Ashish Bhatia IPS (GJ 1985), commissioner of police, Ahmedabad city, is transferred and appointed on the cadre post of Director General and Inspector General of Police, Gujarat state, in the apex scale level 17 in the pay matrix Rs 2,25,000 (fixed) with effect from July 31 vice Shivanand Jha IPS upon demitting of office by him on July 31 (sic)".

Former DGP Shivanand Jha, who was supposed to retire by the end of April this year, was given a three-month extension in the wake of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. He served as the DGP of Gujarat Police from March 1, 2018 to July 31, 2020. Prior to that, Jha had served as the police commissioner for Ahmedabad city.

58-year-old DGP Ashish Bhatia, a native of Haryana, has served various crucial posts in Gujarat Police machinery in the past 20 years. He has received a police medal in 2001 and the President's Police Medal in 2011.

Bhatia was one of the three IPS officers who were part of the special investigative team (SIT) appointed by the Supreme Court on March 26, 2008 to probe nine cases of the Gujarat riots of 2002, as per complaints received by the riot victims. The latter included Zakia Jafri, widow of slain former Congress MP Ahsan Jafri who was killed during the riots. Shivanand Jha was a member of



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the SIT along with Bhatia in the case.

According to sources in Gandhinagar, Bhatia took the charge as DGP on Friday evening even as Shivanand was given a warm farewell by colleagues. The post of Ahmedabad city police commissioner is yet to be given to a police officer.

Under the leadership of Jha, Gujarat Police became the seventh state in the country to receive the President's Colours (or Nishan) on December 15, 2019 as a mark of gallant service rendered by the force.

A day before his retirement, Jha submitted a draft of the new 'Gujarat Police manual 2020' to Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, 45 years after the old manual came into place, thereby making Gujarat the second state in the country after Andhra Pradesh to introduce a new police manual.

Jha, a native of Bihar, had recently issued a gag order for Gujarat Police personnel, restricting them from using social media for any political and social campaigns or agitations in the wake of online campaigns demanding pay hike for constables. In 2019, when Gujarat had witnessed multiple cases of Dalit atrocities and killings in the cities of Ahmedabad, Rajkot and Botad, Jha had ordered the police to complete pending investigations in all cases of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe atrocities and file the chargesheets in a maximum of 60 days.