

Post-Retirement, Controversial Top Cop Rakesh Asthana Lands NHRC 'Monitor' Role

<https://thewire.in/government/rakesh-asthana-narendra-modi-nhrc>

Asthana will oversee thematic areas of NHRC like terrorism, counter-insurgency, communal riots and violence related to left-wing extremism.

New Delhi: Former Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana, a controversial figure in his time, has been picked for a post-retirement assignment by the Union government. Asthana, as a special director of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in 2018, was involved in a feud with the then director of the investigating agency, Alok Verma.

Both Verma and Asthana were accused of bribery and extortion by the CBI. In October 2018, hearing a petition, the Supreme Court had asked Asthana to go on leave. Later, In January 2019, a high powered committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi removed Verma from the director's post. By then, several news reports had

pointed out that Asthana had always landed plush positions in the government because of his proximity with the top brass in the Modi government.

While at the CBI, Asthana had been in the news also because of the investigation into the multi-crore fodder scam in which a strident Modi baiter and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad Yadav was an accused.

In July 2021, the Appointments Committee of Cabinet headed by the Prime Minister, however, picked Asthana, a 1984-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, as Delhi Police chief in 'public interest' four days before he was to retire. His extension led civil society advocacy group Common Cause to petition the Supreme Court. This February, the apex court dismissed the case stating that the matter became infructuous as he had retired from the post in July 2022.

On November 22, the Union government has brought back Asthana as one of the seven 'special monitors' of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

According to a New Indian Express report, Asthana will oversee thematic areas of NHRC like terrorism, counter-insurgency, communal riots and violence related to left-wing extremism.

The six other 'special monitors' named in the November 22 order were IPS officer Mukesh Chandra, Amitabh Agnihotri, Sanjay Aggarwal, R.K. Sama, Manohar Agani and Jyotsna Sitling.

News reports said while Mukesh Chandra will monitor at NHRC the responsibility of monitoring cyber crimes and artificial intelligence, Amitabh Agnihotri will supervise climate change, environment and human rights related issues.

Sanjay Aggarwal has been put in charge of monitoring elementary education. While R.K. Sama will be the 'special monitor' for water, sanitation and hygiene at the Commission, Manohar Agani will oversee public health, healthcare, HIV-AIDS and spurious drugs. Jyotsna Sitling will monitor livelihood, employment and skilling.

Rakesh Asthana, six others made NHRC special monitors

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/thesundaystandard/2023/dec/03/rakesh-asthana-6-others-made-nhrc-special-monitors-2638202.html>

According to the order, Sanjay Aggarwal will monitor elementary education while RK Sama will monitor water, sanitation and hygiene as one of the special monitors with NHRC.

NEW DELHI: Former Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana has got an official hiring post-retirement.

He is appointed as one of the seven 'special monitors' of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). He will oversee thematic areas of NHRC such as terrorism, counter-insurgency, communal riots and violence related to Leftwing extremism as a special monitor.

After a wide consultation, the Modi government appointed seven officials, including Rakesh Asthana by an order passed on November 22.

The order states that Muktesh Chandra, another retired IPS officer, has also been appointed as a special monitor with the responsibility of monitoring cyber crimes & artificial intelligence (AI). Amitabh Agnihotri is also one of the seven special monitors, who will oversee environment, climate change and human rights-related issues.

According to the order, Sanjay Aggarwal will monitor elementary education while RK Sama will monitor water, sanitation and hygiene as one of the special monitors with NHRC.

As per the order, Manohar Agani will be responsible for monitoring the thematic areas concerning public health, healthcare, AIDS and spurious drugs, while Jyotsna Sitling will monitor thematic areas concerning livelihood, skilling and employment.

Asthana is a 1984-batch IPS officer and was appointed in 2021 as Delhi police commissioner till July 31 in 2022. He has been serving as the BSF chief while holding additional charge of Narcotics Bureau earlier. He has served in the state and the Centre, and twice in the CBI. While serving in CBI, he hogged the limelight for investigating a fodder scam in which RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav was accused. Working as special director in CBI, Asthana got into a feud with the CBI's then director Alok Verma. Ashthana was cleared from all charges after a CBI probe.