

Gujarat agri marketing board gets new director after 4 years

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SURAT, NOVEMBER 19

SURAT AGRICULTURE Produce Market Committee (APMC) director Fakruddin Yusuf Shaikh was on Sunday elected the director of the Gujarat State Agricultural Marketing Board (GSAMB), a body that governs the 224 APMCs across the state.

Shaikh was among the 12 others who got a mandate from the BJP to file nomination for the post of director of APMCs.

The GSAMB — with nine members from farmer bodies and three from trader bodies — looks after development works of APMCs and ensures implementation of Union government schemes. It was being run by administrators for the last four years.

The state cooperatives department had on November 1 declared election for the 12 posts of directors of GSAMB, for which nominations were to be filed by November 6. While the last date of withdrawal of nomination was November 9, the election was to be held on November 16.

M S Lokhande, director of Gujarat State Marketing and Agricultural Rural Finance, said: "To be elected as a director of GSAMB, a candidate should be a current director of APMC. We instructed all 224 APMCs across the state to submit names of directors — one each from the farmer bodies and another from trader bodies — who would vote in the election. We received 187 names from APMCs. We also received nominations from 34 candidates."

Sources said that on November 9, 18 candidates from farmer bodies and four from trader bodies had withdrawn their nomination. With this, only 12 candidates remained in the fray. Therefore, on November 16, all the 12 candidates were declared unopposed, said Lokhande.

When contacted, Shaikh said, "I have been a director of Surat APMC for the last 13 years. This is the first time that a Muslim has been elected as one of the directors of GSAMB. My loyalty and attachment to BJP has been fruitful."

"At the next meeting of the GSAMB elected body, the BJP will suggest the name of the GSAMB chairman and all elected directors will have to accept it," he added.