

# Bhupendra Patel BJP's Surprise Pick as Gujarat Chief Minister

**OATH-TAKING TODAY** Patel 'made strong impression at Shah's review meetings with MLAs'

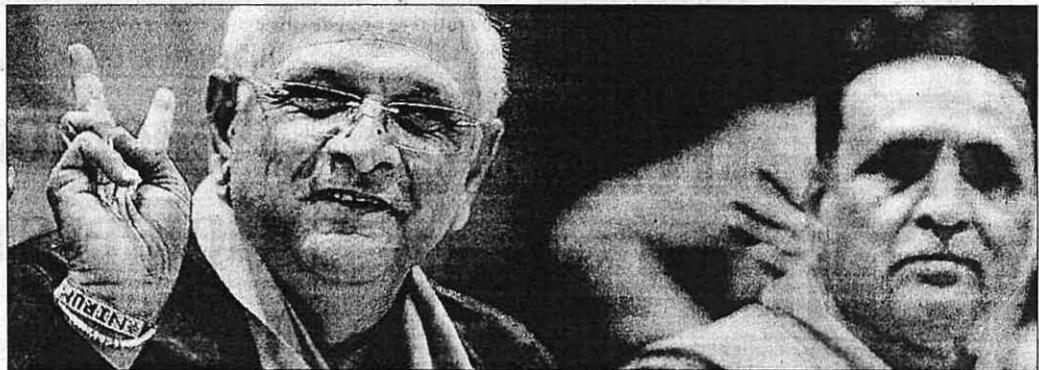
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**Gandhinagar:** Bhupendra Patel, a first-time MLA from Ghatlodia, which falls in Union Home Minister Amit Shah's Gandhinagar parliamentary constituency, is the new Gujarat chief minister and will lead the state BJP to the 2022 assembly elections. He is also the first Kadva Patel chief minister of Gujarat.

While Patel (58) will be sworn in alone on Monday, his cabinet members will be sworn later.

Outgoing chief minister Vijay Rupani proposed his name as his successor at a meeting of the BJP legislators at the BJP headquarters Kamalam on Sunday. The day witnessed a series of high-profile meetings starting with one at Gujarat BJP president CR Patil's residence which was attended by BJP's Gujarat observer Bhupendra Yadav, Central observer Narendra Singh Tomar and senior leaders of the state unit.

This was followed by a meeting of the party's core committee held at Kamalam and finally a meeting of the MLAs where the decision was formalised. Patel expressed his gratitude to the party leaders and said he would work towards the development of the state in tandem with the party. Immediately after this,



**Bhupendra Patel with Vijay Rupani in Gandhinagar on Sunday - PTI**

Patel met the governor with the party leaders to stake his claim as the chief minister.

Known to be a confidant of former chief minister Anandi Patel, whose constituency he inherited, Bhupendra Patel is believed to have made a strong impression at Shah's review meetings with his MLAs. He is expected to play a bridging role in the party's reachout to the agitating Patidars.

Former CM Anandiben Patel, it may be recalled, had to resign in the wake of the Patidar movement, following which Vijay Rupani became CM despite her wishes to install Nitin Patel as her successor. Now, he has had to make way for an emerging Patel leader, who may have started his political career with Anandiben, but

has grown in Shah's leadership.

A diploma holder in civil engineering, Patel is a builder by profession. He won from Ghatlodia constituency in 2017 with a record margin of more than 1.8 lakh votes.

Patel had also been elected as a corporator from the area and rose to become the chairman of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. Later, he was appointed chairman of the Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority before contesting the assembly elections.

However, Patel's work as an MLA in Ghatlodia, which is an important segment of Shah's Lok Sabha constituency, Gandhinagar, is learnt to have caught Shah's attention as he personally monitors developmental projects in his constituency. Soon after his nomina-

tion, Shah congratulated Patel on his twitter handle.

Patel's name was not in the reckoning at all until it was announced. In fact, even Patel looked surprised when his name was announced and admitted before the media that he wasn't aware of the possibility. It may be mentioned here that ET had on Saturday reported that a Patidar candidate is likely to be nominated as the next chief minister.

However, the Patidar names that were doing the rounds included that of deputy chief minister Nitin Patel, Union ministers Parsihottam Rupala, Diu Dadra Nagar Haveli administrator Praful Patel, BJP vice-president Gordhan Zadaphiya. Nowhere was Patel's name highlighted.