

Former chief election commissioner Manohar Singh Gill dies after brief illness

Gill served as chief election commissioner between December 1996 and June 2001, entered Rajya Sabha as Congress member and was made the Union sports minister in 2008



Manohar Singh Gill. PTI file

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Former chief election commissioner Manohar Singh Gill died at a south Delhi hospital on Sunday after a brief illness, according to people close to him.

He was 86.

Gill will be cremated here on Monday, they said.

A former bureaucrat, Gill served under Parkash Singh Badal as a young officer when the Shiromani Akali Dal patriarch was the Punjab chief minister. But no matter where he was or what he achieved, Gill's heart always beat for Punjab, more so for its farmers.

He served as the chief election commissioner (CEC) between December 1996 and June 2001.

Gill and GVG Krishnamurty were made members of the Election Commission when TN Seshan was heading the poll panel. It was then that the poll panel became a multi-member body, a former government functionary said.

He is perhaps the first former CEC to have joined politics. Gill entered the Rajya Sabha as a Congress member and was made the Union sports minister in 2008.

Gill is survived by his wife and three daughters.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge condoled Gill's demise and lauded his contribution to the development of the nation.

"Extremely saddened at the passing away of former Union minister, Padma Vibhushan, Shri Manohar Singh Gill ji," Kharge said in a post on X.

"As a valued colleague in the UPA govt and earlier as a civil servant, his contributions to the development of the nation in varied fields like sports, electoral processes and agriculture were long lasting," he added.

Kharge also extended his "deepest condolences" to the family, friends and followers of the former Union minister.

"I pray to the Almighty for his eternal peace," he added.

Former Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh also expressed his sadness at Gill's passing.

"Saddened to hear about the passing away of former CEC and Union Minister Dr Manohar Singh Gill. My heartfelt condolences are with his family and I pray to Waheguru ji to grant eternal peace to the departed soul," he said in a post on X.