

Bharat Ratna 2024: Who was Chaudhary Charan Singh, tallest farmers' leader?

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Chaudhary Charan Singh served as India's prime minister from July 28, 1979 till January 14, 1980.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday announced that former PM Chaudhary Charan Singh will be conferred with India's highest civilian honour 'Bharat Ratna'. Besides Singh, [ex-PM PV Narasimha Rao and agricultural scientist MS Swaminathan](#) will also be conferred with the top honour.

"We are fortunate to see former prime minister Chaudhary Charan Singh being conferred with the Bharat Ratna. This honour is dedicated to his contribution to the country. He dedicated his entire life for the rights of farmers and their welfare," PM Modi said in an X post.

"He always expedited nation building during his stints as Uttar Pradesh chief minister, Union home minister and even as a legislator. He fought against the Emergency. His dedication towards the farmers and commitment to democracy is an inspiration for all of us," the prime minister added.

Who was Chaudhary Charan Singh?

1. Chaudhary Charan Singh was born in a middle class farmer family in Meerut in 1902. An alumnus of Agra University, Singh trained in law and started practising in Ghaziabad. He shifted to Meerut in 1929.

2. Singh started his political career with the Congress. He was first elected to Uttar Pradesh assembly in 1937 from Chhaprauli, and later got re-elected in 1946, 1952, 1962 and 1967.

3. Chaudhary Charan Singh was appointed as a parliamentary secretary in Govind Ballabh Pant's government in 1946. He worked in several departments before being appointed a cabinet minister for justice and information in 1951.

4. In 1967, he quit the Congress and became the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh for the first time after being elected as the leader of Sanyukta Vidhayak Dal coalition. He became the chief minister for the second time in 1970.

5. In 1979 after the Jana Sangh (BJP's predecessor) pulled out of the 18-month old Morarji Desai-led Janata Party government. Congress (I) decided to extend support to Chaudhary Charan Singh who took oath as prime minister on July 28, 1979. But before he could prove his majority in the Lok Sabha, Indira Gandhi withdrew support to his government and Singh resigned. He continued to remain as caretaker PM till January 14, 1980.