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K. Rajagopal, Chairman and Managing Director of Vijayeswari Textiles, passed away on Sunday morning at his residence here. He was 80.

Mr. Rajagopal was ailing for the last few months, according to a family source. He is survived by his wife Mani Rajagopal, daughter Jayanthi Ramachandra and son R. Gopinath.

Mr. Rajagopal was the Managing Director of Lakshmi Mills for more than four decades till he took over as Chairman and Managing Director of Vijayeswari Textiles.

He was the chairman of the board of Lakshmi Apparels and Wovens, and Director of Seshraj Enterprises and Vijayeswari Exports. He was the chairman of Southern India Mills' Association (SIMA) from 1975 to 1977 and again from 1992 to 1994. He was the chairman of the Indian Cotton Mills' Federation (ICMF) from 1980 to 1982 and was also a committee member of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (1980 to 1982).

Manickam Ramaswami, former chairman of SIMA, said Mr. Rajagopal became the chairman of the association for the second time in 1992 after having been the chairman of the ICMF (now known as the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry). He helped in reinvention of SIMA when it was going through tough times. He inducted several new members and mentored them. It was a time when, "We needed someone who had the courage and conviction to drive change in the industry. In more ways than one he had been an inspiration to SIMA," Mr. Ramaswami said.

According to Vijay Venkataswamy, who has worked directly under Mr. Rajagopal for 16 years at Lakshmi Mills and was also a former chairman of SIMA, Mr. Rajagopal was a man of principles, an able administrator and was simple and compassionate.

He had done his B.S. in Textiles at the Philadelphia College of Textiles and Sciences, USA, and had a strong technical background. He silently took care of and encouraged those who wanted to excel in sports.

Mr. Rajagopal is credited with bringing about many revolutionary changes to golf in India. Persons associated with the Coimbatore Golf Club remember him as a man with immense passion for the sport.

“Golf gave me the energy to do things. I do not wish to hide anything. It taught me great values and helped me take crucial and careful decisions in almost everything I did. But, today I am a bit bothered that I am bed ridden and not able to play a round of golf.

But I am not going to sit quiet, I will try my best to do something for the sport till I breathe my last,” he told *TheHindu* a couple of months ago in an interview. Mr. Rajagopal was instrumental in transforming a huge chunk of barren land at Chettipalayam here into a lush green golf course.

“He brought the game to this part of the world and developed it from the stage of infancy,” Shyam Sunder, former golf captain of the Ooty Gymkhana, said.” It is the greatest loss for the golfing fraternity.

If there was one man who had served for five terms as president of the Indian Golf Union (IGU), the premier body of golf in India, it was Mr. Rajagopal.

He is a great guru for all of us. We are going to greatly miss him,” said Mr. Mohan Nambiar, Golf captain, Ooty Gymkhana.” Mr. Rajagopal was a great human being.

He jelled well with all age groups. Whether it was the young or the old, he always loved to share a word or two. Golf will miss him badly,” said Mr. D. Lakshminaraswamy, vice-president of the Coimbatore Golf Club.

Mr. Rajagopal was a pilot with a private flying licence. He was the president of the Coimbatore Management Association from 1997 to 1980.

The other positions he held were: president of G. Kuppuswamy Naidu Memorial Trust for Education and Medical Relief (1998 to 2004); Trustee of P.S. Govindaswamy Naidu and Sons Charities (1989 to 2004); president of the Coimbatore Golf Club and Managing Trustee of the Coimbatore Golf Club Trust; chairman of the Coimbatore Zoological Park; president of the Indian Golf Union (1997-2001); captain of the Ootacamund Gymkhana Club (1977 to 2002) and president of the club (2002-2004). In 1978 he was the captain of the Addicts Golfing Society of Southern India.