

AIR Spotlight: Padma Awards - 2023

AIR Spotlight is an insightful program featured daily on the All India Radio News on air. In this program, many eminent panellists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in [IAS exam](#) preparation.

This article is about the discussion on: **Padma Awards-2023**.

Participants -

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Padma Awards

The Government of India instituted two civilian awards - Bharat Ratna & Padma Vibhushan in 1954. The latter had three classes namely Pahela Varg, Dusra Varg and Tisra Varg. These were subsequently renamed as Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri vide Presidential Notification issued on January 8, 1955.

- The Padma Awards are one of the highest civilian honours of India announced annually on the eve of Republic Day.
- The Awards are given in three categories -
 1. Padma Vibhushan for exceptional and distinguished service,
 2. Padma Bhushan for distinguished service of higher order and
 3. Padma Shri for distinguished service.

Bharat Ratna

Bharat Ratna is the highest civilian award of the country.

- It is awarded in recognition of exceptional service/performance of the highest order in any field of human endeavour.
- The recommendations for Bharat Ratna are made by the Prime Minister to the President of India.
- The number of Bharat Ratna Awards is restricted to a maximum of three in a particular year.
- Nobody received Bharat Ratna this year - 2023.
- Only 45 Bharat Ratnas have been awarded till date.

All persons without distinction of race, sex, occupation or position are eligible to receive Padma Awards. However, Government servants including those working in PSU, except doctors and scientists, are not eligible for these awards.

The awards are presented by the President of India usually in the month of March/April every year where the awardees are presented a Sanad (certificate) signed by the President and a medallion.

The total number of awards to be given in a year (excluding posthumous awards and to NRI/foreigners/OCIs) should not be more than 120.

The award seeks to recognize achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved. The list of fields include-

- Art - music, sculpture, painting, photography etc.
- Public Affairs - politics, Law, Public life etc.
- Social Work - Charitable service, Social Service etc.
- Trade and Industry - Banking, Management, Economic Activities, Business etc.
- Science & Engineering - Nuclear Science, Space Engineering, Information Technology, Research & Development in Science and its allied subjects etc.
- Medicine - Medical Research in Allopathy, Homeopathy, Naturopathy, Ayurveda etc.
- Civil Service - Excellence in administration etc.
- Sports - Popular Sports, Mountaineering, Promotion of Sports, Yoga etc.
- Literature and Education - Journalism, Literature, Poetry, Promotion of Education, Reforms in Education etc.
- Others - fields not covered above like Protection of human Rights, Conservation of Wildlife etc.

Padma Awards Committee

The Padma Awards Committee is constituted by the Prime Minister every year. All the nominations received for the Padma Awards are placed before the Padma Awards Committee.

- The committee is headed by the Cabinet Secretary and includes Home Secretary, Secretary to the President and four to six eminent persons as its members. The recommendations of the committee are submitted to the Prime Minister and the President for approval.
- Every recipient receives a call from the Home Ministry informing him/her about the selection. In case, the recipient expresses his/her desire to be excluded from the award list, the name is removed.
- Any citizen of India can nominate a potential recipient. One can even nominate one's own self. All nominations are to be done online where a form is to be filled along with details of the person.

Padma Awards 2023

The President has approved conferment of 106 Padma Awards including three duo cases (in a duo case, the award is counted as one) for the year 2023.

- The list comprises 6 Padma Vibhushan, 9 Padma Bhushan and 91 Padma Shri Awards. 19 of the awardees are women and the list also includes 2 persons from the category of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI and 7 Posthumous awardees.
- Among the awardees include medical professional Dilip Mahalanabis who promoted world wide use of ORS (Oral Rehydration Solution). Mahalanabis from West Bengal will be posthumously awarded Padma Vibhushan - the country's second highest civilian award.
- Ratan Chandra Kar, retired govt. doctor from Andaman, who is working with the Jarawa tribe in the Nicobar islands, Siddi tribal social worker from Gujarat Hirabai Lobi, war veteran Munishwar Chander Dawar who has been treating under- privileged people in Madhya Pradesh have been selected for Padma Shri.
- Among those selected for Padma Shri also include 'Kannur ke Gandhi' , V.P. Appukkuttan Poduval- a 99 year old freedom fighter who participated in the Quit India movement, 98 year old self-sustained small organic farmer from Sikkim Tula Ram Upreti.
- Expert snake-catchers from the Irula tribe in Tamil Nadu, Vadivel Gopal, and Masi Sadaiyan, were selected for the Padma Shri – the country's fourth-highest civilian award – on the occasion of the Republic Day 2023. The duo, despite their lack of formal education, travel across the globe for catching snakes as well as to teach snake catchers.

Conclusion - From the past few years, more people from remote areas are being conferred with Padma Awards recognising their contribution towards their society in particular and towards the country in general. The reforms in the nomination system and expanding the number of fields is the need to bring more people under the realm of Padma Awards to recognise their contribution and at the same time inspire others.