

List of Important Awards & Honours, Their Fields And First Awardees

India has a rich tradition of recognising and honouring individuals who have made significant contributions in various fields. These awards and honours celebrate excellence, achievements, and contributions to the nation's development. Awards and honours, along with their respective fields, have become an essential part of various government competitive exams conducted today, like Railways, SSC, UPSC and more.

Knowing these prestigious awards is crucial for those preparing for competitive exams in India. Recognising the achievements of individuals across different fields, this topic holds great significance as a part of Static General Knowledge (GK).

In this article, we present a comprehensive list of important awards and honours in India, along with their fields and the first awardees.

Comprehensive List of All Important Awards

Countless individuals around the world have showcased their exceptional talents, unwavering determination, courage and expertise in various fields such as science, literature, art, sports, and social work. In recognition of their remarkable contributions, governments and organisations have established numerous prestigious awards and honours. From the renowned Nobel Prize to the esteemed Academy Awards and from the prestigious Pulitzer Prize to the revered Padma Awards, this compilation features a list of distinguished accolades and their respective fields. These awards celebrate and acknowledge the extraordinary achievements of individuals and organisations, highlighting their significant impact in their respective domains.

Here is a list of important awards and honours in India, along with their respective fields and the first awardees:

List of Awards, Fields and First Awardee			
S. No.	Name Of Award & Honour	Respective Field	First Awardee
1.	Bharat Ratna	Exceptional service or performance of the highest order in any field of human endeavour. It is the highest civilian award in India, instituted in 1954.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• C. Rajagopalachari,• Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and• C.V. Raman
2	Padma Vibhushan	Distinguished service of exceptional order in various fields. It is the second-highest civilian award in India	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Satyendra Nath Bose,• Nand Lal Bose,• Zakir Husain, and

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balasaheb Gangadhar Kher
3	Padma Bhushan	Distinguished service in various fields. It is the third-highest civilian award in India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homi Jehangir Bhabha Shanti Swaroop Bhatnagar Mahadeva Iyer Ganapati Jnan Chandra Ghosh Radha Krishan Gupta
4	Padma Shri	Distinguished service in various fields. It is the fourth-highest civilian award in India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asha Devi Aryanayakam Bir Bhan Bhatia Perin Captain K. R. Chakravorty Amalprava Das
5	Param Vir Chakra	Acts of valour during wartime. Instituted in 1947.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Somnath Sharma and Lieutenant Karam Singh
6	Ashoka Chakra	Acts of valour and courageous action. It is the highest peacetime gallantry award in India. It was instituted in 1952.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Havildar Bachittar Singh and Naik Narbahadur Thapa
7	Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna	Exceptional performance in sports. It was instituted in 1992.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Viswanathan Anand
8	Man Booker Prize	It is a literary award which recognises the best works of fiction written in English and published in the UK.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PH Newby
9	Gandhi Peace Prize	Contributions towards peace and harmony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Julius Nyerere (1995)
10	Right Livelihood	It honour and support individuals and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hassan Fathy

	Award	organisations working for social justice, environmental sustainability, and peace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stephen Gaskin
11	Pulitzer Prize	It highlights achievements in journalism, literature, and music.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jean Jules Jusserand Gobind Behari Lal (First Indian)
12	UNESCO Peace Prize	To promoting peace, tolerance and non-violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nelson Mandela
13	Oscar Awards	For exceptional accomplishments in the film industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emil Jannings Janet Gaynor
14	Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding	For outstanding contributions to international understanding and goodwill among the people of the world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> U Thant
15	Magsaysay Awards	For a demonstration of integrity, courageous service to the people and pragmatic idealism in various fields in Asia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vinoba Bhave Mary Rutnam Jose Vasquez Aguilar Robert McCulloch Dick Mochtar Lubis
16	Nobel Prize	For groundbreaking achievements in the fields of Physics, Chemistry, Medicine, Peace, Literature, and Economics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen: Physics Jacobus H. van 't Hoff: Chemistry Emil von Behring: Medicine Sully Prudhomme: Literature Henry Dunant: Peace
17	Dadasaheb Phalke Award	For outstanding contribution to the growth and development of the Indian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devika Rani (1969)

		cinema. This award was initiated in 1969.	
18	Sahitya Akademi Awards	Outstanding works in various Indian languages (any of the 22 languages including English literature). It was instituted in 1955	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kuppali Venkatappa Puttappa (Kuvempu), Gopinath Mohanty, and Uma Shankar Joshi (1955)
19	Jnanpith Award	Outstanding contribution to Indian literature (22 languages). The award acknowledges excellence, innovation, and the exploration of profound ideas and themes in literary works.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G. Sankara Kurup (1965)
20	Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Awards	Given to Indian scientists for their exceptional performance. It was established in 1958.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Jnan Chandra Ghosh: Chemical Sciences
21	Sangeet Natak Akademi Award	<p>Sangeet Natak Akademi Award is given for performing arts in India</p> <p>This award was instituted in 1951</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alauddin Khan in Music for Hindustani Sarod, Mushtaq Hussain Khan in Music for Hindustani Vocal, Karaiyadi Sambasiva Iyer in Music for Carnatic Veena Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar for Music in Carnatic Vocal
22	Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award	Award is given for excellence in academics/ public administration or management. It was initiated in 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prof. C.K. Prahalad
23	Abel Prize	Abel prize is given for outstanding scientific work in the field of Mathematics. This award was instituted in the year 2002.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jean-Pierre Serre (2003) Professor Srinivasa SR Varadhan (2007): First Indian awardee
24	Grammy Award	Grammy Award is given for outstanding achievement in the music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nel Blu Dipinto Di Blu (Volare): 'Record of the

		<p>industry</p> <p>This award and honour was initiated in 1959</p>	<p>Year'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Music from Peter Gunn: 'Album of the Year' was Nel Blu Dipinto Di Blu (Volare): 'Song of the Year'
25	Pritzker Architecture Prize	<p>Pritzker Architecture is awarded in the field of Architecture</p> <p>This award started in the year 1979.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Philip Johnson
26	Moorti Devi Award	<p>Moorti Devi Award is given in the field of literature. It was instituted in the year 1983.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C.K. Nagaraja Rao
27	Dronacharya Awards	<p>Dronacharya Award is given to outstanding coaches in sports and games. It was instituted in 1985. Given by the Sports Ministry, Government of India to sports coaches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bhalchandra Bhaskar Bhagwat O.M. Nambiar Om Prakash Bhardwaj
28	Arjuna Award	<p>Outstanding achievements in sports. Instituted in 1961</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gurbachan Singh Randhawa, Karnam Malleswari, and Khashaba Dadasaheb Jadhav (1961)
29	Dhyan Chand Award	<p>Dhyan Chand Award is given for sports and games. It was initiated in 2002.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ashoka Diwan, Shahuraj Birajdar, and Aparna Ghosh
30	Dhanvantri Award	<p>These awards are given for extraordinary performance in the medical sciences.</p>	-
31	World Food Prize	<p>It recognises individuals who have made exceptional contributions to improving the quality, quantity, or availability of food worldwide. It was established in 1986 by Norman Borlaug, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate. It is presented by Food and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. M.S. Swaminathan in 1987 for Green revolution

		Agriculture Organization (FAO)	
32	Vyas Samman	To recognise outstanding contributions to Hindi literature. The award was established in 1991. It is presented annually by the K.K. Birla Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ram Vilas Sharma
33	Saraswati Samman	To recognise outstanding literary works in any Indian language, including English. The award was established in 1991.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harivansh Rai Bachchan
34	Indira Gandhi Award For International Peace, Disarmament and Development	Presented by Indira Gandhi Memorial Fund in India for specialised contribution in the field of international disarmament and development. It was established in 1984.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parliamentarians for Global Action

Important Awards & Honours: In Detail

All the listed awards will now be discussed in detail, to help aspirants have comprehensive knowledge about all these awards.

Bharat Ratna

Bharat Ratna is the highest civilian award in India, bestowed upon individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the advancement of Art, Literature, Science and for their outstanding public service.

- It is a symbol of national pride and honour, representing the highest recognition given by the Government of India to its citizens.
- Instituted in 1954, the Bharat Ratna is presented by the President of India.
- This prestigious award recognises individuals who have achieved rare and extraordinary accomplishments in their respective fields, leaving an indelible impact on the nation.
- It serves as a tribute to their unwavering dedication, talent, and significant contributions towards the progress and development of India.

The list of notable recipients of the Bharat Ratna is illustrious and includes eminent personalities such as Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Mother Teresa, Rajiv Gandhi, Lata Mangeshkar, Sachin Tendulkar, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and Pranab Mukherjee, among others. These exceptional individuals have left an indelible mark on society and have become role models for generations to come.

The Bharat Ratna is not only a recognition of individual excellence but also a celebration of the diverse and rich cultural heritage of India. It represents the highest ideals and values of the nation, honouring those who have made extraordinary contributions in various spheres of life. The award serves as a

testament to their exemplary achievements, inspiring the citizens of India to strive for greatness and contribute to the betterment of society.

Padma Awards

The Padma Awards are among the highest civilian honours bestowed by the Indian government to **recognise individuals who have made exceptional contributions in various fields** such as arts, literature, science, sports, social work and more. **Instituted in 1954**, these awards are announced **annually** on India's Republic Day. The Padma Awards consist of three categories: Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri. Each of these awards is highly regarded within India's honour system.

- **Padma Vibhushan:**

- Padma Vibhushan holds the distinction of being the second-highest civilian award in India.
- It was established in 1954 and is conferred upon individuals who have rendered distinguished services in any field, including government service.
- Notable personalities such as Zakir Husain, V.K Krishna Menon, Satyendra Nath Bose, Balasaheb Gangadhar Kher, Nandalal Bose, and Jigme Dorji Wangchuck were among the first recipients of this award.

- **Padma Bhushan:**

- Padma Bhushan, instituted in 1954, is presented for distinguished service of a high order.
- The first person to receive the Padma Bhushan was Homi Jehangir Bhabha, a renowned scientist.

- **Padma Shri:**

- Padma Shri is bestowed for distinguished service in various fields, including arts, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, and sports.
- It recognises individuals who have made significant contributions in their respective domains.

Difference Between Padma Awards

Aspect	Padma Vibhushan	Padma Bhushan	Padma Shri
Recognition and Ranking	Second-highest civilian award in India, after Bharat Ratna	Third-highest civilian award in India	Fourth-highest civilian award in India
Field of Achievement	Arts, literature, sports, social service, and more	Arts, literature, sports, social service, and more	Arts, literature, sports, social service, and more

Design of the Award	Bronze medallion with lotus and between the words 'Padma Vibhushan' written in Devanagari and the Indian emblem on the back.	Gold-coloured medallion with lotus on the front between the words 'Padma Bhushan' written in Devanagari script and the Indian emblem on the back.	Bronze medallion with lotus and between the words 'Padma Shri' written in Devanagari script and the Indian emblem on the back.
Inclusion and Exclusion	Given without regard to ethnicity, occupation, status, or gender	Excludes individuals working in PSUs, except doctors and scientists	Given without regard to ethnicity, occupation, status, or gender

Gallantry Awards

Gallantry awards are a special category of honours presented to members of the military and police forces in recognition of their exceptional acts of bravery and valour while performing their duties. These awards serve as a way to acknowledge and commend the extraordinary courage and selflessness demonstrated by the recipients in challenging and perilous situations. In India, gallantry awards are divided into two types:

- Awarded during times of peace
- Given during times of war

During times of peace, the following gallantry awards are given:

- **Ashok Chakra:** It is the highest peace-time gallantry award, bestowed upon individuals for acts of conspicuous bravery and valour in non-war situations.
- **Kirti Chakra:** Equivalent to the wartime Mahavir Chakra, the Kirti Chakra is the second-highest peacetime gallantry award, honouring acts of exceptional courage and bravery.
- **Shaurya Chakra:** The Shaurya Chakra is a peacetime gallantry award, recognising courageous actions or acts of self-sacrifice that do not occur in direct combat against the enemy.

During times of war, the following gallantry awards are bestowed:

- **Param Vir Chakra:** This is the highest award for bravery in India, conferred for extraordinary acts of valour during wartime.
- **Mahavir Chakra:** It is the second-highest gallantry award, presented for acts of exceptional courage and gallantry in the face of the enemy.
- **Vir Chakra:** This is the third-highest gallantry award, recognising acts of bravery and valour exhibited by individuals during wartime.

These gallantry awards in India highlight and pay tribute to the extraordinary courage and sacrifice displayed by military and police personnel in safeguarding the nation and its citizens.

Difference Between Gallantry Awards awarded during war time:

	Param Vir Chakra	Mahavir Chakra	Vir Chakra
Award Type	Highest military honour in India	Second-highest military decoration in India	Third-highest military decoration in India
Criteria	Exceptional bravery or self-sacrifice in wartime	Conspicuous gallantry in the presence of the enemy, whether on land, at sea, or in the air,	Acts of gallantry in the presence of the enemy. whether on land, at sea, or in the air,
Medal Description	Bronze medal with Indra's Vajra and State Emblem in the centre.	Standard silver medal with a five-pointed star and the points of the star just touching the rim.	Circular silver medal with a five-pointed star with the chakra in the centre, and, on this, the domed gilded state emblem.
Reverse Embossing	'Param Vir Chakra' in Hindi and English	'Maha Vir Chakra' in Hindi and English	'Vir Chakra' in Hindi and English
Ribbon	Plain purple	Half dark blue and half orange-saffron	16 mm dark blue and 16 mm saffron
Compensation (Monthly)	Rs 3,000 for recipients or families of posthumous recipients	Rs 2,400 for recipients or their next of kin, with additional amounts for each bar	Rs 1,700 for recipients or their families if awarded posthumously, with additional amounts for each bar
First Awardee	Major Somnath Sharma was the first recipient of the Param Vir Chakra. He was posthumously awarded the honour for his exceptional courage and leadership during the Battle of Badgam in the Kashmir operations in 1947.	Lieutenant Colonel Ardeshir Burzorji Tarapore was the first recipient of the Mahavir Chakra. He was awarded for his bravery and leadership during the Battle of Chawinda in the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965.	Major Dhan Singh Thapa was the first recipient of the Vir Chakra. He was awarded for his gallantry and outstanding leadership during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1947-48.

Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna

- The Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna is India's highest sports honour.
- It recognises outstanding athletes for their exceptional achievements and contributions to sports.

- The award is named after former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.
- It was instituted in 1992.
- The award is presented annually by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- Eligibility requires consistent performance at the international level and bringing recognition to the country.
- A committee of sports personalities and administrators evaluates athletes' performances and recommends deserving recipients.
- The award highlights commendable displays by players in their respective sports.
- The first recipient of the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award was Viswanathan Anand, the renowned Indian chess Grandmaster. He was honoured with the award in 1991-1992 for his exceptional achievements and contributions to the sport of chess.

Man Booker Prize

- The Man Booker Prize is a highly prestigious literary award.
- It was established in 1969.
- The award recognises the best works of fiction written in English and published in the UK.
- Initially open to writers from Commonwealth countries, Ireland and Zimbabwe.
- Expanded in 2014 to include novels written in English and published in the UK.
- The prize is named after its former sponsor, the Man Group.
- The Man Group ended its sponsorship in 2019.
- The winning author receives a cash prize and gains global recognition.
- It was called The Booker Prize from 1969 to 2001. **PH Newby** was the first winner of the prize in 1969 for '*Something to Answer For*'.

UNESCO Human Rights Award

- The UNESCO Human Rights Award, also known as the UNESCO/Bilbao Prize for the Promotion of a Culture of Human Rights, recognises contributions to the promotion and protection of human rights.
- It was established in 1968 and has been presented to over 30 laureates.
- The award ceremony takes place annually on December 10th, which is the International Day for Human Rights.
- The award is given every two years, alternating with another year.
- It honours individuals, organisations, institutions and other entities for their significant contributions to human rights awareness.

Mahatma Gandhi Peace Prize

- The Mahatma Gandhi Peace Prize is an annual award presented by the Government of India.
- The Government of India launched the International Gandhi Peace Prize in 1995 on the occasion of the 125th birth anniversary of Mohandas Gandhi.
- It recognises individuals and organizations that have significantly contributed to promoting peace, non-violence and Gandhian values.
- The award includes a cash prize of Rs. 1 crore, a citation and a plaque.
- The Mahatma Gandhi Peace Prize is highly regarded internationally as a prestigious peace award.
- Recipients of the award have included notable figures like Nelson Mandela and institutions such as the Ramakrishna Mission.
- The award was instituted in 1995 by the Government of India.
- It is considered an equivalent to the Nobel Prize in the field of international peace.
- The first recipient of the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Prize was the late Julius Nyerere, the former President of Tanzania.

Right Livelihood Award

The Right Livelihood Award is considered an alternative to the traditional Nobel Prizes, emphasizing values and actions aligned with sustainable development and positive social change.

- The Right Livelihood Award, also known as the "**Alternative Nobel Prize**," was established in 1980.
- It was founded by the Right Livelihood Society in London.
- The award aims to honour and support individuals and organisations working for social justice, environmental sustainability, and peace.
- It recognises efforts in addressing global issues such as human rights abuses, environmental degradation and poverty.
- The award is presented annually to four recipients from different parts of the world.
- Its focus areas include promoting environmental conservation and advancing social justice.
- The award carries significant recognition and support for the recipients' work.

Pulitzer Prize

- Pulitzer Prize is a prestigious award in journalism and literary arts.
- It is administered by Columbia University.
- Established in 1917, it is named after Joseph Pulitzer, a US publisher.

- The prize is awarded annually in the United States.
- Recognises achievements in journalism, literature, and music.
- Notable recipients include Ernest Hemingway, Harper Lee, and Bob Dylan.
- The **first Indian to win Pulitzer Prize was Gobind Behari Lal**, a part of the Indian freedom struggle.

UNESCO Peace Prize

- The UNESCO Peace Prize, established in 1989, is an international award presented by UNESCO.
- It recognises individuals, organisations or institutions that have made significant contributions to promoting peace, tolerance and non-violence.
- The prize includes a sum of money, a peace diploma and a medal.
- It is also known as the **Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize**.
- The prize is presented by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- It honours extraordinary contributions to international peace.
- The first awardee of the UNESCO Peace Prize was **Nelson Mandela**. He received the inaugural prize in 1991 in recognition of his remarkable efforts to promote peace, reconciliation, and democracy in South Africa.

Oscar Awards

The Oscar Awards, also known as the Academy Awards, is an esteemed annual ceremony that celebrates exceptional accomplishments in the film industry. It is considered one of the most highly regarded events in the entertainment world, attracting a global audience.

- Established in 1929, the Oscars are presented each year.
- The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in the United States bestows the awards.
- **Bhanu Athaiya became the first Indian** to receive an Oscar for her work on the film 'Gandhi'.
- In 1992, **Satyajit Ray** was honoured with an Oscar for his lifetime achievements in cinema.
- The winners of the first Academy Awards were:
 - **Emil Jannings**: He received the award for Best Actor for his performances in the films "The Last Command" and "The Way of All Flesh."
 - **Janet Gaynor**: She was awarded the first-ever Best Actress for her roles in the films "Seventh Heaven," "Street Angel," and "Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans."

Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding

The Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding was instituted by the Government of India in 1965.

- It recognises outstanding contributions to international understanding and goodwill among the people of the world.
- It is open to individuals, institutions, and organisations from all countries.
- The award honours the values and ideals embodied by Jawaharlal Nehru.
- Considered one of India's most prestigious awards in the field of international relations.
- The first awardee of the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding was **U Thant**, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Magsaysay Awards

- The Magsaysay Awards, established in 1957, are named after Ramon Magsaysay, the former President of the Philippines.
- The awards are presented annually on August 31st.
- The Magsaysay Awards recognise individuals and organisations in Asia who demonstrate integrity, courageous service to the people, and pragmatic idealism, reflecting the ideals of Ramon Magsaysay.
- The awards are given for outstanding contributions in various fields, including public service, community leadership, journalism, literature and creative arts, and international understanding.
- Often referred to as the "**Nobel Prize of Asia**," the Magsaysay Awards hold great prestige in the region.
- Human rights activist Vinoba Bhave was among the first five individuals to receive the Ramon Magsaysay Award in its year of inception in 1958.

Nobel Prize

The Nobel Prize is widely regarded as the most prestigious international award in the world. It was instituted by Alfred Bernard Nobel, the inventor of dynamite, and is presented on December 10th, the anniversary of Nobel's death.

- The Nobel Prize is an esteemed international award presented annually to individuals who have made groundbreaking achievements in the fields of Physics, Chemistry, Medicine, Peace, Literature, and Economics.
- It has been awarded since 1901, with the exception of the Economics category, which was established in 1967 and first awarded in 1969.
- Several distinguished individuals from India have received Nobel Prizes in various fields.

Year	Field	Name
1913	Literature	Rabindranath Tagore
1930	Physics	C.V. Raman
1979	Peace	Mother Teresa
1998	Economic Studies	Amartya Sen
2014	Peace	Kailash Satyarthi