

Padma awards and recipient's consent

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In news- Recently, former West Bengal CM Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee refused to accept the Padma award.

About Padma Awards-

- The Padma awards are the **highest civilian honour of India after the Bharat Ratna.**
- They are **announced every year on the eve of Republic Day.**
- **The awards are given in three categories:**
 1. **Padma Vibhushan** (for exceptional and distinguished service).
 2. **Padma Bhushan** (distinguished service of higher order) and
 3. **Padma Shri** (distinguished service).
- **The award seeks to recognise achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved.**
- **The awards are given in certain select categories which include Art, Social Work, Public Affairs, Science & Engineering, Trade & Industry, Medicine, Literature & Education, Civil Service and Sports.**
- Awards are also given for propagation of Indian culture, protection of human rights, wildlife protection among others.
- The PADMA Awards were **instituted in 1954 along with Bharat Ratna.**
- **At that time only Padma Vibhushan existed with three sub-categories – 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.

- During the years 1978 and 1979 and 1993 to 1997, Padma awards were not announced.
- **The awardees do not get any cash reward but a certificate signed by the President** apart from a medallion which they can wear at public and government functions.
- **The awards are, however, not a conferment of title** and the awardees are expected to **not use them as prefix or suffix to their names.**
- A Padma awardee can be given a higher award only after five years of the conferment of the earlier award.
- **Not more than 120 awards can be given in a year** but this does not include posthumous awards or awards given to NRIs and foreigners.
- The award is normally not conferred posthumously. However, in highly deserving cases, the Government could consider giving such an award.
- **All persons without distinction of race, occupation, position or sex are eligible for these awards.** However, government servants including those working with PSUs, except doctors and scientists, are not eligible.
- According to Padma awards selection criteria, the award is given for “special services” and not just for “long service”. It should not be merely excellence in a particular field, but the criteria has to be ‘excellence plus’.
- **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 or the organization being nominated.
- An 800-word essay detailing the work done by the potential awardee is also to be submitted for the nomination to be considered.
- **All nominations received for Padma awards are placed**

before the Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted by the Prime Minister every year.

- The Padma Awards Committee is **headed by the Cabinet Secretary** and includes Home Secretary, Secretary to the President and four to six eminent persons as members.
- The recommendations of the committee are submitted to the Prime Minister and the President of India for approval.

Recipient's consent for the award-

- **There is no provision for seeking a written or formal consent of the recipient before announcement of the award.**
- However, before the announcement, **every recipient receives a call from the Ministry of Home Affairs informing him or her about the selection.**
- In case the recipient expresses a desire to be excluded from the award list, the name is removed.
- In the case of Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said that a call was made to his residence informing about the conferment of the award.