

What is Bharat Ratna?

The Bharat Ratna is India's top civilian honor. Started on January 2, 1954, it rewards outstanding service or achievement in any area, regardless of a person's race, job, status, or gender. Initially, it was given for contributions in arts, literature, science, and public service. However, in December 2011, the Indian government broadened the criteria to cover achievements in any field.

Now the total count of Bharat Ratna awardees has gone to 53, five of them within 2024, maximum in a year so far (against the convention of maximum 3 in a year).

Are there any equivalents of Bharat Ratna award in the world?

Yes, many countries have their own highest civilian awards equivalent to India's Bharat Ratna, recognizing exceptional service or achievements in various fields. Here are a few examples:

1. **United States:** The Presidential Medal of Freedom is the highest civilian award, recognizing individuals who have made "an especially meritorious contribution to the security or national interests of the United States, world peace, cultural or other significant public or private endeavors."
2. **United Kingdom:** The Order of Merit is a British order awarded to individuals who have demonstrated distinguished service in the armed forces, science, art, literature, or for the promotion of culture.
3. **France:** The Legion of Honour, known in French as the Légion d'honneur, is the highest French order of merit for military and civil merits, established in 1802 by Napoléon Bonaparte.
4. **Japan:** The Order of the Chrysanthemum is Japan's highest order, which is awarded by the Emperor of Japan for distinguished achievements in a range of fields.
5. **Canada:** The Order of Canada is one of the country's highest civilian honors, recognizing outstanding achievement, dedication to the community, and service to the nation across all sectors of society.
6. **Australia:** The Companion of the Order of Australia is awarded for eminent achievement and merit of the highest degree in service to Australia or humanity at large.
7. **Germany:** The Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, also known as the Bundesverdienstkreuz, is the highest tribute the Federal Republic of Germany can pay to individuals for services to the nation.

Why awards like Bharat Ratna are important?

Awards play a pivotal role in society, influencing behaviors, perceptions, and interactions across various domains. Their significance can be understood through the insights provided by notable works in sociology, psychology, political science, and economics, each offering a distinct perspective on the multifaceted impact of awards.

Sociology: Validation and Social Roles Erving Goffman's "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life" sheds light on the societal aspect of awards, illustrating how individuals navigate **social roles** and seek **validation**. Awards act as a form of societal acknowledgment, recognizing an individual's contribution and performance in their respective roles. This recognition not only **validates** their

efforts but also **reinforces** the social norms and values, encouraging others to emulate commendable behaviors.

Psychology: Motivation and Self-Esteem In "**Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us**," **Daniel H. Pink** explores the psychological impact of awards, highlighting their role in **motivating** individuals. Awards serve as both **intrinsic** and **extrinsic motivators**, enhancing an individual's motivation to pursue excellence and contributing to their **self-esteem**. This recognition fulfills a fundamental human need for **appreciation**, driving individuals towards higher achievements.

Political Science: Diplomacy and Influence **Joseph S. Nye Jr.**'s "**Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics**" introduces the concept of **soft power**, incorporating awards as tools for **diplomacy** and international **influence**. Awards can be strategically used to honor individuals and entities, fostering **goodwill** and strengthening international relations. **Murray Edelman**'s "**The Symbolic Uses of Politics**" further discusses how awards serve as **symbolic acts** that influence public perception and reinforce the **legitimacy** of political systems, highlighting their importance in political strategies.

Economics: Incentives and Market Behavior "**The Economics of Awards**" by **Bruno S. Frey** and **Jana Gallus** analyzes awards from an economic perspective, focusing on their role as **incentives** that influence behavior and performance. Awards signal exceptional achievement to the market, potentially affecting **funding**, **investment**, and **consumption patterns**. **Dan Ariely**'s "**Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions**" complements this view by examining how awards impact human **motivation** and **decision-making**, underlining their economic significance beyond mere recognition

Changing trends in the history of Bharat Ratna?

- Initial Focus on Political and Independence Leaders

In the early years following its inception in 1954, the Bharat Ratna was predominantly awarded to prominent political figures and leaders of the Indian independence movement. This trend underscores the nation's initial focus on honoring those who played pivotal roles in establishing and shaping the newly independent country. Figures like C. Rajagopalachari, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and Jawaharlal Nehru were instrumental in the political and ideological foundation of India.

- Broadening to Include Diverse Fields

Over time, the scope of the Bharat Ratna expanded beyond politics to include exceptional contributions in various fields such as science, arts, literature, and sports. This shift reflects a broader recognition of nation-building beyond political leadership, acknowledging contributions to cultural richness, scientific advancement, and social welfare. The awards to C.V. Raman, a Nobel laureate physicist, and M.S. Subbulakshmi, a Carnatic vocalist, exemplify this trend.

- Posthumous Recognitions

The allowance for posthumous awards marked a significant shift, enabling the nation to honor contributors who were not recognized during their lifetime. This change highlights a retrospective acknowledgment of enduring contributions to the nation's heritage and development, such as the 1st posthumous recognition of Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1966 and then B.R. Ambedkar in 1990, which underscored their lasting impact on Indian society and polity.

- **International Figures and Global Outreach**

The Bharat Ratna's scope further widened to include non-Indian recipients, reflecting India's growing global engagement and the recognition of international figures who contributed to human rights, peace, and cooperation. The awards to Nelson Mandela and Mother Teresa, for instance, signify India's acknowledgment of global contributions to peace, harmony, and humanitarian efforts, aligning with universal values and international camaraderie.

- **Recognition of Popular Figures and Mass Appeal**

The inclusion of popular figures such as Sachin Tendulkar, a cricketing legend, marked a trend towards recognizing individuals who have had a profound impact on the popular culture and collective consciousness of the nation. This shift acknowledges the role of sports and entertainment in fostering national pride and unity, and the significant influence these domains have on society.

- **Recent Trends Towards Comprehensive Representation**

In recent years, there has been a noticeable trend towards a more comprehensive representation of India's diverse fabric in the award's recipients. This includes recognizing leaders from various political, social, and scientific backgrounds, reflecting a multifaceted approach to acknowledging contributions to India's development. The awards to figures like A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, an aerospace scientist and former President of India, and Lata Mangeshkar, a legendary playback singer, illustrate the award's evolving nature to encompass a wide range of fields and contributions.

So, the changing trends in the Bharat Ratna awards over the years reflect the evolving priorities and values of Indian society, from honoring the architects of its independence and political framework to acknowledging contributions in science, culture, sports, and international humanitarian efforts.

List of Bharat Ratna award Recipients: -

| Year | Name | State/Country | Lifespan | Contributions/Remarks |
|------|--------------------------|---------------|-----------|--|
| 1954 | C. Rajagopalachari | Tamil Nadu | 1878-1972 | Last Governor-General of India, first governor of West Bengal, Home Minister, Chief Minister of Madras Presidency/Tamil Nadu, founded the Swatantra Party. |
| 1954 | Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan | Tamil Nadu | 1888-1975 | First Vice-President and second President of India, his birthday is celebrated as Teachers' Day in India. |
| 1954 | C. V. Raman | Tamil Nadu | 1888-1970 | Physicist known for Raman scattering and Raman spectroscopy, Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930. |
| 1955 | Bhagwan Das | Uttar Pradesh | 1869-1958 | Independence activist, theosophist, educationist, co-founded Kashi Vidyapith and helped establish Banaras Hindu University. |

| Year | Name | State/Country | Lifespan | Contributions/Remarks |
|------|------------------------|----------------|-----------|---|
| 1955 | M. Visvesvaraya | Karnataka | 1861-1962 | Civil engineer, statesman, 19th Diwan of Mysore, his birthday is observed as Engineer's Day in India. |
| 1955 | Jawaharlal Nehru | Uttar Pradesh | 1889-1964 | Independence activist, first and longest-serving Prime Minister of India. |
| 1957 | Govind Ballabh Pant | Uttar Pradesh | 1887-1961 | Independence activist and politician, served as the premier of United Provinces and the first Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Union Home Minister. |
| 1958 | Dhondo Keshav Karve | Maharashtra | 1858-1962 | Social reformer and educator, known for his work on women's education and widow remarriage, founded Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Women's University. |
| 1961 | Bidhan Chandra Roy | West Bengal | 1882-1962 | Physician, politician, and educationist, served as the Chief Minister of West Bengal, known as the "Maker of Modern West Bengal", his birthday is observed as National Doctors' Day in India. |
| 1961 | Purushottam Das Tandon | Uttar Pradesh | 1882-1962 | Independence activist and politician, served as the speaker of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, actively involved in a campaign to get official language status for Hindi. |
| 1962 | Rajendra Prasad | Bihar | 1884-1963 | Independence activist, lawyer, and statesman, associated with Mahatma Gandhi in the Champaran Satyagraha and non-cooperation movement, first President of India. |
| 1963 | Zakir Husain | Andhra Pradesh | 1897-1969 | Independence activist and philosopher, served as the Vice Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, Governor of Bihar, second Vice-President, and third President of India. |
| 1963 | Pandurang Vaman Kane | Maharashtra | 1880-1972 | Indologist and Sanskrit scholar, known for his monumental work "History of Dharmasāstra". |
| 1966 | Lal Bahadur Shastri | Uttar Pradesh | 1904-1966 | Independence activist, known for his slogan "Jai Jawan Jai Kisan", served as the second Prime Minister of India, led the country during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965. |
| 1971 | Indira Gandhi | Uttar Pradesh | 1917-1984 | Prime Minister of India, known as the "Iron Lady of India", led India during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 and the Bangladesh Liberation War. |

| Year | Name | State/Country | Lifespan | Contributions/Remarks |
|------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------|--|
| 1975 | V. V. Giri | Odisha | 1894-1980 | Independence activist, organized trade unions, served as Governor and the fourth President of India. |
| 1976 | K. Kamaraj | Tamil Nadu | 1903-1975 | Independence activist and politician, served as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, known as the "King Maker" in Indian politics. |
| 1980 | Mother Teresa | West Bengal (b. Skopje) | 1910-1997 | Catholic nun and founder of the Missionaries of Charity, Nobel Peace Prize laureate for her humanitarian work. |
| 1983 | Vinoba Bhave | Maharashtra | 1895-1982 | Independence activist, social reformer, known for the Bhoodan movement, awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award for his humanitarian work. |
| 1987 | Abdul Ghaffar Khan | Pakistan | 1890-1988 | Independence activist, a follower of Mahatma Gandhi, known as "Frontier Gandhi", advocated for Hindu-Muslim unity. |
| 1988 | M. G. Ramachandran | Tamil Nadu | 1917-1987 | Actor and politician, founder of AIADMK, served as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, known as "Puratchi Thalaivar" (Revolutionary Leader). |
| 1990 | B. R. Ambedkar | Maharashtra | 1891-1956 | Social reformer, principal architect of the Indian Constitution, campaigned against social discrimination towards Dalits, and embraced Buddhism. |
| 1990 | Nelson Mandela | South Africa | 1918-2013 | Anti-Apartheid leader, President of South Africa, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, known for his efforts to dismantle apartheid and foster reconciliation. |
| 1991 | Rajiv Gandhi | Uttar Pradesh | 1944-1991 | Pilot turned politician, served as the sixth Prime Minister of India, focused on leading India towards the 21st century. |
| 1991 | Vallabhbhai Patel | Gujarat | 1875-1950 | Independence activist, first Deputy Prime Minister of India, instrumental in the integration of princely states into the Indian Union, known as the "Iron Man of India". |
| 1991 | Morarji Desai | Gujarat | 1896-1995 | Independence activist and politician, served as the fourth Prime Minister of India, first not from the Indian National Congress, also awarded Nishan-e-Pakistan. |

| Year | Name | State/Country | Lifespan | Contributions/Remarks |
|------|----------------------|---------------|-----------|---|
| 1992 | Abul Kalam Azad | West Bengal | 1888-1958 | Independence activist and politician, served as the first Education Minister of India, his birthday is observed as National Education Day. |
| 1992 | J. R. D. Tata | Maharashtra | 1904-1993 | Industrialist, philanthropist, and aviation pioneer, played a pivotal role in the development of the Indian aviation industry and the Tata Group. |
| 1992 | Satyajit Ray | West Bengal | 1922-1992 | Film director, known for his work in Indian cinema, brought international recognition to Indian films, awarded the Academy Honorary Award. |
| 1997 | Gulzarilal Nanda | Punjab | 1898-1998 | Independence activist and politician, served as the interim Prime Minister of India twice, and as the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission. |
| 1997 | Aruna Asaf Ali | West Bengal | 1909-1996 | Independence activist, known for hoisting the Indian flag during the Quit India Movement, later became Delhi's first mayor. |
| 1997 | A. P. J. Abdul Kalam | Tamil Nadu | 1931-2015 | Aerospace and defence scientist, played a leading role in India's missile and nuclear weapons programs, served as the 11th President of India. |
| 1998 | M. S. Subbulakshmi | Tamil Nadu | 1916-2005 | Carnatic classical vocalist, first musician to be awarded the Bharat Ratna, also received the Ramon Magsaysay award for public service. |
| 1998 | C. Subramaniam | Tamil Nadu | 1910-2000 | Independence activist and politician, instrumental in India's Green Revolution as Minister of Agriculture. |
| 1999 | Jayaprakash Narayan | Bihar | 1902-1979 | Independence activist and social reformer, led the Total Revolution Movement, referred to as "Loknayak" (People's Leader). |
| 1999 | Amartya Sen | West Bengal | 1933- | Economist, Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences laureate for his contributions to welfare economics and social choice theory. |
| 1999 | Gopinath Bordoloi | Assam | 1890-1950 | Independence activist and politician, served as the first Chief Minister of Assam, played a key role in keeping Assam united with India. |

| Year | Name | State/Country | Lifespan | Contributions/Remarks |
|------|----------------------|----------------|-----------|---|
| 1999 | Ravi Shankar | Uttar Pradesh | 1920-2012 | Musician and sitar maestro, played a pivotal role in bringing Indian classical music to the global stage, winning multiple Grammy Awards. |
| 2001 | Lata Mangeshkar | Maharashtra | 1929-2022 | Playback singer, known as the "Nightingale of India", her career spanned over seven decades with songs in over 36 languages. |
| 2001 | Bismillah Khan | Bihar | 1916-2006 | Shehnai maestro, credited with elevating the shehnai from a traditional ceremony instrument to a concert stage instrument. |
| 2009 | Bhimsen Joshi | Karnataka | 1922-2011 | Hindustani classical vocalist, known for his contributions to the Khayal genre of singing and for his renditions of devotional music. |
| 2014 | C. N. R. Rao | Karnataka | 1934- | Chemist, recognized for his work in solid-state and structural chemistry, contributed significantly to the development of science and technology in India. |
| 2014 | Sachin Tendulkar | Maharashtra | 1973- | Cricketer, considered one of the greatest batsmen in the history of cricket, holds numerous cricketing records, and is the first sportsperson to be awarded the Bharat Ratna. |
| 2015 | Atal Bihari Vajpayee | Madhya Pradesh | 1924-2018 | Politician, served three terms as Prime Minister of India, known for his contributions to Indian politics and governance, as well as his poetry. |
| 2015 | Madan Mohan Malaviya | Uttar Pradesh | 1861-1946 | Educator and politician, founded Banaras Hindu University and served as its Vice-Chancellor, also served as President of the Indian National Congress. |
| 2019 | Pranab Mukherjee | West Bengal | 1935-2020 | Politician, served as the 13th President of India, held various ministerial portfolios, contributing significantly to Indian politics and governance. |
| 2019 | Bhupen Hazarika | Assam | 1926-2011 | Musician, singer, and filmmaker, known for his folk songs and ballads in Assamese, promoting social justice and harmony. |
| 2019 | Nanaji Deshmukh | Maharashtra | 1916-2010 | Social activist and politician, worked in the fields of education, health, and rural self-reliance, was a senior figure in the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. |

| Year | Name | State/Country | Lifespan | Contributions/Remarks |
|------|---------------------|---------------|-----------|---|
| 2024 | Karpoori Thakur | Bihar | 1924-1988 | Politician, served as the 11th Chief Minister of Bihar, introduced the reservation policy in state government jobs. |
| 2024 | L. K. Advani | Delhi | 1927- | Politician, served as the 7th Deputy Prime Minister of India, co-founder of Bharatiya Janata Party, instrumental in the Ram Janmabhoomi Movement, known as "Loh Purush" (Iron Man). |
| 2024 | P. V. Narasimha Rao | Telangana | 1921-2004 | Lawyer and politician, served as the 9th Prime Minister of India, introduced liberal reforms to India's economy, first Prime Minister from South India. |
| 2024 | Charan Singh | Uttar Pradesh | 1902-1987 | Politician and independence activist, served as the 5th Prime Minister of India, known as the "Champion of India's peasants", founder of the political party Lokdal. |
| 2024 | M. S. Swaminathan | Tamil Nadu | 1925-2023 | Agronomist, geneticist, and administrator, a global leader of the Green Revolution, played a key role in introducing and developing high-yielding varieties of wheat and rice in India. |

What is Nomination and selection process?

The nomination and selection process for the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, is notably discreet and is primarily driven by the Prime Minister of India. The process is as follows:-

- Recommendations:** Unlike many other awards, there is no open nomination process for the Bharat Ratna. Recommendations for potential recipients are typically made by the Prime Minister.
- Prime Minister's Proposal:** The Prime Minister sends a proposal to the President of India suggesting the names of individuals deemed worthy of this prestigious honor.
- Presidential Approval:** The President of India, based on the Prime Minister's recommendations, approves the conferment of the award. The President's approval is the final step in the selection process.
- Official Announcement:** Once the President approves the recommendations, the names of the recipients are officially announced and published in The Gazette of India. This publication formalizes the conferment of the Bharat Ratna.

What are the components of the Bharat Ratna Award?

1. **Medallion:** The award includes a medallion that is in the shape of a peepal leaf, made of Bronze & platinum. The obverse side of the medallion features a Sun emblem with the words "Bharat Ratna" inscribed in Devanagari script, and the reverse side bears the State Emblem of India along with the motto "Satyameva Jayate".
2. **Certificate (Sanad):** Along with the medallion, recipients receive a certificate (Sanad) signed by the President of India, officially recognizing their exceptional service/performance of the highest order.

What are the different privileges Given to the Awardee?

1. **Precedence:** Bharat Ratna recipients are given precedence in the Indian order of precedence, which is a protocol list that ranks the most important positions within the Government of India. Bharat Ratna awardees rank **seventh** in the order of precedence.
2. **Diplomatic Passport:** Recipients of the Bharat Ratna are entitled to a diplomatic passport, which is typically reserved for diplomats and top-ranking government officials. This facilitates easier travel across borders.
3. **State Guest Status:** When traveling within any state in India, Bharat Ratna awardees are treated as state guests, entitling them to certain courtesies and privileges during their stay.
4. **Concessional Train & Air Travel:** There have been instances where Bharat Ratna recipients were offered concessional fares by the national carrier, Air India. However, such privileges can vary and may not be a standard entitlement for all recipients.

It's important to note that the Bharat Ratna does not include any monetary grant or reward. The honor is purely symbolic, recognizing the recipient's invaluable contribution to the nation. The prestige of the award lies in its recognition of the awardee's exceptional service to the Republic of India, transcending material benefits.

Evolution of Specifications of the Bharat Ratna Medal

Original Design (1954):

- **Shape and Material:** The original medal was a gold circle, $1\frac{3}{8}$ inches (35 mm) in diameter.
- **Obverse Side:** Featured a centered image of the sun, with the text "Bharat Ratna" in Devanagari script inscribed on the upper edge in silver gilt, and a wreath along the lower edge.
- **Reverse Side:** A platinum State Emblem of India centered, with the national motto "Satyameva Jayate" (Truth Alone Triumphs) in Devanagari script inscribed in silver-gilt on the lower edge.

Modified Design (Post-1955):

- **Shape:** Changed to a peepal leaf, approximately $2\frac{5}{16}$ inches (59 mm) long, $1\frac{7}{8}$ inches (48 mm) wide, and $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (3.2 mm) thick, rimmed in platinum.
- **Obverse Side:** Maintains an embossed sunburst design made of platinum, with rays spreading out. The inscription "Bharat Ratna" remains in Devanagari script.

- **Reverse Side:** Continues to feature the State Emblem of India and the motto "Satyameva Jayate", similar to the original design.
- **Ribbon:** A 2-inch-wide (51 mm) white ribbon is attached for wearing around the neck.
- **Material Changes:** The silver-gilt decoration was changed to burnished bronze in 1957.
- **Minting:** The medals are minted at the Alipore Mint in Kolkata.



What are different controversies in regarding to Bharat Ratna?

- **Subhas Chandra Bose (1992):**
 - Government announced Bharat Ratna for Bose via press release, not through Gazette notification or Sanad issuance.
 - Public interest litigation followed, questioning the posthumous award without official acknowledgment of Bose's death.
 - Critics felt the award diminished Bose's legacy.
 - Supreme Court cancelled the press communique, leaving questions about honoring historical figures unresolved.
- **Bharat Ratna as "Titles" and Constitutional Challenges (1992):**
 - Legal challenges questioned if Bharat Ratna and other civilian awards were "titles" against the Constitution under **Article 18(1)**.
 - Madhya Pradesh High Court temporarily suspended the awards.
 - Supreme Court clarified these awards do not violate the Constitution, balancing recognition with constitutional values.

- In the case of *Balaji Raghavan v. Union of India*, AIR 1996, the court said that National awards aren't titles under clause 1 of Article 18. The court directed for setting up guidelines while giving these awards as they are highly respected.
- **Political Figures and Posthumous Honors:**
 - Posthumous Bharat Ratnas to K. Kamaraj, M.G. Ramachandran (MGR), and B.R. Ambedkar sparked debate over political motivations.
 - Critics argued these awards might aim to influence voters, especially when conferred close to elections.
- **Sachin Tendulkar's Nomination (2013):**
 - Tendulkar's Bharat Ratna nomination celebrated but also attracted controversy over selection criteria and political affiliations.
 - Litigation alleged violation of the model code of conduct, reflecting concerns over awards being used for political advantage.
 - Election Commission dismissed the petition, but the controversy continued over merit and influence in award selections.

What are different criticisms of Bharat Ratna Awards?

Political Motivations and Timing

1. **Awards to Serving Prime Ministers:**
 - **Criticism:** Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi receiving the Bharat Ratna while in office raised concerns about the self-conferment of the award, although it was later clarified that these were awarded suo moto by the then respective Presidents of India.
2. **Posthumous Awards Aimed at Electoral Influence:**
 - **K. Kamaraj (1977):** Indira Gandhi's decision to honor K. Kamaraj posthumously was criticized as an attempt to influence Tamil Nadu assembly elections.
 - **M. G. Ramachandran (1988):** Rajiv Gandhi's conferment of the award on MGR was seen as an electoral strategy for the Tamil Nadu assembly elections. The timing was also questioned for prioritizing MGR over figures like B. R. Ambedkar and Vallabhbhai Patel.
 - **B. R. Ambedkar (1990):** V.P. Singh's decision to honor Ambedkar posthumously was perceived as an attempt to garner support from Dalit voters.
3. **Historical Figures:**
 - **Criticism:** The awarding of figures who died before independence or the institution of the award itself has led to debates about the potential for endless retroactive honors, citing figures like Ashoka, Akbar, Shivaji, Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and Mahatma Gandhi.
4. **Delayed Recognition:**

- **Sardar Patel and Subhas Chandra Bose:** Criticized for the delayed conferment (41 years and 47 years posthumously, respectively), questioning the criteria and timing of such decisions.
- **Madan Mohan Malaviya (2015):** Narendra Modi's decision to award Malaviya was criticized for its timing relative to local elections in Uttar Pradesh.

Global Recognition Prior to Bharat Ratna

1. **Mother Teresa (1980):** The award was conferred a year after she received the Nobel Peace Prize, leading to criticisms of the Bharat Ratna being influenced by global recognitions.
2. **Satyajit Ray (1992):** Received the Bharat Ratna the same year he was awarded an Academy Honorary Award, raising questions about the timing of the national honor.
3. **Amartya Sen (1999):** His Bharat Ratna came a year after the Nobel Prize, prompting debates on whether international acclaim influences Bharat Ratna selections.

Lobbying Allegations

1. **Ravi Shankar:** Accused of lobbying for the Bharat Ratna, this criticism touches on the transparency and integrity of the selection process.

What are popular demands for different Bharat Ratna awards?

Political Leaders

1. **Jyoti Basu:**
 - **Demand by:** Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)).
 - Following Advani's recommendation for Vajpayee, CPI(M) lobbied for Basu, the long-serving Chief Minister of West Bengal. Basu, however, stated he would decline the honor if awarded, reflecting his personal stance on such recognitions.
2. **N.T. Rama Rao, Kanshi Ram, and Parkash Singh Badal:**
 - **Demand by:** Respective political parties, Telugu Desam Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, and Shiromani Akali Dal.
 - These demands were made by the parties to honor their leaders, each a significant figure in their respective regions and political spheres, highlighting their contributions to regional politics and social movements.
3. **Vinayak Damodar Savarkar:**
 - **Demand by:** Shiv Sena in September 2015.
 - The party argued that Savarkar, a prominent independence activist, had been neglected by previous governments. However, Savarkar's family clarified they were not seeking the award, emphasizing his contributions to India's freedom movement as beyond the need for formal recognition.

Sports Personalities

1. **Dhyan Chand and Viswanathan Anand:**

- **Context:** Post-2011 rule revision, sports personalities became eligible for the Bharat Ratna. Dhyan Chand, a legendary field hockey player, and Viswanathan Anand, a former world chess champion, were among those discussed for the honor.
- **Recommendations:** In 2011 and 2013, Dhyan Chand's name was recommended by members of parliament and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. Anand's contributions to chess also made him a discussed candidate.

2. **Abhinav Bindra and Tenzing Norgay:**

- **Context:** Alongside Dhyan Chand, shooter Abhinav Bindra and mountaineer Tenzing Norgay were recommended for the award, showcasing the broadening scope to include Olympic and mountaineering achievements.

Mahatma Gandhi

- **Litigation for Award:**
 - **Filed in:** Karnataka High Court in 2012.
 - **Demand:** To direct the Ministry of Home Affairs to confer the Bharat Ratna on Mahatma Gandhi.
 - **Outcome:** The court dismissed the petition in 2014, stating the process of nominations and conferment was at the discretion of the highest government authority and not amenable to adjudication.

General Trivia: -

Highest Civilian Awards received by Hon'ble PM Narendra Modi: -

- **Order of the Distinguished Order of Nishan Izzuddin (Maldives):** Awarded to foreign dignitaries for their exceptional contributions, Prime Minister Narendra Modi received this honor in 2019.
- **Order of St. Andrew (Russia):** This is the highest civilian honor of Russia, also awarded to PM Narendra Modi in 2019, acknowledging his efforts in strengthening bilateral ties.
- **State Order of Ghazi Amir Amanullah Khan (Afghanistan):** The highest civilian honor of Afghanistan, conferred upon PM Narendra Modi in 2016 for his significant contributions to fostering Indo-Afghan relations.
- **Grand Collar of the State of Palestine Award:** This is the highest honor of Palestine awarded to foreign dignitaries, and PM Modi was the recipient, recognizing his contributions to Indo-Palestinian relations in 2018.
- **Collar of the Order (United Arab Emirates):** PM Modi was awarded the UAE's highest civilian honor, the Order of Zayed, on August 24, 2019, for bolstering the relationship between India and the UAE.

The Firsts: -

- **1954:** First Bharat Ratna awards given to C. Rajagopalachari, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and C. V. Raman.
- **1955 Amendment:** Allowed posthumous awards; Lal Bahadur Shastri was the first posthumous recipient in 1966.
- **First Singer:** M. S. Subbulakshmi received the Bharat Ratna in 1998.
- **First Actor:** M. G. Ramachandran awarded in 1988.
- **Youngest Recipient:** Sachin Tendulkar at age 40 in 2014; also the first sports person to receive the award.
- **Centenarian Award:** Dhondo Keshav Karve awarded on his 100th birthday in 1958 for his contributions to women's education and welfare.

The Exception:-

In 1999, the Bharat Ratna was exceptionally awarded to four individuals instead of the usual maximum of three, to honor significant contributions across various fields. The recipients were J.P. Narayan (Posthumous), Amartya Sen, Gopinath Bordoloi (Posthumous), Pandit Ravi Shankar.

UPSC PYQs:-

Q. Consider the following statements in respect of Bharat Ratna and Padma Awards:

[CSE 2021]

1. Bharat Ratna and Padma Awards are titles under the Article 18(1) of the Constitution of India
2. Padma Awards, which were instituted in the year 1954, were suspended only once.
3. The number of Bharat Ratna Awards is restricted to a maximum of five in a particular year.

Which of the above statements are **not** correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) **1, 2 and 3**

Q. Which of the following pairs is **not** correctly matched ?

[CSE 2001]

Anonymous Poll

- A) India's first Technicolor film - Jhansi ki Rani
- B) India's first 3D film - My Dear Kuttichathan
- C) India's first insured film - Taal
- D) **India's first actress to win Bharat Ratna - Meena Kumari**