

Actors, Filmmakers, Musicians Honored with Padma Awards

By Lisa Tsering, Staff Reporter | INDIWEST | January 29, 2014

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Actress Vidya Balan, who won the Padma Bhushan January 26, says she is thrilled by the honor. Numerous other artists have also been named winners this year.

(AFP/Getty Images)

India

"The Press Trust of India reported January 26 that a number of eminent South Asian artists, whose work ranges from Bollywood to the fine arts, were among the list of 127 luminaries awarded with India's top civilian honors.

The Indian government's awards are conferred in three categories, namely, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri. "Padma Vibhushan" is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service; "Padma Bhushan" for distinguished service of high order and "Padma Shri" for distinguished service in any field, according to India's national news service, the Press Information Bureau. The awards are announced on the occasion of Republic Day every year.



Actor-director Kamal Haasan, 59, was one such artist selected for the Padma Bhushan for his contribution to the world of cinema. A recipient of the Padma Shri in 1990, the actor-director has starred in and made various hit movies, mainly in Tamil, in a career spanning more than five decades,

Bangladeshi national Anisuzzaman, an eminent academician of Bengali literature, was also selected for the award, reported PTI. Singer Parveen Sultana, 63, a classical singer of the Patiala Gharana, was also among the Padma Bhushan awardees. Cinematographer-turned-director Santosh Sivan — who often explores issues of

history and national identity in films such as "Asoka," "Urumi" and "Before the Rains" — commented

to PTI: "It's a great feeling. I am very happy and excited. I have been flooded with calls since it was announced. It's good to get all these congratulatory messages from my near and dear ones."

Actress Vidya Balan took the Padma Shri. Dedicating the honor to her family, she said, "I'm thrilled. I'm overjoyed. I'm overwhelmed. I'm honoured. I'm humbled...! I'm running out of words to express my feelings and gratitude."

Other Padma Bhushan winners included painter Gulam Mohammed Sheikh and ghatam maestro T.H. Vinayakram. **Padma Shri winners included screenwriter Sooni Taraporevala** and many others, including Sudarsan Pattnaik, India's top sand sculptor.

Leading fashion designer Wendell Rodricks, who has come out as being gay, is being called upon by gay activists to use his Padma Shri honor to speak out against the Indian Supreme Court's Jan. 28 decision to refuse to consider a repeal of the anti-gay Sec. 377 penal code.