



India's Traditional New Year Festivals

Why in News?

Recently, India celebrated [Chaitra Sukladi](#), **Ugadi**, **Gudi Padwa**, **Cheti Chand**, **Navreh** and **Sajibu Cheiraoba**. These festivals of the **spring season** mark the **beginning of the traditional new year** in India.

What are the Traditional New Year Festivals in India?

- **Chaitra Sukladi:**
 - It marks the beginning of the new year of the **Vikram Samvat** also known as the Vedic [Hindu] calendar.
 - Vikram Samvat is based on the day when the emperor **Vikramaditya defeated Sakas**, invaded Ujjain and called for a new era.
 - It is the first day during the **waxing phase** (in which the visible side of moon is getting bigger every night) of the **moon in the Chaitra** (first month of Hindu calendar).
- **Gudi Padwa and Ugadi:**
 - These festivals are celebrated by the people in the **Deccan region** including **Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra**.
 - A famous **concoction served is jaggery (sweet) and neem (bitter)**, called **bevu-bella in the South**, signifying that life brings both happiness and sorrows.
 - **Gudi is a doll** prepared in **Maharashtrian homes**.
 - For Ugadi, doors in homes are **adorned with mango leaf decorations** called toranalu or Torana in Kannada.
- **Cheti Chand:**
 - **Cheti Chand** is the new year festival of the **Sindhi community**.
 - The festival is celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Jhulelal**, the **patron saint of the Sindhi community**.
- **Vaishakhi:**
 - It is also pronounced as **Baisakhi**, observed by Hindus and Sikhs.
 - It commemorates the formation of **Khalsa panth** of warriors under [Guru Gobind Singh](#) in 1699.
 - **Baisakhi** was also the day when colonial British empire officials committed the [Jallianwala Bagh massacre](#) at a gathering, an event influential to the Indian movement against colonial rule.
- **Navreh:**
 - Navreh is the **Kashmiri New Year's Day**.
 - The day is marked by performing various rituals, decorating houses with flowers, preparing traditional dishes, and offering prayers to the deities.
- **Sajibu Cheiraoba:**
 - It is considered one of the most important festivals of **Manipur**.
 - It is celebrated with great pomp and joy, especially by the **Meiteis of the state**.
- **Vishu:**
 - It is a **Hindu festival celebrated in the Indian state of Kerala, Tulu Nadu** region in **Karnataka, Mahé district of Union Territory of Pondicherry**, neighbouring areas of Tamil Nadu and their diaspora communities.
 - The **festival marks the first day of Medam (falls in the middle of April in the**

Gregorian calendar), the 9th month in the solar calendar in Kerala.

▪ **Puthandu:**

- Also known as **Puthuvarudam or Tamil New Year**, is the first day of the year on the **Tamil calendar and traditionally celebrated as a festival.**
- The festival date is set with the **solar cycle of the lunisolar Hindu calendar**, as the first day of the Tamil month Chithirai.
- It therefore falls on or about **14th April every year on the Gregorian calendar.**

▪ **Bohag Bihu:**

- **Bohag Bihu or Rongali Bihu also called Xaat Bihu** (seven Bihus) is a traditional aboriginal ethnic festival celebrated in **the state of Assam and other parts of northeastern India** by the indigenous ethnic groups of Assam.
- It marks the beginning of the **Assamese New Year.**
- It usually falls in the **2nd week of April**, historically signifying the time of harvest.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question:

Q. Chaitra 1 of the national calendar based on the Saka Era corresponds to which one of the following dates of the Gregorian calendar in a normal year of 365 days? (2014)

- (a) 22nd March (or 21st March)**
- (b) 15th May (or 16th May)**
- (c) 31st March (or 30th March)**
- (d) 21st April (or 20th April)**

Ans: (a)

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