




drishti

Bhaskarabda: A Luni-Solar Calendar

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Why in News

Recently, the Assam Government has announced that **Bhaskarabda, a Luni-Solar Calendar** will be used as an official calendar.

- Presently, the official calendar of Assam government makes use of the **Saka calendar and the Gregorian calendar**.
- However, the **Bhaskarabda calendar will also be used** from now onwards.

Key Points

- **About:**
 - Bhaskarabda, an era counted from the date of the ascension of a **7th-century local ruler Bhaskar Varman**.
 - It is based on **both the phases of the moon and the solar year**.
 - It began when **Bhaskaravarman was crowned ruler of the Kamrupa kingdom**.
He was a contemporary and political ally of northern Indian ruler **Harshavardhana**.
 - The **gap between Bhaskarabda and Gregorian is 593 years**.
- **Type of Calendars:**
 - **Solar:**
Any dating system **based on the seasonal year of approximately 365 1/4 days**, the time it takes the Earth to revolve once around the Sun.
 - **Lunar:**
Any dating system **based on a year consisting of synodic months**—i.e., complete cycles of phases of the Moon.
 - **Luni-Solar:**
In the lunisolar calendar **months are lunar but years are solar**, it was used in the early civilizations of the **whole Middle East** and in Greece.

- **Bhaskarvarman (600–650):**
 - He belonged to the **Varman dynasty** and was the **ruler of Kamarupa Kingdom**. **Kamarupa** was one of the most advanced kingdoms in India under Bhaskaravarman. Kamarupa was the first historical kingdom of Assam.
 - His name has been immortalised in the accounts of the **Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, Xuanzang**, who visited Kamarupa during his reign.
 - He is **known for his alliance with Harshavardhana against Shashanka**, the first major ruler of Bengal (Karnasuvarna).

Classification of calendars in India

Vikram Samvat (Hindu lunar calendar)

- It dates back to 57 B.C where **57 B.C. is the zero year**.
- Introduced by **King Vikramaditya** to mark his victory over the **Saka rulers**.
- It is a lunar calendar as it is **based on the movement of the moon**.
- Every year is divided into 12 months and each month is divided into two phases.
 - The **bright half is called the Shuklapaksha** (15 days). It starts with the new moon and ends with a full moon.
 - The **dark half is called the Krishnapaksha** (15 days). It starts with the full moon and ends with a new moon.
- The month begins with the dark half. There are 354 days in a year.
- Hence **every third and fifth year in a cycle of five years** has 13 months (the 13th month is called Adhik Mass).

Saka Samvat (Hindu Solar calendar)

- The zero year of Saka Samvat is 78 A.D.
- It was started by **Saka rulers to mark their victory over Kushanas**.
- It is a solar calendar, any dating system based on the seasonal year of approximately 365 1/4 days, the time it takes the Earth to revolve once around the Sun.
- It was adopted by the Government of India as the **official calendar in the year 1957**.
- Every year has 365 days.

Hijri calendar (Islamic lunar calendar)

- The zero year is 622 A.D.
 - It was initially **started and followed in Saudi Arabia**.
 - Every year has **12 months and 354 days**.
 - The **first month is called Muharram**.
 - Ninth month is called **Ramzaan**.
During this month, Muslims observe a fast for the purification of souls. The morning breakfast is called Shehri and evening food is called Iftar.
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**Gregorian
calendar
(Scientific
solar calendar)**

- The Gregorian calendar is used as the civil calendar.
- It began to be **used from 1582**.
- It is named after **Pope Gregory XIII**, who introduced the calendar.
- It substituted the earlier Julian calendar because the Julian calendar had a **miscalculation regarding leap year**.
The Julian year had 365.25 days.

Source: TH