



Traditional New Year Festivals

For Prelims: Vaisakhi, Vishu, Naba Barsha, Vaisakhadi and Puthandu-Pirappu and Bohag Bihu.

For Mains: Traditional New Year Festivals.

Why in News?

The President of India has greeted people on the eve of [Chaitra Shukladi, Gudi Padwa, Ugadi, Cheti Chand](#), Vaisakhi, Vishu, Naba Barsha, Vaisakhadi and Puthandu-Pirappu and Bohag Bihu.

- These festivals of the spring season mark the beginning of the [traditional new year in India](#).

What are the Traditional New Year Festivals?

▪ Vaishakhi:

- It is also pronounced as Baisakhi, **observed by Hindus and Sikhs**.
- It marks the beginning of **Hindu Solar New year**.
- 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.

▪ 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, the ninth month in the solar calendar in Kerala**.
- It therefore always **falls in the middle of April in the Gregorian calendar on 14th or 15th April every year**.

▪ 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.

▪ Naba Barsha:

- Naba Barsha is the celebration of the new year in **West Bengal** as per the Bengali

Calendar.

- It is also **popularly known as the PoilaBaisakh which literally translates to first Baisakhi (a month in the lunisolar calendar of the Bengalis)**.
 - The people of Bengal come together and celebrate this new year in their own way by making it loud and magical like every other Bengali festival.
- The festival is celebrated by all castes and religions all across Bengal.
- **After Durga Pooja, this is the second most hyped festival in Bengal**, this festival connects the people of Bengal, especially the Bengalis who are originally Hindu.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. Consider the following pairs: (2018)

Tradition	State
1. Chapchar Kut festival —	Mizoram
2. Khongjom Parba ballad —	Manipur
3. Thang-Ta dance —	Sikkim

Which of the pairs given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: (b)

- **Chapchar Kut** is one of the oldest festivals of **Mizoram** and has a great cultural significance.
- **Khongjom Parba** is a style of ballad singing from **Manipur** using Dholak (drum) which depicts stories of heroic battle fought by Manipuris against the British Empire in 1891.
- **Thang-Ta** is a popular term for the ancient **Manipuri** martial art known as Huyen Lallong. Thang-Ta is a sword and spear dance where 'Thang' means 'sword' and 'Ta' means 'spear'.

Source: PIB

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