

## UPSC Civil Services Examination

### UPSC Preparation

#### Topic – National Calendar of India

The National Calendar of India is based on the Saka Calendar which is adopted as the official civil calendar beside the Gregorian Calendar. It is one of the [National Symbols of India](#). It is important to read about the Calendars in India, including the facts about the Saka Calendar; for the IAS Exam.

#### National Calendar of India - Saka Calendar

The Saka Era marked the beginning of the Saka Samvat, a historic Hindu calendar which was later introduced as '**Indian National Calendar**' in 1957. The Saka Era is believed to have been founded by King Shalivahan of Shatavahana dynasty. The Saka calendar consists of 365 days and 12 months which is similar to the structure of the Gregorian Calendar. The first month of the Saka Samvat is Chaitra which begins on March 22 which corresponds with March 21 during the leap year.

To know about the 12 months in Saka Calendar refer to the table below:

Saka Samvat	Gregorian Calendar
Chaitra	March 21 – April 20
Vaishakha	April 21-May 21
Jyeshtha	May 22-June 21
Ashadha	June 22- July 22
Shravana	July 23-August 22
Bhaadra	August 22-September 22
Ashwin	September 23-October 22
Kartika	October 23-November 21
Agrahayana	November 22-December 21
Pausha	December 22-January 20
Magha	January 21- February 19
Phalguna	February 20-March 20/21

#### Facts about National Calendar of India / Saka Calendar

1. It is a historical calendar era corresponding to Julian year 78.
2. It is also known as Shalivahana Saka era or Mahasakkarat Era.
3. Saka era marks the remembrance of King Shalivahana's chief military triumphs.
4. The first indication of a relationship between King Shalivahana and the Saka era was authenticated by the Kannada work Udbhatakavya by Somaraja.
5. The Saka calendar is used also by the Indonesian Hindus in Bali and Java.

6. The Gazette of India uses this calendar along with the Gregorian Calendar.

## Types of Calendar in India

The word Calendar has its origin from the Roman word Calends or Kalends meaning a way of allocating time into certain periods adopted for the purpose of civil life. National Calendar of a country has a strong association with the historical period of a country and holds a certain golden period therein. In India, four types of calendars are followed:

1. Vikram Samvat
2. Saka Samvat
3. Hijri calendar
4. Gregorian calendar

The Calendars of India holds an important part of the UPSC Syllabus. It is very important to know the basic facts about India to crack UPSC [IAS Exam](#).

### Vikram Samvat

The Vikram Samvat also regarded as the Vikrami calendar is a historical calendar for the Hindus in India. Vikram Samvat is also the official calendar of Nepal and is named after the king Vikramaditya. This calendar came into focus after the 9th century with the beginning of epigraphical artwork. Before the 9th century, the same calendar system was known with other names such as Krita and Malava.

Some of the unique features of the Vikrami calendar are mentioned below:

1. It marks the beginning of the Vikrama era that prevailed in India and Nepal.
2. The period is named after King Vikramaditya to mark his triumph over the Saka rulers.
3. It starts at 57 B.C. before the 9th century with Vikramaditya.
4. This is a calendar based on the movement of the moon and has 354 days in a year.
5. The Vikram Samvat has 12 months with each month divided into two phases:
  - **Shukla paksha (15 days)** – begins with new moon and ends with full moon
  - **Krishna paksha (15 days)** – begins with full moon and ends with new moon

### Division of a year in Vikram Samvat

The first day of the Vikram Samvat calendar is celebrated after Diwali in Gujarat and Maharashtra. The Vikram Samvat is similar in design to the Gregorian calendar and has been used by the Hindus and the Sikhs. This calendar system is one of the lunisolar calendars developed by ancient human cultures. It uses the lunar months and solar sidereal years for the division of a year.

The 12 months of Vikram Samvat that correspond to the 12 months of the Gregorian Calendar are mentioned in the table below:

Vikram Samvat	Gregorian Calendar
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Baishakh	April-May
Jestha	May-June
Ashadh	June-July
Shrawan	July-August
Bhadra	August-September
Ashwin	September-October
Kartik	October-November
Mangsir	November-December
Poush	December-January
Magh	January-February
Falgun	February-March
Chaitra	March-April

## Hijri/Hijra calendar

The Hijri calendar is an Islamic lunar calendar which consists of 12 lunar months and 354/355 days. The Hijri calendar is used to determine the Islamic holidays and rituals such as the annual period of fasting and the pilgrimage time to Mecca.

Some of the important facts about the Hijri calendar are mentioned below:

1. The Islamic year began in AD 622 during which the migration of Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina, known as the Hijra happened.
2. The Islamic year has 12 months that are grounded on a lunar cycle.
3. It has 354 days.
4. It is used to date events in many Muslim countries simultaneously with the Gregorian calendar.
5. Muslims everywhere in the World use this calendar to decide the proper days on which to observe Ramadan, to attend Hajj, and to celebrate other Islamic festivals.
6. There are 12 months in the Hijri calendar which are mentioned below:
  - Muharram
  - Safar
  - Rabia Awal
  - Rabia Thani
  - Jumaada Awal
  - Jumaada Thani
  - Rajab
  - Sha'ban
  - Ramadan
  - Shawwal
  - Dhul-Qi'dah
  - Dhul-Hijjah

## Gregorian Calendar

The Gregorian calendar which was developed as a correction to the Julian Calendar was introduced in October 1582. This calendar is named after Pope Gregory XIII and is the most used calendar in the world. This calendar determines the Earth's revolution around the Sun and spaces leap years to make the average year 365.2425 days long.

Some of the unique features of the Gregorian calendar are:

1. The Gregorian calendar is used as the civil calendar.
2. It began to be used from 1582.
3. It is named after Pope Gregory XIII, who introduced the calendar.
4. It substituted the earlier Julian calendar because the Julian calendar had a miscalculation regarding leap year.
5. The Julian year had 365.25 days.
6. The Gregorian calendar sustained to employ the Julian months.
  - January
  - February
  - March
  - April
  - May
  - June
  - July
  - August
  - September
  - October
  - November
  - December

Several questions are asked regarding the National Flag, National Anthem, etc. during the UPSC exams. Candidates appearing for [UPSC 2020](#) should be very clear with the basic historical concepts of India.

## Calendars in India UPSC Question

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? (**UPSC Prelims Examination 2014**)

1. 22 March (or 21st March)
2. 15th May (or 16th May)
3. 31st March (or 30th March)
4. 21st April (or 20th April)

Answer: A