

Navroz: Parsi New Year

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The Parsi New Year which is also known as Navroz is celebrated to mark the beginning of the new Iranian calendar. In the Persian language 'Nav' means new, and 'Roz' stands for the day, i.e., 'new day'

History of Navroz

The tradition began around 3000 years ago, and it is observed by the Iranians and the Parsi community around the world. The day is also known as Jamshed-i-Nouroz after the Persian King, Jamshed, who introduced the Parsi calendar i.e., Shahenshahi Calendar.

Celebration of Navroz in India and Parsi Population in India

- In India, it is observed in Maharashtra (especially Mumbai) and Gujarat in the month of August according to the Gregorian calendar.
- In India the Parsis follow Zoroastrianism, there are an estimated 2.6 million Zoroastrians worldwide with the Parsis in India being the largest single group i.e, more than 50000.

Reasons for Indians celebrating the Novroz in August

In most parts of the world, the Navroz takes place on 21st March, but in the Indian subcontinent, the Shahenshahi Calendar (Persian Calendar) is followed which does not take leap years into account, which is why Navroz is celebrated 200 days later, on August 17.

Key Highlights about Navroz celebrations

- The Parsi New Year is not only a time for celebrating,

renewing spirits with kindness and patience, and feasting, but also a time for cleansing oneself from all past evil deeds and thoughts, and to repent for one's mistakes.

- The celebration day is also dedicated to cleansing one's mind, body and soul from all evil thoughts and deeds, people pray for prosperity.
- The Navroz celebrations begin on New Year's Eve, also known as Pateti, when Parsis rigorously go into cleaning mode externally too and get rid of all their unwanted belongings and possessions, in the hopes of cleansing themselves.

About Parsis in India

- Parsi, also spelled Parsee, member of a group of followers in India of the Iranian prophet Zoroaster (or Zarathustra).
- The Parsis, whose name means "Persians," are descended from Persian Zoroastrians who emigrated to India to avoid religious persecution by Muslims. They live chiefly in Mumbai and Gujarat
- According to tradition, the Parsis initially settled at Hormuz on the Persian Gulf but finding themselves still persecuted they set sail for India, arriving in the 8th century. The migration may in fact have taken place as late as the 10th century, or in both.
- They settled first at Diu in Kāthiāwār but soon moved to Gujarāt, where they remained for about 800 years as a small agricultural community.