



wound a bright saffron cloth as well as mango leaves and flowers- representing a new beginning. A similar symbol of celebration is the Basundhara theki of the Oriya households which involves- a small pot filled with pana (a sweet drink of misri and water), hung on tulusi (Basil plant) with a hole at the bottom of the pot that allows the liquid to drip on the plant- representing rain, water and life. A representative puja is also performed at the occasion of Navroz where

Odisha in eastern India, Cheiraoba in Maipur and Rongali Bihu in Assam towards north-eastern India. Interestingly enough, inspite of the cultural connectivity, all the regions celebrate the occasion through their own unique touches of traditional food, sweetmeats, music and dances as well as their own regional clothes. Traditionally these food items were prepared with the freshly harvested winter crops and are mostly made from rice, coconut and various seasonal fruits.

a table is set which includes seven items which all begins with 'S'- or sin in Farsi. This includes sabzeh (sprouts), an apple (sib), dried fruit of the oleaster tree (senjed), garlic (seer), vinegar (serkeh), a sweet wheat-based pudding (samanu), and the spice sumac. People from across all religions and age groups as well as various languages join in the festivities and it is a time to honour the bond of friendship and togetherness. Spring festivals of India are a true reflection of the ethos of unity in diversity and speak of not only a myriad range of celebrations, but highlights an important strain of historical continuity that makes the region unique as well as important.

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Cultural Calendar - April 2018

6
Friday
10.00 am -
12.00 noon

Arterra
Terracotta Jewellery making workshop
by Deepika Shami from India
Venue: ICC lawns

Bollywood special - Dangal
Directed by Nitesh Tiwari
Cast: Aamir Khan, Sakshi tanwar, Fatima Sana Shaikh,
Aparshakti Khurana, Zaira Wasim, Suhani Bhatnagar
Ritwik Sahore & Girish Kulkarni
Duration: 1hr 43mins
Venue: ICC Auditorium

11
Wednesday
3.00 pm

20
Friday
6.30 pm

Samarpana - An Odisi Performace
by Buddhi Edirisinghe, ICCR Scholar
Venue: ICC Auditorium

Avurudu
Sinhala and Tamil New Year Celebrations
Organized by students of the
Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo
Venue: ICC

24
Tuesday
10.00 am onwards

27
Friday
6.30 pm

Celebrating Maestro Illayaraja
An evening of Instrumental Music
by Soundari David Rodrigo & ensemble
Venue: ICC Auditorium

Programmes subject to change
Admission to all programmes are on first come first serve basis.
All are cordially invited



Indian Council for Cultural Relations
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Sanskarika

Newsletter of the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo

April 2018



Happy Sinhala & Tamil New Year

Cultural Tapestry

The celebration of a new beginning across India- The many new year celebrations

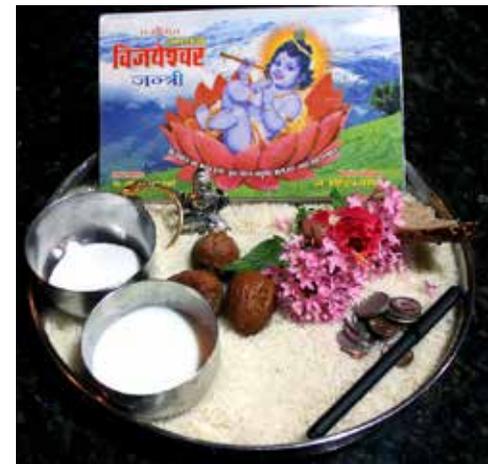
One of the most incredible gift in the life of man and the domestication of plants and animals is the pattern of life that gradually evolved around it. Not only did this result in steadily settling down from a wandering and hunting-gathering way of lifestyle, but also signalled the introduction of agriculture, trade and commerce and a developing and complex family as well as social structure- the beginning of the very first unit of village life. In South Asia, the earliest development of plant and animal husbandry and the first reflections of the same are prominent in the northwestern part of the subcontinent from the eighth through the third millennium cal BC. This has been variously testified through archaeological excavations and zooarchaeological analyses that has shown the domestication of wild forms of goat, sheep, zebu cattle, and water buffalo- which

gradually resulted in a change in man-nature relationship. Agriculture was provided an important helping hand with the gradual domestication of animals. Though the time of domestication is not the same the world over, yet the features that grew out of the result were more or less the same and one of them is the observation of various rites and rituals. With agriculture being an important part of the process of domestication of many cultures, the celebration of the same became a significant part of our lives gradually. Various evidences from the RgVeda also speak about the significant agricultural celebrations around c. 1500 and 1200 BC - which used to correspond with the dual cropping pattern of the ancient times and the months of March-April and September-October seems to hold a special place even in those times.

Across a wide length of history, the concept seems to have remained an integral part of our lifestyle as the many regions of India celebrate the same agricultural festivals across the sub-continent.



Over several thousand years, the nature of festivals has developed across time to be an integral part of our lives. Expanding beyond the mere peripheries of religion, they have grown to become an important part of our socio-cultural ethos. In today's time, they further serve an important aspect of creating a bond between people. In the modern fast-paced lifestyle, festivals help to celebrate our close bond with not only friends and families but Mother Nature as well. They help to not only connect people in specific geographical areas, but also create a bond with the many who are geographically present far away and residing in various regions of the world. In the



modern world of globalisation, this nature of festivals is prominent especially across several celebrations in India and one of them is the many festivals which are observed during the Spring season (March-April), corresponding to the Indian agricultural-calendar months of Phalgun-Chaitra.

Across India, various festivals are observed during this time and can be referred to as Spring Festivals since the ethos of all of these festivals highlight the same aspect. For all the festivals from across India, this is a celebration of thanking Mother Nature for the bountiful winter harvest, welcome a new harvesting year and seek blessings from the forefathers and Mother Nature for the same. Thus, Spring festival is observed under many names across India- across regions as well as communities. Novruz is celebrated by the Parsis across India during the



time of the beginning of the month of Chaitra (March-end). The word Navroz has come from the two words- Nav meaning 'New' and Roz meaning 'Day'. The event marks the 1st day of the Spring Equinox and the beginning of the traditional New Year- i.e. the 1st day of the first month- Farvardin- of the Iranian calendar. It thus, also marks the beginning of Spring in the Northern hemisphere and is roughly celebrated around the time of March 21 every year and is observed the moment the sun crosses the celestial Equator and equalises night and day is calculated exactly every year. Chetti Chand is celebrated by the Sindhi community across India and marks the first day of the Sindhi month of Chet (Chaitra) (March-end). Interestingly, this also coincides typically with other Spring festivals including, Gudi Padwa of Maharashtra, Goa and the Konkan region

of western India, and Ugadi in Andhra Pradesh and Telengana and Karnataka regions of south India, Navreh in Kashmir and Navratra in Jammu of north India. Within a fortnight and by the end of the month of Chaitra (April-end) as a year comes to an end, various festivals mark the occasion with celebrations for sowing of the new harvest for the upcoming summer season. Thus, festivity is marked through the celebrations of Vishu in Kerala, Tamilputhandu in Tamilnadu across south India, Vaisakhi across north and central India, Poila Boisakh in Bengal and Bishuva Sankranti in

