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Chaitra shukla pratipada – means the first day after the new moon in the month of Chaitra [hindi lunar calendar] or you can also say it as the first day during the waxing phase of moon in the Chaitra Month. It marks the beginning of the New Year of Vikram Samvat or better known as Vedic [Hindu] Calendar. This Hindu new year is also known as Gudi Padwa in Maharashtra, Ugadi in Telegu. India is a land enriched with different cultures thus there are various calendars in use depending upon regional and cultural backgrounds. Here mostly the New Year celebration is based upon the harvest mostly. However, the famous Vikram Samvat is based on the day when Vikramaditya defeated Sakas and invaded Ujjain. He called for a new era. Under his supervision astronomers formed new calendar based on luni-solar system that was very much near to accuracy, was released that is still followed in the Northern regions of India. Astronomically, it is the day when the Sun crosses from the southern hemisphere to the northern hemisphere and intersects the celestial equator and ecliptic. It is known as the first point of Aries, this is the day when Sun enters the first sign of zodiac- Aries. More look at here: www.indastro.com/aries.html It is also known as Spring Equinox too. This is the day when a chart is drawn to know the yearly upcoming important events related to country and people. Thus, astronomically it is known as to be important day and celebrated with great respect and honor by offering prayers to Gods and Goddesses. The forecast for the coming year is heard by learned person of the society [generally the priest].

The beginning of the New Year begins by offering salutations to Devi Durga – who is seated on lion and known as symbol of power and victory. The prayers are held for nine days and nine nights therefore known as Nav- means nine and ratri- means night. Devotees keep fast and perform prayers in the glory of Durga Devi and celebrate navratri with full enthusiasm. The first day of the celebration is the first day of the Hindu New Year too, is celebrated throughout India with great enthusiasm. During this day barley is planted in a mud pot along with prayers offered to Lord Ganesha and Devi Parvati. After the sacred ghat sthaapan - prayers are offered to Devi Durga that is concluded with aarti and distribution of Prasad. After that the prophecy of the celestial council and its effect on general public along with the rulers is heard. Many people in North India keep fast for nine days to appease Goddess Durga. It is followed by the celebration of Ram Navami- birth day of Lord Rama.

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