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## ISLAMIC NEW YEAR

The **Islamic New Year** ([Arabic](#): رأس السنة الهجرية, *Ra's as-Sanah al-Hijriyah*), also called the **Hijri New Year** or **Arabic New Year**, is the day that marks the beginning of a new lunar [Hijri year](#), and is the day on which the year count is incremented. The first day of the [Islamic year](#) is observed by most [Muslims](#) on the first day of the month of [Muharram](#). The [epoch \(reference date\)](#) of the [Islamic era](#) was set as [622 Common Era \(CE\)](#), the year of the emigration of [Muhammad](#) and his followers from [Mecca](#) to [Medina](#), known as the [Hijra](#).<sup>[1]</sup> All religious duties, such as [prayer](#), [fasting](#) in the month of [Ramadan](#), and [pilgrimage](#), and the dates of significant events, such as celebration of holy nights and [festivals](#), are calculated according to the Islamic calendar.

While some [Islamic](#) organizations prefer determining the new

month (and hence the new year) by local sightings of the [moon](#),<sup>[2]</sup> most Islamic institutions and countries, including [Saudi Arabia](#),<sup>[3]</sup> follow [astronomical](#) calculations to determine future dates of the Islamic calendar. There are various schemas for calculating the [tabular Islamic calendar](#) (i.e. not based on observation), which results in differences of typically one or even two days between countries using such schema and those that use lunar sightings. For example, the [Umm al-Qura calendar](#) used in Saudi Arabia was reformed several times in recent years. The current scheme was introduced in 1423 [AH](#) (15 March 2002).<sup>[4]</sup>

A day in the Islamic calendar is defined as beginning at [sunset](#). For example, 1 Muharram 1432 was defined to correspond to 7 or 8 December 2010 in [civil calendars](#) (depending on the country). For an observation-

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based calendar, a sighting of the [new moon](#) at sunset of 6 December would mean that 1 Muharram lasted from the moment of sunset of 6 December to the moment of sunset of 7 December, while in places where the new moon was not sighted on 6 December 1 Muharram would last from the moment of sunset of 7 December to the moment of sunset of 8 December.

