

Advance IST by 30 minutes, save Rs.10 bn: scientists

A group of scientists have suggested that the Indian Standard Time (IST) be shifted forward by 30 minutes to reduce peak time energy demand and save at least Rs.10 billion per year.

According to a paper prepared by Dilip R. Ahuja, D.P. Sen, both from the National Institute of Advanced Studies, and V.K. Agrawal, Southern Regional Load Despatch Centre, Bangalore, the shift in IST by 30 minutes will help India use more daylight and reduce the peak power demand during evening.

The shift will put India six hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). Though several countries use multiple time zones, the scientists say it may not be a viable option for India.

'We propose that we advance, once and for all, IST from being the time at the 82.5 degrees East longitude to 90 degrees.... The consequence will be that we would advance the day by half an hour and hence have available an extra half hour of daylight in the evenings, when it is more useful for the entire country,' the scientists said in their paper.

'The major quantifiable benefit will be the savings in peak load electricity,' they added.

The paper published in the Current Science magazine underlines that the average cost of generating energy or electricity in the evening is usually more than the average tariff charged by the government, leading to losses.

'The money value of the saving is likely to be in the range of Rs.1,000 crore (Rs.10 billion) per annum and will alleviate partially the current problem of meeting the evening energy demand,' they said.

If the government goes in for such a change, the percent saving in the evening peak energy demand would be around 16 percent, which is 'substantial', they explained.

The scientists further stressed that the 'saving of about 16 percent will be greater in later years as domestic loads tend to increase with GDP growth.

'We readily acknowledge that some lights may have to be switched on in the mornings, especially in northern and western parts of the country for a few weeks in winter following the time advancement.

'This increase could be considerably reduced by having separate timings for schools during winter, thereby also reducing the inconvenience of sending children to school in dark,' the trio said.

'The only investment that will be required is for planning for the first year of implementation and for subsequent monitoring and evaluation,' the scientists held.

They also pointed out that in the eastern parts of the country, the IST shift would provide an extra hour of daylight as there would be a change in the office timings.

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