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Chaos in Lebanon over what time it is: What is the underlying idea of Daylight Saving Time?

Lebanon saw mass confusion Sunday after its govt decided to delay DST by a month. Why was this practice adopted?

By: Express News Service
New Delhi | March 28, 2023 07:21 IST





People gather near a departures board, amid a dispute between political and religious authorities over a decision to extend winter time, at Beirut International Airport, Lebanon March 26, 2023.

(REUTERS/Mohamed Azakir)

Lebanon was thrown into mass confusion Sunday after its government at the last minute delayed the start of daylight saving time by a month. Meanwhile, Greenland has chosen to stay with daylight saving time forever.

What is daylight saving time?

According to Norway-based Time and Date, daylight saving time (DST) is the practice of setting the clocks forward one hour from the standard time during the summer and back again in the autumn. This is done to make better use of natural daylight. India does not follow daylight saving time as countries near the Equator do not experience high variations in daytime hours between seasons.

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What happened in Lebanon?

clocks would be reset on April 21.

While no reason was given, according to AP, a leaked video shows Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri urging Mikati to postpone DST to allow Muslims to keep their Ramadan fast an hour earlier. The confusion was created as some institutions, including Christian churches, reset their clocks despite Mikati's decision. Thus, airlines, cellphone operators, schools, workplaces, etc., are no longer following the same time.

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What happened in Greenland?

Greenland reset its clocks this weekend, but will leave them undisturbed when daylight saving time ends in autumn. According to AP, officials of Greenland — a Danish semi-independent territory in the Arctic — said another hour of daylight in the afternoons would give them more time to do business with Europe and farther afield.

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Why was this practice adopted?

According to Time and Date, on July 1, 1908, “the residents of Port Arthur, Ontario—today's Thunder Bay—turned their clocks forward by one hour to start the world's first DST period. Other locations in Canada soon followed suit.” The idea caught on globally after Germany and Austria introduced DST on April 30, 1916, to minimise the use of artificial lighting and save fuel during World War I.

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Today, many argue that with most appliances consuming energy running at all hours of the day, DST has lost relevance. Some studies have also shown that disruption of the body clock due to the DST has adverse health effects.

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