Daylight Saving Time

Why in news?

Clocks in the US will “fall back” an hour on Sunday, signalling the end of Daylight Saving Time (DST) this year.

What is Daylight Saving Time (DST)?

- DST is the practice of resetting clocks ahead by an hour in spring, and behind by an hour in autumn (or fall).
- The rationale behind setting clocks ahead of standard time, usually by 1 hour during springtime, is to ensure that the clocks show a later sunrise and later sunset — in effect a longer evening daytime.
- In the Southern Hemisphere, the opposite happens, where countries “spring forward”.
- Because the spring to fall cycle is opposite in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, DST lasts from March to October/November in Europe and the US
- in New Zealand and Australia it lasts from September/October to April.

How many countries use DST?

- DST is in practice in some 70 countries, including those in the EU.
- India does not follow daylight saving time as countries near the Equator do not experience high variations in daytime hours between seasons.
- (There is, however, a separate debate around the logic of sticking with only one time zone in a large country.)
- Most Muslim countries do not use DST — during the holy month of Ramzan which could mean delaying the breaking of the fast for longer.
- Morocco has DST, but suspends it during Ramzan. However, Iran has DST, and stays with it even during Ramzan.

What does this system mean to achieve?

- The key argument is that DST is meant to save energy.
- According to a report, it was initially followed by a group of Canadians on July 1, 1908, when residents of Port Arthur, Ontario, turned their clocks forward by an hour.

- Other locations in Canada soon followed suit.
- However, the idea did not catch on until Germany and Austria introduced DST in 1916 to minimise the use of artificial lighting to save fuel during WWI.

How relevant is DST now?

- A century ago, when DST was introduced, more daylight did mean less use of artificial light.
- But modern society uses so much energy-consuming appliances all day long that the amount of energy saved is negligible.
- Among the biggest disadvantages is the disruption of the body clock or circadian rhythm.

What are the countries that want DST gone?

- In March 2020, the European Union moved to scrap the custom of DST, with the European Parliament voting 410-192.
- After 2021, EU member states will choose between "permanent summertime" or "permanent wintertime".

Source: The Indian Express

