

One Nation, One Time-India's March Towards Time Sovereignty : Pralhad Joshi

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Securing National Infrastructure through Accurate and Traceable Indian Standard Time (IST): Shri Pralhad Joshi



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The Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India, organized a landmark Round Table Conference on Time Dissemination at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, today, under the visionary theme “One Nation, One Time.”

Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and New & Renewable Energy, Shri Pralhad Joshi, emphasized on the strategic significance of the Time Dissemination Project being implemented by the Department of Consumer Affairs in collaboration with CSIR-NPL and ISRO.

He highlighted that the upcoming Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2025, will mandate synchronization of all legal, commercial and administrative activities with Indian Standard Time (IST), prohibiting the use of alternative time references unless explicitly authorized.

The Minister underscored that precise and uniform dissemination of IST across sectors such as financial markets, power grids, telecommunications, transportation and others are essential to ensuring fairness, accuracy and national security.

The initiative aims to deliver IST with millisecond to microsecond accuracy through five Regional Reference Standard Laboratories (RRSLs) equipped with atomic clocks and secure synchronization protocols like NTP and PTP, ushering in a new era of digital and administrative efficiency under the vision of "One Nation, One Time."

Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, Smt. Nidhi Khare, in her presentation highlighted the urgent need for accurate, secure and legally mandated dissemination of IST to ensure uniformity across strategic and non-strategic sectors.

She explained that under the Time Dissemination Project, the Department in collaboration with CSIR-NPL and ISRO is establishing an advanced infrastructure comprising five Regional Reference Standard Laboratories (RRSLs) in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Faridabad, and Guwahati. These centers are being equipped with atomic clocks and secure synchronization systems using Network Time Protocol (NTP) and Precision Time Protocol (PTP) to ensure millisecond to microsecond accuracy.

The Secretary emphasized that the forthcoming Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2025, will mandate synchronization of all legal, administrative and commercial operations with IST, making India's timekeeping infrastructure legally enforceable, digitally secure and globally benchmarked.

Her presentation outlined the risks posed by current reliance on foreign time sources, including cybersecurity vulnerabilities like spoofing and jamming. She further stated that the implementation of these rules would be a crucial step toward ensuring traceability, enhancing operational reliability, and fostering national time sovereignty. The initiative, is a major step in building a trusted and standardized digital ecosystem across the country.

Shri Bharat Khera, Additional Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, in his welcome address, emphasized that adopting a comprehensive approach to time management strengthens the Government's ability to carry out enforcement activities with greater efficiency, accuracy and coordination, thereby enhancing overall administrative effectiveness.

The conference featured expert presentations on time synchronization challenges and the necessity of reducing dependency on foreign time sources like GPS, which pose risks such as spoofing and jamming. Stakeholders from diverse sectors such as banking, telecom, energy, stock markets and transportation echoed the importance of an indigenous, precise, and verifiable time standard.

The Time Dissemination initiative is the result of sustained inter-ministerial coordination and technical consultations since 2018. Meetings were held with the Principal Scientific Adviser, Deputy NSA, Cabinet Secretariat and NSCS. Over 60 meetings have been held

by the Department of Consumer Affairs, with extensive engagement with CSIR-NPL, ISRO and other key stakeholders.

This sustained engagement led to the formulation of the Draft Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2025. For the common man, this initiative translates into more secure digital transactions, accurate billing in utilities, reduced cybercrime risks and synchronized timekeeping in transportation and communication, ensuring fairness, transparency, and trust in day-to-day services.

The Round Table Conference witnessed active participation from over 100 stakeholders representing a broad spectrum of sectors. These included senior officials from key Government Ministries and Departments such as the Department of Telecommunication, Ministry of Power, Ministry of Electronics & IT, Ministry of Finance, SEBI, NSCS, Railways, and the Central Bank of India.

Technical partners from CSIR-NPL and ISRO also played a central role. Leading public and private sector organizations like Power Grid, RailTel, BSNL, NSE, BSE and major telecom and internet service providers such as Reliance Jio, Airtel, Sify and Tata Communications participated.

Industry associations including FICCI, CII, ASSOCHAM, PHD Chamber, COAI and TEMA were well-represented, alongside key cybersecurity and digital infrastructure stakeholders like CERT-In, NIC, NCIIPC and CCA. Voluntary Consumer Organizations (VCOs) and representatives from ICICI, Bank of Baroda and various other stakeholders also contributed to the discussions, reaffirming collective national support for the adoption of Indian Standard Time across sectors.