LEGAL METROLOGY

Rules make Indian Standard Time the only time reference

G.S.R. 761(E) makes IST the only time reference and sets sync, backup and record-keeping duties for all users, with added duties for critical sectors.

THE DEPARTMENT OF Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, issued notification G.S.R. 761(E), dated August 27, 2026, making the Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2026. The Central Government made them under section 52 of the Legal Metrology Act, 2009, and they were published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 3, Sub-section (i), No. 695, of the same date. They come into force after one hundred and eighty days from the date of publication in the Official Gazette. They give no calendar date; the Gazette issue is dated August 27, 2026, and its digital signature is dated August 29, 2026. Anupam Mishra, Additional Secretary, signed them under F. No. I-9/1/2025-W&M.

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Notification G.S.R. 761(E), the Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2026



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Legal Metrology · August 27, 2026

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The rules define Indian Standard Time (IST) as the official time scale for all civil, commercial and legal purposes in India, realized and maintained by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research - National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL). It is derived by adding an offset of 5 hours and 30 minutes to UTC(NPLI), CSIR-NPL's realization of Coordinated Universal Time (UTC). NavIC is Navigation with Indian Constellation, developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). An "Authorised Timing Source" is any institution, system or service the Director (Legal Metrology) authorizes to disseminate UTC(NPLI) or IST. The Director may suspend or revoke an authorization for non-compliance after a hearing. These sources provide time by standard protocols, including Network Time Protocol (NTP) and Precision Time Protocol (PTP). The Director is to publish the addresses or access protocols for designated NTP, PTP, NavIC and other services, and may specify a subscription fee.

All references to time in legal, administrative and official documents are to be IST unless explicitly stated otherwise. IST is the standard time reference across all sectors, including commerce, transport, public administration, legal contracts and financial operations. The standard format is HH:MM:SS, or DD-MM-YYYY- HH:MM:SS with the date. Rule 7 says no entity shall use, display or record any time reference other than IST for all purposes. Its proviso reads: "if any law in force or orders or directions or guidelines permits for display of time of foreign time zones with clear labelling alongside Indian Standard Time (IST), alternate time scales may be used for scientific research, navigation or astronomy with prior approval". The rules do not say who gives that approval.

Government offices and public institutions must synchronize time-dependent applications and public time displays to IST through an authorized timing source. Major public locations, including railways, airports and Government offices, must display IST synchronized with a traceable source. Entities operating within critical sectors, "including telecommunications, financial services, energy and data centers", must synchronize time-dependent systems to IST. They must use an authorized time source traceable to UTC(NPLI): NPLI, a Regional Reference Standards Laboratory (RRSL), a NavIC based timing reference or device, the National Informatics Centre, or other authorized timing sources. Rule 9(6) gives a longer list of critical infrastructure

sectors, "including defence, power grids, utilities, telecommunications, banking and finance, transportation, enterprises, broadcasting, data centers, etc." These must use a redundant time synchronization system that incorporates NavIC or one or more authorized timing sources as a timing reference, "in addition to other authorised timing source".

Other duties apply beyond critical sectors. Every end entity, meaning any person, user, organization or system receiving and using time from an authorized timing source, bears exclusive responsibility for the accuracy, stability and traceability of time within its systems and must employ a redundant time synchronization system. The end user must monitor deviations, record them in accordance with international standards and keep auditable data showing traceability. All entities and organizations must keep a comprehensive contingency plan against disruptions, including jamming, spoofing and cyber-attacks, and integrate one or more authorized timing sources. Time-synchronization systems must carry cybersecurity measures against malicious attacks. Periodic audits are to be conducted. A breach is punishable under the provisions of the Act, and the Director, Legal Metrology or an authorized officer conducts an inquiry and imposes the penalty. The rules give no penalty amount, accuracy figure or audit frequency, and do not set out the information technology security guidelines that rule 9(4) refers to.

Issued by	Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
Document	Notification G.S.R. 761(E), the Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2026
Dated	August 27, 2026
Published	Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 3, Sub-section (i), No. 695, August 27, 2026
Applies to	Every entity that uses, displays or records time, with further duties for end entities, Government offices and public institutions, major public locations, critical sectors and authorized timing sources
Takes effect	After one hundred and eighty days from the date of publication in the Official Gazette; the rules give no calendar date
Indian Standard Time	UTC(NPLI) plus an offset of 5 hours and 30 minutes, realized and maintained by CSIR-NPL
Format	HH:MM:SS; with the date, DD-MM-YYYY- HH:MM:SS
Other time references	Not to be used, displayed or recorded for any purpose; the proviso allows alternate time scales for scientific research, navigation or astronomy with prior approval, if a law in force or orders, directions

	or guidelines permit the display of foreign time zones with clear labeling alongside IST
Dissemination	Standard protocols including NTP and PTP, NavIC or other authorized means; addresses published by the Director (Legal Metrology), who may specify a subscription fee
Sources for critical sectors	NPLI; RRSL; NavIC based timing reference/device; National Informatics Centre; other authorized timing sources
Redundancy	Every end entity: a redundant time synchronization system; critical infrastructure sectors: one that incorporates NavIC or one or more authorized timing sources as a timing reference, "in addition to other authorised timing source"
Penalties	A breach is punishable under the provisions of the Legal Metrology Act, 2009; the Director, Legal Metrology or an authorized officer conducts an inquiry and imposes the penalty; no amount stated
Legal basis	Section 52, Legal Metrology Act, 2009
File number	F. No. I-9/1/2025-W&M
Signed by	Anupam Mishra, Additional Secretary

Who must do what under the rules

Who	What the rules require	Rule
Every entity	Use, display or record no time reference other than IST, for all purposes; the proviso allows alternate time scales for scientific research, navigation or astronomy with prior approval, if a law in force or orders, directions or guidelines permit the display of foreign time zones with clear labeling alongside IST	7
End entity: any person, user, organization or system receiving and using time from an authorized timing source	Bear exclusive responsibility for the accuracy, stability and traceability of time within its systems; employ a redundant time synchronization system to ensure continuous time traceable to UTC(NPLI) or IST	6(4), 9(2)
End user	Monitor deviations, record them in accordance with international standards, and keep auditable data to demonstrate traceability of its time to the national time standard	6(5)
User	Maintain uninterrupted timing if a reference input fails, using atomic clocks calibrated by CSIR-NPL or an RRSL, or time from authorized timing sources	9(9)

All entities and organizations	Implement and maintain a comprehensive contingency plan against disruptions, including jamming, spoofing and cyber-attacks; integrate one or more authorized timing sources into their timing infrastructure	9(3), 9(8)
Time-synchronization systems	Cybersecurity measures to safeguard against malicious attacks; secure housing, hardware, software and procedures; a dependable level of reliability; security procedures for accountability, availability, reliability and traceability of time; standards, guidelines and procedures the Government specifies	9(1), 9(5)
Global navigation satellite systems based timing devices	Receive at least one timing reference directly from the NavIC constellation or from an authorized timing source	9(7)
Entities operating within critical sectors, "including telecommunications, financial services, energy and data centers"	Synchronize time-dependent systems to IST using an authorized time source traceable to UTC(NPLI): NPLI, RRSL, NavIC based timing reference/device, National Informatics Centre, or other authorized timing sources	8(4)
Critical infrastructure sectors, "including defence, power grids, utilities, telecommunications, banking and finance, transportation, enterprises, broadcasting, data centers, etc."	Use a redundant time synchronization system that incorporates NavIC or one or more authorized timing sources as a timing reference, in addition to other authorized timing source	9(6)
Government offices and public institutions	Synchronize time-dependent applications and public time displays to IST through an authorized timing source	8(1)
Major public locations, including railways, airports and Government offices	Display IST synchronized with a traceable source	8(3)
Authorized timing sources	Maintain accuracy and traceability to UTC(NPLI) or IST; provide a traceable time signal; provide dissemination services by standard protocols, including NTP and PTP; be subject to audits, as are the RRSLs	6(3), 6(4), 8(5), 10(2)
CSIR-NPL	Maintain UTC(NPLI), the primary time scale of India, traceable to UTC, and realize IST	5(3), 10(3)
Legal Metrology Division	Establish and maintain secondary time scales at RRSLs traceable to IST; oversee and enforce compliance with the rules	5(5), 10(4)
Director (Legal Metrology)	Authorize timing sources and suspend or revoke them; publish the NTP, PTP, NavIC and other access addresses; may specify a subscription fee; conduct an inquiry and impose penalty on a breach (or an authorized officer does)	2(c), 8(2), 8(5), 11(2)

The notification (PDF, 756 KB)

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