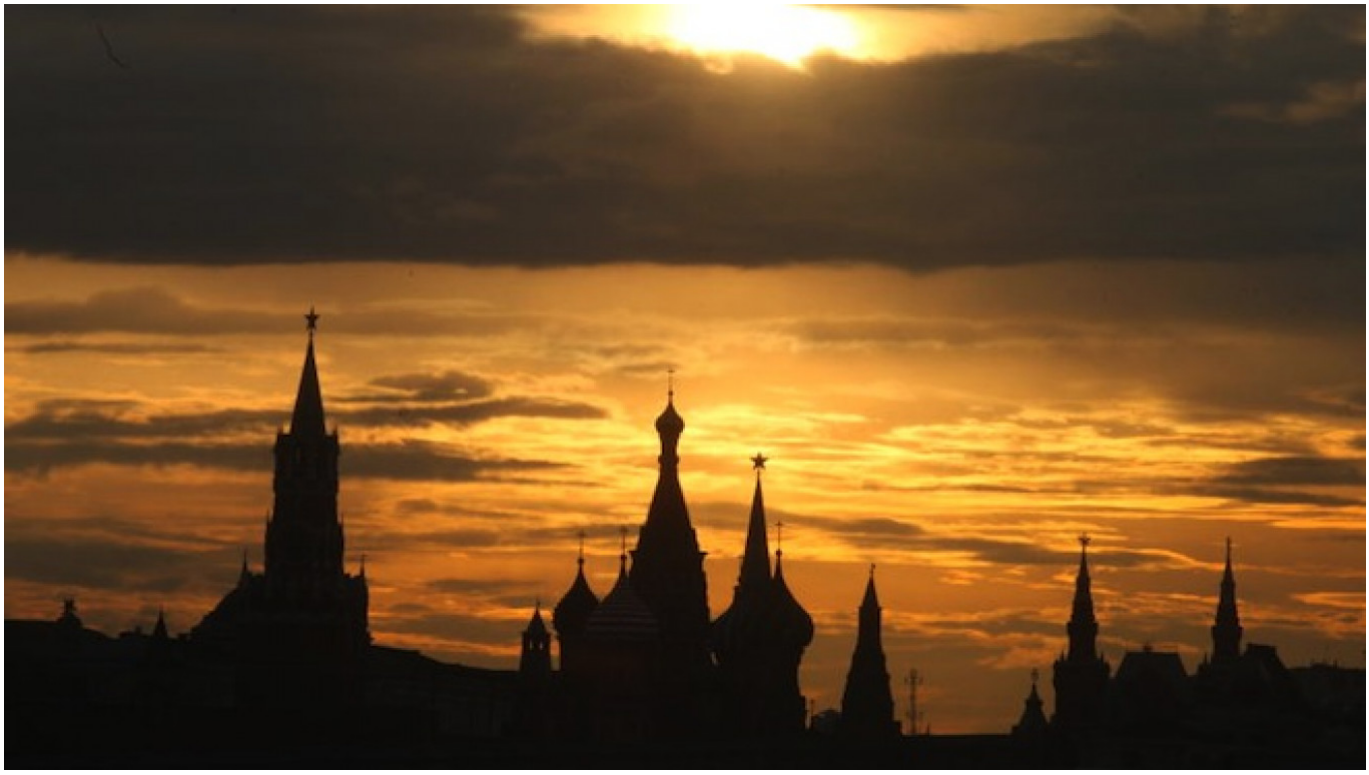
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Moscow Residents Struggle with Early Sunrise on 'Winter Time'

By Elizaveta Vereykina

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More Muscovites are complaining of insomnia and buying blackout curtains this summer to cope with the early sunrise brought on by Russia's permanent switch to "winter time" last year, newspaper Moskovsky Komsomolets reported Thursday,

"We noticed an increase in shoppers the middle of May," Natalia Borovikova, manager of a curtain shop in Moscow told Moskovsky Komsomolets. "People are interested in blinds that block out the light so it looks like night even in the middle of the day."

The official sunrise in Moscow right now is about 3:45 a.m., but the sky begins to get light 45-60 minutes earlier.

Doctors have also seen an increase in the number of patients complaining about insomnia and increased stress due to lack of sleep.

"The photons of light that permeate a human's brain give the body a signal to wake up ... As the result, it leads to catastrophic lack of sleep ... People begin to suffer from hypertension, problems with the thyroid gland, blood vessels," Roman Buzunov, a sleep disorder specialist told Moskovsky Komsomolets, adding that the permanent switch to winter time was "a mistake."

In July 2014, the State Duma voted to end Russia's short-lived stint on year-round "summer time," which began in 2011 when former President Dmitry Medvedev led an initiative for Russians to move their clocks forward an hour in the spring, but not move them back in the fall. The same legislation reduced the number of time zones in Russia from 11 to nine.

The summer solstice will take place this weekend on June 21.

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