

# Germany unveils world's 1st hydrogen-powered train fleet



AP/PTI

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German officials launched what they say is the world's first fleet of hydrogen-powered passenger trains on Wednesday, replacing 15 diesel trains that previously operated on nonelectrified tracks in the state of Lower Saxony.

The 14 trains use hydrogen fuel cells to generate electricity that powers the engines. The German government has backed expanding the use of hydrogen as a clean alternative to fossil fuels.

State governor Stephan Weil said the 93-million-euro (\$92 million) project was an "excellent example" for Lower Saxony's efforts to make its economy greener.

The trains manufactured by French company Alstom are operated by regional rail company LNVG on routes between the northern towns of Cuxhaven, Bremerhaven, Bremervoerde, and Buxtehude.

Alstom says the Coradia iLint trains have a range of up to 1,000 kilometres (621 miles) and a maximum speed of 140 kph (87 mph).

By using hydrogen produced with

renewable energy the trains will save 1.6 million litres (more than 422,000 gallons) of diesel fuel a year.

The hydrogen is currently produced as a byproduct in chemical processes, but German specialty gas company Linde plans to manufacture it locally using only renewable energy within three years.

Meanwhile, Germany on Wednesday prioritised the transportation of materials and equipment essential for energy production on part of the country's rail networks in case water levels on the Rhine fall further and hamper shipping by river,

according to a decree approved by the cabinet. The aim of the decree is to ensure the operation of power stations, refineries and power transport networks, which need more coal and mineral oil as Russian pipeline gas exports have fallen amid an East-West standoff over the war in Ukraine.

Shortages of gas have also resulted in industry temporarily switching to more coal and oil usage to fuel manufacturing processes.

"In order to ensure security of supply, we also have to change the delivery routes," said economy minister Robert Habeck in a statement.

"This requires very demanding logistics, which makes it necessary to prioritise energy transport by rail," he added.

The law will apply for six months mostly to help Germany's economy avoid disruption in the coming winter season when households heat with gas and energy demand will surge.

DB Netz, the network arm of railway operator Deutsche Bahn, is making rearrangements to ensure a preference for trains carrying mineral oil products and hard coal for power generators on designated corridors, said transport minister Volker Wissing.