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TRAIN RUNNING ON LNG

» Dual-Fuel System

- With railway electrification work nearing completion, Indian Railways has introduced a new train capable of operating on both Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and diesel.
- The train, consisting of 8 non-air-conditioned coaches, recently began service from Sabarmati Railway Station in Gujarat.
- This is not an entirely new train. An existing diesel-electric train has been modified and designed to operate using a dual-fuel system.
- At present, most trains in Indian Railways are operated using electric locomotives. Diesel locomotives are mainly used on routes that have not yet been electrified.
- By using LNG instead of diesel, pollution and emissions can be reduced.
- Therefore, the Railways plans to gradually convert existing diesel-electric trains across the country so that they can operate using LNG.

WHEN WILL THE IRAN WAR END?

» Background of the War

- The conflict may be considered to have begun on February 28. On that day, the United States and Israel jointly launched attacks on Iran.
- The United States cited several reasons for the attack. Among them were : Changing the regime in Iran, Destroying Iran's nuclear-weapons capability
- On the very first day of the war, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, several military commanders and members of their families were reportedly killed.
- Civilians and schoolchildren were also killed. However, Iran did not surrender as the United States had expected.
- Instead, Iran attacked US military bases located in Gulf countries, as well as Israel.
- More importantly, Iran blocked traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.
- The Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf with the Arabian Sea through the Gulf of Oman.
- About 20% of the world's fuel/energy supplies are transported through this route.
- When this route was blocked, fuel prices increased around the world.

» Conditions

- The following conditions were put forward : All military operations must be stopped. The blockade of Iranian ports must be lifted.
- The United States, which has imposed economic sanctions on Iran since 1978, must remove those sanctions.
- The United States agreed to these conditions. The agreement also contained an assurance that Iran would not manufacture nuclear weapons.
- However, once reopening the Strait of Hormuz became the immediate priority, the nuclear-weapons issue moved to the background.
- Strait of Hormuz : Iran lies on one side of the Strait of Hormuz, while Oman lies on the other.
- After the June agreement, Iran allowed ships to travel only along the route close to its own coastline.
- However, some vessels, with support from the United States, began travelling through the route close to the Omani coast. Iran then began attacking such vessels.
- Iran argued that, according to the agreement, it was responsible for traffic through the Strait and therefore ships should use only the route approved by Iran.
- The United States described this as a violation of the agreement.

» Ceasefire and Continued Tensions

- In the fourth week after the agreement, Donald Trump announced on July 9 that the ceasefire had ended. Mutual attacks continued.
- At the same time, negotiations mediated by Qatar and Pakistan also continued.
- Compromise and Dispute : Against this background, Iran announced that it was willing to reopen the Strait.
- However, the United States now refuses to accept the conditions that it had reportedly agreed to in June.
- Iran restricted traffic along the route near its own coast. But ships travelling along the Omani side of the Strait have continued under the protection of the US Navy.
- By September, the number of vessels crossing the Strait in this manner may have reached around 75% of the pre-war traffic level.
- Providing US naval protection to shipping along the Omani coast is highly expensive.
- It also involves considerable risk and high insurance costs. This is one reason why international oil prices have not fallen significantly.
- The question therefore arises: How long can Donald Trump continue to provide this level of maritime protection?
- Secondly, Iran's attacks after the agreement have so far remained relatively limited.
- If Iran intensifies its attacks, both shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf countries could face much greater disruption.
- The final question is therefore : Does Donald Trump have a clear plan to deal with such an escalation?