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Malappuram, Heavy Rain, Flood

Rain hits GAIL pipeline work hard

Paddy fields inundated, equipment and machinery submerged in water

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The heavy rain that inundated paddy fields and low-lying areas in the district has had its toll on GAIL India's natural gas pipe-laying work.

Much of the equipment and machinery, including earth movers, used for the pipeline work is submerged, posing a big challenge to GAIL India authorities.

Officials admitted that a day's rain could pull the work by about one month backward.

More than the loss by way of machinery damage, the time lost will cost the company dearer.

As the project has been outsourced on contract basis, GAIL India authorities said that they were not worried.

The officials said that the flooding would not cause any damage to the gas pipes. As pipes take more than 60% of the total project cost, floods causing damage to machinery are not a cause of worry.

The mud and sludge that entered the pipelines in the floods will be cleared after laying work is done. The GAIL authorities clarified that even in normal circumstances, different levels of



An earth-mover used for laying gas pipe lying submerged in flood waters at Pookkottoor, near Malappuram. • SAKHEER HUSSAIN

cleaning would be done before the commissioning of the project. During the cleaning stage, hydro-testing and nitrogen filling will be done.

As much as 35-km stretch of the total 53-km pipeline in the district is going through paddy fields. And no field in the district is has been spared by the rains.

Although two-thirds of the pipes are lying in the rainwaters, the project work has

not stopped in Malappuram and Kozhikode districts.

The GAIL authorities are making use of the rains to carry out the work in rocky terrains. Although the rains would cause much delay to the project, officials said that they expected to finish the pipe laying by the end of this year.

Kalpataru Power Transmission Ltd (KPTL) is laying the pipeline in Malappuram and Kozhikode districts.

Contracts have been assigned to competent companies at different places for laying the pipeline.

Kochi to Mangaluru

Horizontal directional drilling (HDD) technology is being used to lay the pipeline across the rivers.

GAIL India officials said that the pipeline would be at least five or six metres below the riverbed so that sand-mining or any other activity

in the river would not affect the pipeline.

They said the HDD technology was being employed to lay the pipeline across major roads. However, village roads will be cut open and filled after laying the pipeline.

The officials said that no traffic would be affected anywhere as the work would be done at night. HDD boring will be done across highways.