

## IOC seeks TN help to expedite pipelines

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CHENNAI: Indian Oil Corporation has sought the help of the Tamil Nadu government to hasten approvals for its two stalled pipeline projects to improve fuel availability in the State at times of crisis such as the one Chennai city faced during the recent rains.

The projects, which have been stalled are the Rs.124 crore Cauvery Basin Refinery Narimanam - Tiruchi product pipeline and Rs.711 crore LPG pipeline from Chennai to Madurai via Tiruchi, for want of necessary approvals from the State government.

Talking to *The Hindu*, a senior IOC official said: "Last week, Chennai city faced a fuel crisis, even though we had enough stock on hand at Manali Refinery. To diffuse the crisis, we used underground pipeline to pump petroleum products to our depots in Tiruchi, Madurai, Sankagiri, Chittoor and Bengaluru, which was transported back to Chennai by trucks. The problem would have been severe, but for the existing Chennai-Madurai product pipeline. Hence, we are urging the State to grant approval for these projects."

### Narimanam-Tiruchi pipeline

Seeking early approval for the Narimanam-Tiruchi pipeline project, he said: "If Chen-

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nai plant is unable to deliver petroleum products to consuming cities due to unforeseen circumstances, then POL vessels can easily be diverted to Nagapattinam port and from there petroleum products can be moved to Tiruchi by pipeline with minimum risk of disruption."

He also said that Tiruchi had excellent rail-road connectivity and petroleum products such as petrol, diesel and kerosene could be moved to any part of the State.

The State-run oil company's moves to expedite the pipelines gain importance as Chennai faced a fuel crisis last week, following the closure of Manali refinery due to heavy flooding at the premises and the non-availability of truck drivers to move the fuel to retail outlets. The use of generator sets also led to a sudden surge in demand for diesel.

"The Nagapattinam-Tiruchi project has been hanging fire for the last two years. So far 40 per cent of the work has been completed. We seek the help of the State government to accord all clearances to complete the balance project at the earliest," he said.