

57% telecom towers exposed to cyclonic winds: Report

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Chennai: Telecom disruptions during disasters could put lives at risk by cutting off early warnings, as 16,113 of Tamil Nadu's 48,416 telecom towers (33%) are exposed to medium to very high flood hazards and 27,690 (57%) are located in high or very high cyclonic wind zones, says a report by Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

"Our analysis showed that nearly one-third of the state's telecom towers are in flood-prone areas. Without reliable networks, emergency services can fail when communities need them most—putting lives, livelihoods and the digital economy at risk," said CDRI director general Amit Prothi. "Tamil Nadu depends on its telecom networks to sustain growth and deliver essential



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services. Strengthening the resilience of these networks is urgent."

Chennai, Chengalpet and Kancheepuram were found to have most number of towers exposed to very high floods, while Chennai, Chengalpet and Tiruvallur have the most towers exposed to very high cyclonic winds.

Around 6,796 towers (14%) are in areas vulnerable to storm surges exceeding 6m, with Kancheepuram, Thanjavur and Tirunelveli being the most vulnerable

districts. Another 516 towers are exposed to landslide hazards, with the highest numbers in the Nilgiris and Dindigul districts.

The assessment used geographic information system-based multi-hazard mapping and stakeholder consultations to examine telecom infrastructure vulnerabilities.

The report recommends that critical telecom towers in the state withstand basic wind speeds of up to 250kmph. It also calls for a single-window permission system to expedite restoration during disasters, a state-level disaster task force to validate operators' damage reports, updated data formats for assessing disaster impacts and the use of local-scale risk models for preparedness.

Nationally, 27% of telecom towers are vulnerable to high earthquake hazards.