

# Storm ahead? Get yourself covered



## T.A. Ramalingam lists the three must-have insurance covers you should take against natural disasters

**T**he nature and severity of natural and man-made disasters have been increasing globally. Natural calamities are now occurring at an unnatural frequency where in cyclones, floods, earthquakes, which used to be a once-in-a-10-year phenomenon, are now an occurrence every year. India particularly is prone to natural calamities such as earthquakes, floods, tsunamis and cyclones.

According to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), more than 40 million hectares or 12 per cent of the country's land is prone to floods and river erosion.

Disasters seriously threaten India's economy, its population and sustainable development, mainly because of its increasing vulnerabilities related to changing demographics, socio-economic conditions, unplanned urbanisation and global warming.

Natural disasters are often devastating, unavoidable and uncontrollable. In the recent past we saw calamities such as the Kerala floods and Cyclone Fani causing massive destruction to several houses and vehicles.

Similar is the situation today, where because of Cyclone Amphan many people are stranded and have incurred huge losses because of damages to their assets.

However, insurance is a tool that can help you recuperate from the damages caused because of these disasters. In the case of natural disasters in India, there is a vast difference between the economic losses and insured losses. This is mainly because of the "nothing will happen to me attitude" of people, and also, the lack of awareness about the importance of insurance. Here are a few insurance covers

that one must have to protect oneself, one's family members and their hard-earned assets.

### Protect your homes

One of the biggest loss that a person can incur because of a natural disaster is any damage to his or her home. However, it is unfortunate that, despite paying high EMIs and investing their savings in it, most people give little priority to protecting their house with home insurance.

Home insurance is a step towards protecting your home against the threats that natural calamities pose, where you not only shield the structure of your house, but also the contents within. Insuring your home keeps you free from worries in such challenging times while also ensuring a swift revival to normalcy.

Home insurance is inexpensive especially when compared to other means that one invests in to secure their home or property. One can buy this policy for a year or for a longer period and customise it according to one's needs.

### Health first

Health insurance is a must have in today's age as previously unheard ailments are affecting masses and a steep increase in medical costs is making it difficult for people to access quality medical treatments.

During natural disasters, especially in the case of flooding, there is an increased risk of infections and outbreak of communicable diseases and waterborne diseases such as typhoid fever, cholera, leptospirosis and vector borne diseases such as malaria, dengue. Hence, it is crucial to have an adequate health insurance that covers medical expenses and ensures that

you can access quality healthcare services whenever in need.

### Comprehensive motor cover

While most vehicles plying on Indian roads may have a third party liability cover as it is mandated by law, not many vehicles have a comprehensive motor insurance which also covers damages to the vehicles.

Natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes etc can cause severe damage to your vehicle. Such damages to the vehicle due to natural calamities are covered under the own damage (OD) section of a comprehensive motor insurance policy. It is crucial to have a comprehensive motor insurance policy as the extent of the damage can vary from a minor crack in the windshield to a total damage of the vehicle.

Additionally, it is advisable to opt for necessary add-on covers along with a comprehensive motor insurance policy like an engine protector, depreciation shield, 24x7 roadside assistance that enhance the coverage of your vehicle.

These natural calamities are certainly an eye opener for many and some people do realise the importance of having insurance during such times. However, there are very few who actually buy insurance, as in most cases once the effect of the calamity reduces, so does the interest of people in insurance.

Natural disasters like most other risks we face are unpredictable. Hence, it is advisable to be prepared for it with necessary insurance covers so that you are not defenceless against disasters and are able to manage losses, without dipping into your hard-earned life savings and investments.

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