



INTERNET ARTICLE

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SA's water situation stabilize - report

The recent heavy rains in parts of South Africa have helped to stabilise South Africa's water situation as they maintained an average 60% dam levels this week..

A weekly report by the Department of Water and Sanitation on dam levels shows that there is an average 21 191,2 cubic metres of water in storage across the country. South Africans breathed a sigh of relief last week after showers fell across major parts of the country to usher the Spring season, with the hope that this is a sign of good rains in the next few months of Spring and Summer.

The report also indicates that dam levels have plummeted by 15% since the beginning of winter, declining by an average one percent week-on-week.

Free State remains at the top with the highest dam levels in the country. Although it dropped its levels marginally, the province recorded 76,9% of capacity this week. It is followed by Gauteng and Northern Cape at 97,4% 95,5% respectively. Both provinces have the smaller dams that fill up quickly compared to the Free State which has the biggest and deepest reservoirs. Gariiep Dam in Free State is the biggest water reservoir in the country and has peaked at 80,7% while Sterkfontein on the south east of the province continues to be steady at 93,9%.

Elsewhere, the water situation in the Western Cape continues to improve as the province's dam levels in the winter rainfall area recorded a high of 84,2%, an increase of 4% from last week. The regular winter rainfall has boosted the province's water situation substantially and the levels are expected to continue rising before the end of the wet hydrological season in about two months. At the moment the provincial average stands at 75,5%.

Mpumalanga and Limpopo continue to hold out at the middle of the table with Mpumalanga recording 68%, dropping marginally from 68,6% last week, while Limpopo recorded 60,9%, marginally lower than the 61,3% a week ago. Driekoppies and Maguga dams on the Lowveld of Mpumalanga are drifting at 72,2% and 65,2% apiece while Inyaka in Bushbuckridge is on the throes plunging below half at 51,2%

On average, Limpopo dams have improved substantially, having risen from below 50% eight months ago. The Vhembe big three dams, Vondo, Nadoniand Mutshedzi, held the fort as they averaged 95% capacity. However, the situation in the citrus fruit Mopani District is worrying as the three major



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dams – Modjadji, Tzaneen and Middel-Letaba - hover below 20%. Tzaneen Dam, a major supplier of citrus fruit industry, recorded 12% this week.

In KwaZulu-Natal several water reservoirs are keeping the province afloat with their averages of about 80%. The Driel Barrage that is supplied by UThukela River tops the charts at 98,1%, followed by Midmar Dam in Natal Midlands at 93,9%.

A total of four dams in North West has realized the full 100% capacity and pushed the province's average levels to 65,9%, down slightly from 66,6% a week ago. Both Boskop and Elandskuil dams are bursting at the seams at 102,3% and 100,9% respectively. This marks a substantial recovery from levels that were at below half at the beginning of the year. The province was one of three whose water levels had dropped to below half in February this year.

A heavy snow fall in Eastern Cape two weeks ago has helped to stabilise the water situation quite considerably as the dam levels have maintained an average 50,6%. However, the situation is expected to improve in the next few months when the summer rains begin to drench large parts of South Africa.

The Department of Water and Sanitation would like to thank all those who heeded its call to save water during the dry winter season. the department urged all South Africans to continue the water conservation efforts to save the country's scarce resource.

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