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INTERNET ARTICLE

South Africans welcomes heavy downpours

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South Africans have welcomed the persistent heavy downpours that fell in large parts of South Africa since the beginning of the week

According to the latest weekly report on dam levels by the Department of Water and Sanitation Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape are among the provinces whose dam levels increased considerably as a result of the sustained downpours. Northern Cape dams went up by two percent while other provinces increased their capacity by an average one percent

Of particular concern, however, is Eastern Cape, whose water facilities dipped deeper as they recorded 47,9% from last week's 48,2%. The province has been in the grip of a drought for the past four years, living residents in most regions struggling to access potable water. This led to the provincial government last year declaring the province a disaster area. The Department of Water and Sanitation is pulling all the stops to help beleaguered municipalities to stay afloat. Last month the department announced a R50 million package to help alleviate the water situation in the province.

The South African Weather Services (SAWS) has predicted more rains for Gauteng, Free State, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal. The heavy downpours are expected to subside by Friday.

At 69,8%, Free State dam levels continue to be the highest in the country, followed by Gauteng and Northern Cape respectively. Western Cape, whose dams were beginning to drop because of the end of its hydrological season, picked up its levels from 79,9% to 80,1%. Following the rains, Theewaterskloof Dam which forms part of the Western Cape Integrated System soared from 100% to 100,1%.

Next week the Department of Water and Sanitation will pump water from Sterkfontein Dam in Free State to the Vaal Dam whose level has dropped below 30%. In the past months water levels at the Vaal Dam have been dropping at the rate of one percent week-on-week. However, other dams in Gauteng continued to rise exponentially, with Bon Accord in Pretoria North recording a whopping 108,4% and Bronkhortspruit on the border with Mpumalanga reaching 80,9%



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The sustained rainfall in North West pushed the province's dam levels from 60,9% to 62,8% this week, while Limpopo dropped slightly from 57,2% to 57%. With the predicted more rainfall in the next two days, North West levels are set to increase further. KwaZulu-Natal dams are also expected to increase substantially with the current rains falling in large parts of the province, including Umkhanyakude and Zululand regions which have been plagued by acute water shortages. SAWS predicted a 60% more rainfalls for the province until Friday.

Against this background, the Department of Water and Sanitation has warned South Africans against complacency as the current rain do not mark an end to water challenges. Instead, water users must double their efforts to save and harvest as much water as possible, the department said.

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