

Torrential rains improve SA's water levels

The latest weekly report by the Department of Water and Sanitation shows that dam levels in the Eastern Cape are sitting at 51% after the recent torrential rains.



Image source: www.pexels.com

“With more rains expected in the run-up to Christmas, it is likely that the levels may soon soar to 55% and beyond,” the Department of Water and Sanitation said on Wednesday, 16 December. The department said in the past weeks, vast parts of the country have been soaked with torrential rains that have changed the water situation drastically.

“The current heavy downpours have increased Gauteng dam levels by 5%, from 91.7% to 96.1% since the beginning of December.

“The increased levels, which include the Vaal Dam, will bring much-needed relief to Gauteng water users,” the department said.

Free State tops the charts with its week-on-week dam level improvement, which the report captured at 72.4% this week. The figure reflects a 7% increase compared to the same period last year when the dams stood at 65.2%.

With the exception of the Western Cape and Limpopo, all provinces registered an increase in dam levels.

In the Western Cape, which has entered a dry hydrological summer season, total dam levels dropped from 77.2% to 76% this week. However, the figure reflects a 16% improvement compared to the corresponding period last year, when the province experienced the worst drought in a century.

Limpopo dropped slightly from 56.1% to 55.8%. The department said the situation in Mopani and Mogalakwena districts is a great source of concern.

No drop in Middel-Letaba Dam

“There is virtually no drop in Middel-Letaba Dam, which registered a measly 0.7% this week. The dam supplies Giyani and its sprawling villages. Glen Alpine Dam, which supplies several towns in the Waterberg District, including Mokopane, dropped from 6.5% to 5.7% this week,” the department said.

The South African Weather Service has, however, predicted thundershowers for most parts of the province, giving hope that the water situation might improve by the end of the week.

Mpumalanga looks set for a bumper season, as its dams record a 1% rise week-on-week. This week, local dams improved their intake from 63.4% to 64.4%, with 1,635.1 cubic metres of water in reservoir storage.

KwaZulu-Natal, where soft rains have become a weekly occurrence, is also increasing its dam levels by a percentage point week-on-week. As a result, the dry regions of Zululand and Umkhanyakude are receiving regular rainfalls that has drastically improved their situation.

The Northern Cape and North West have also benefitted immensely from the current rainfall, with the former recording a significant 7% increase from 87.7% to 94.2%.

The North West improved slightly from 63.4% to 64.1%. More thundershowers have been predicted in the province this week.

The Department of Water and Sanitation has reiterated its call for water users in rural and peri-urban areas to harvest as much water as they can in the rainy season for future use in the dry winter. Water users in urban areas are also urged to use water wisely and sparingly.

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