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Storage in southern reservoirs is down to as low as 15% in certain cases. ROBIN NELSON

## Water levels in 150 big reservoirs have shrunk further

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**W**ater levels in India's 150 major reservoirs fell further to 27% of their total storage capacity, with eastern and southern India seeing levels depleting rapidly in the severe heatwave.

The falling water reservoir levels coupled with high temperatures may affect sowing of summer crops, according to farm analysts.

While 30 reservoirs have 50% of normal water storage capacity, the levels in eastern and southern reservoirs have dropped to as low as 34% and 15%, respectively, as per a bulletin issued by the Central Water Commission (CWC) on Thursday.

Southern states such as Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka and eastern states such as Bihar and West Bengal have been facing significant shortfalls in water storage.

The depleting water level could be attributed to lower rainfall and a scorching summer caused by the El Niño weather phenomenon (which ended on 16 April as per the Australian Bureau of Meteorology), leading to water scarcity in some regions, besides droughts and prolonged dry periods across Asia.

As many as 22 states in the country have witnessed rain deficiency or no rainfall since March. The country has received 16% below-normal rainfall since March, as per the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

As per data from the CWC, the available water level this week in these reservoirs was 47.658 billion cubic metres (BCM), 20.7% lower than the year-ago period when it was 60.141 BCM and nearly 7.7% lower than the average of last 10 years (51.655 BCM).

The live storage in 150 reservoirs as of Thursday was 79% of the live storage of the corresponding period of the previous year and 92% of storage of average of the past 10 years.

India will likely receive above-normal monsoon rainfall at 106% of long-period average (87 cm) this year, the IMD has predicted.