

# 3 districts still getting water through tankers

Mohammed Akhef, TNN Aug 4, 2013

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AURANGABAD: The above average rainfall in the region has brought much needed relief to parched Marathwada, though villages in three districts of the region are still dependent on tankers for drinking water supply. The good and timely rains have, however, meant 100% sowing and expectations of a good yield this year.

The region was reeling under severe scarcity conditions, described by chief minister Prithviraj Chavan, as the worst drought in the state since 1972. The situation was so grim that farmers had given up on their cotton, sweetlime farms, as they struggled to get enough drinking water for days at end.

Even now, parts of Aurangabad, Beed and Osmanabad districts are yet to recover from the severe drought. Over 300 tankers are providing drinking water to 287 villages and 48 hamlets in these three districts. By Saturday, the region had received an average rainfall of 518.56 mm this monsoon since June 1. Hingoli district has reported the highest rainfall (819.8 mm) in the region, followed by 728.5 mm in Nanded till now.

With Jalna, the worst drought affected district in the state, receiving close to 150% above average rainfall this year, the region has begun receiving regular supply of drinking water.

Jalna businessman Kanhayya Kherudkar said, "Following the water release from Jayakwadi dam, we have started receiving regular water supply at least once in three or four days. Earlier, we would get water once in 45 days, which had made things difficult."

A senior official from the irrigation department on the conditions of the anonymity said, "Although there has been better rainfall than the last two years, still, it has not rescued the region from the effects of drought. The situation in the region is such that there should be heavy rains for another month for the three districts to be rid of water tankers."

Most parts of the region have reported 100% sowing of soyabean and cotton, though the areas which receive water from the Manjara and Majalgaon dams have reported only 85% sowing. The overall increase in sowing has also been attributed to the availability of seeds and fertilizers in the region, officials said.

Bandu Shinde, a farmer from Osmanabad district said, that there has hardly been any improvement in the groundwater level in the past two months in the district. "The rains are good but with these rains, we will be able to cultivate only one crop. There is need for more rains so that the ground water level increases and the wells and borewells in the

farms get enough water so that the farms sustain for over a year and yield at least three crops."

Minister for Agriculture Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil said that the government had received good reports from the eight districts in Marathwada, with indications that it will be a good crop this year. "On an average, there has been 100% sowing in [Marathwada](#) region and the constant rainfall will help in ensuring a good yield this season. However, there needs to be more rainfall to increase the water table and sustain the crop growth," he said.