Gujarat’s Water Crisis

What is the issue?

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- Climate change is touted to influence monsoon in the coming years.
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- There is a serious call for mitigating actions from concerned governments.
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- In India, arid states like Gujarat are of particular concern.
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What is the situation in Gujarat?

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- Drought in India is growing in severity, and it is being aggravated by heat waves and significant rain deficits in different regions.
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- On the cusp of the southwest monsoon, several arid States are hoping to revive their rivers and reservoirs with bountiful rain.
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- Gujarat government has embarked on a labour-intensive programme to desilt rivers and water-bodies ahead of the rains.
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- Notably, fall in reservoir storage levels in the Sardar Sarovar Dam, and 27 other reservoirs, had severely affected the farmers of the state last year.
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- Considering the dire situation, drinking water needs are being prioritized, and supply for irrigation from dams has already been suspended for now.
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- This underscores the need for comprehensive reforms at the level of States, with the Centre helping to conserve hydrological resources.
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What more can be done?

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- Gujarat needs to improve rural water storage structures to ensure long-term prosperity for its drier regions - Saurashtra, Kutch and North Gujarat.
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- This will ensure relief for farmers from the monsoon vagaries that affect the Narmada, whose waters are apportioned among four States.
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- As studies have estimated that public irrigation efficiency to be as low 35%, work needs to be commenced to better this by usage of field technologies.
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- Decentralised water storage too will help cities like Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Surat and Vadodara when supply from large dams and other sources dwindles.
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Source: The Hindu

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