Water Crisis in Cape Town

What is the issue?

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- The southern coastal city of Cape Town in South Africa is currently facing its worst drought in over 300 years, which has entered its 3rd year.
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- The region is also experiencing a long-term decline in average rainfall.
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How bad is the situation?

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- Reservoirs in Cape Town and surrounding areas now have water below their 25% mark.
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- The largest dam supplying water to the city, the “Theewaterskloof Dam”, is filled to only 11.3% of its capacity.
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- Water supply has already been reduced from about 1,200 million litres per day in 2015 to about 566 million litres per day now.
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- The city is fast approaching a situation where “water supply” to nearly 75% of the population would have to be cut.
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- Once such a situation is reached, water would then have to be rationed at some designated distribution points only.
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- Notably, residents of the city at present do not have more than 50 litres of water per person per day.
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Is climate change the cause?

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- It is difficult to ascertain the impact of climate change over a small geographical region.
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- But preliminary analysis suggests that three-year cumulative rainfall deficits have become five times more likely due to global warming.
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- The area has become prone to fluctuations in rainfall, and climate change does accentuate the variability.
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- But there is good reason to believe that Cape Town’s case has significant links to larger changing climatic patterns.
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Source: Indian Express

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