

DWS prioritises Ntshingwayo, Pongolapoort dams to prevent overflow

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) has said that it is prioritising maintenance at the Ntshingwayo and Pongolapoort dams in KwaZulu-Natal to prevent overflow.



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Department spokesperson Sputnik Ratau said Ntshingwayo Dam is currently at 82% of its capacity. He said the release from the dam now is at 23.43 cumecs (cubic metre per second, as a unit of rate of flow of water), which is in line with the 80% operating rule.

“The second dam on the DWS radar is Pongolapoort Dam, famously known as Jozini Dam, [which] is currently at 86%. According to the 85% operating rule for the dam, the DWS should be releasing 38 cumecs but 20 cumecs is being released currently,” Ratau said in a statement.



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Importance of communication

The lower release, Ratau said, is to allow for the security of the infrastructure, while downstream communities have been informed accordingly.

“Communication to communities downstream is essential as it ensures the protection of lives and livelihoods. Once that communication is done and people are in the light, there is a possibility of the release from Pongolapoort Dam to be raised to the required 38 cumecs.

“All sleeve valves are available to release the required amount of water. However, it should be noted that the river will overflow [with] the release of 38m cumecs and thus the importance of communication to communities downstream who may be flooded if this happens without notice,” Ratau said.

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