

China to provide cloud-seeding tech to drought-hit Maharashtra

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Beijing: China is in talks with India to provide cloud-seeding technology to drought-hit Maharashtra to induce rain and train the staff of local meteorological department.

A team of scientists and officials from Beijing, Shanghai and China's eastern Anhui province mooted the cooperation during their recent visit to Maharashtra which has experienced severe droughts over the past two years.

China has over the years used the cloud seeding rockets tipped with silver iodide to cause precipitation. But it requires clouds to cause precipitation.

If the discussions are successful, Chinese experts would provide training to officials of the Indian Meteorological Department on their latest cloud-seeding technology, state-run China Daily quoted officials as saying.

The training is expected to be given on procedures to seed clouds successfully, the daily said. The training is aimed at inducing rain over Maharashtra's Marathwada region in the summer of 2017 if needed, it said. The development follows a meeting between Shanghai's top official Han Zheng and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in Mumbai in early May.

Han, who is also a Communist Party of China Politburo member, had asked Fadnavis if China could do anything for drought relief in Maharashtra, it said. China started to use cloud-seeding technology in 1958, and today it has one of the most advanced systems in the world, the report said.

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