



CUARTOSCUROMOISÉS PABLO

STOCKING UP

A woman in Mexico City's Coyoacán borough fills buckets with water from a "pipa," or tanker truck, on Saturday as water supply cutoffs began for an estimated 5.5 million people in parts of the capital and its suburbs.

PHOTO NEWS



Cisterns help as water cutoffs start

But those without private reservoirs feel the pinch

BY **NACHA CATTAN**
The News

On the first day of water rationing in Mexico City, middle to upper-middle class neighborhoods in the center appeared to suffer only slight discomfort, but some residents on the poorer outskirts had no water for basic household chores.

More than 2 million capital residents in at least 10 boroughs were expected to have their water cut off or reduced from Saturday to Monday, with service returning to normal Wednesday. Over a dozen cities in the State of Mexico were also expecting cuts.

But some residents and businesses in the upper-middle class neighborhoods of Vertiz Narvarte and Del Valle – two of the more than 70 colonias to be affected by shortages – did not notice any change. Giant cisterns installed in their homes with a capacity of approximately 5,000 liters had

sustained them despite the cutoff.

Those without cisterns weren't so lucky.

Héctor Miguel López Ramírez of the eastern Iztapalapa borough said his family has not had water for the past week, despite the fact that his neighborhood received new piping last year.

López Ramírez said his sisters had piled up baskets full of laundry waiting for the water to return. Strict rationing and buckets of water have allowed the family to keep washing dishes, but if the faucets don't flow soon he and his neighbors will look for other alternatives.

"We'll just have to start protesting again," he said.

NO DOG-WASHING

Concrete-lined cisterns are often built into the ground floor of newer houses and condominiums, while older buildings, such as the home of Del Valle

resident Claudia Hernández, are left with much smaller rooftop tanks.

Hernández, a publicist who lives with her mother in a comfortable 1950s two-story brick home had only intermittent water on Saturday. She is accustomed to filling up giant buckets to last through the weekend, as the pipes in her home are too old to handle a cistern.

"We already know that you can't wash the patio or the dog over long weekends," Hernández said.

A few blocks away at Rosy's laundromat in Vertiz Narvarte, the clothes were piling up. Less pressure had left owner Abram Rogelio López with no option but to run one washing machine at a time.

On Saturday the city piped in water on 430 trucks to the most-affected areas, even as officials and water experts played down the extent of the problem, saying that the capital has only seen a 15-percent drop in service.



Abram Rogelio López had to cut back on running loads at his laundromat.