

Friday, 3 March 2023

Cut-off low pressure system to affect the Western Cape this Sunday, 5 March 2023

The South African Weather Service hereby alerts the public regarding the possibility of extreme weather conditions expected over the Western Cape on Sunday, 5 March 2023. These extreme weather conditions will be in a form of severe thunderstorms and heavy rainfall due to a cut-off low pressure system in the upper region of the troposphere.

Initially, a steep upper trough is expected to result in scattered to widespread showers and thundershowers over the Western Cape on Saturday, 4 March 2023. Subsequently the trough will further steepen and intensify, ultimately becoming a cut-off low system during Sunday morning as it moves closer to the country. At the surface, the southern Atlantic high pressure will start to ridge from the south-west of the country, supplying cool, moisture-laden maritime air to the Cape south coast and adjacent interior. The interaction between the surface high pressure system and the cut-off low pressure system is expected to amplify the intensity of a variety of extreme conditions associated with this weather system.

Heavy rain, localised flooding as well as severe thunderstorms are some of the more notable and potentially damaging weather phenomena most likely to accompany this weather system. Well-developed, intense upper-air cut-off lows are notoriously efficient producers of a combination of heavy rain as well as severe thunderstorms, especially around the core as well as on the eastern flank of the system. Moreover, large amounts of small hail, heavy downpours, damaging winds and lightning are likely to occur in association with this weather system. Rainfall predicted by numeric weather Prediction (NWP) models for Sunday is projected to be of the order of 40 to 60 mm for the southern parts of the Cape Winelands and Central Karoo districts, reaching 70 to 100 mm in the Overberg and the Garden Route districts. Major disruptions due to heavy, widespread rainfall over a large area of the province, especially in the Overberg and along the Garden Route are therefore highly likely.

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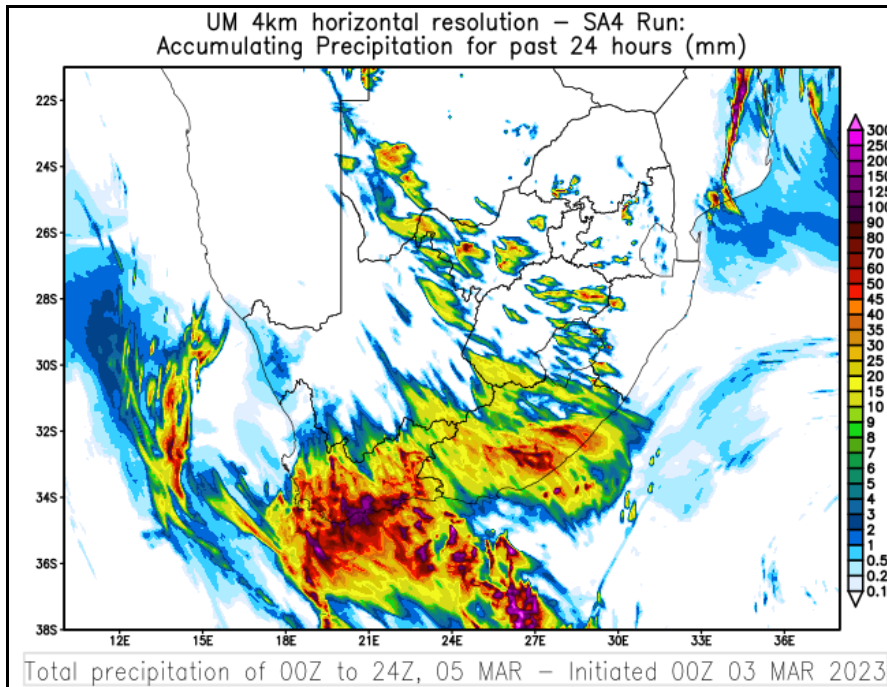


Figure 1: Accumulated 24-hour rainfall (mm) predicted by the Unified Model (UM) for Sunday, 5 March 2023 (Courtesy: SAWS)

IMPACT-BASED SEVERE WEATHER WARNINGS ISSUED:

A. **YELLOW Level 4 Warning for Severe Thunderstorms:** Severe thunderstorms resulting in in localised flooding and large amounts of small hail are expected over the southern Cape Winelands District, Laingsburg, and Prince Albert municipalities on Sunday (05/03/2023).

B. **ORANGE Level 6 Warning for Severe Thunderstorms:** Severe thunderstorms resulting in heavy downpours, strong, damaging winds and flash flooding leading to damage to infrastructure are expected in the Overberg and Garden Route districts on Sunday (05/03/2023).

POSSIBLE IMPACTS

- Damage or loss of infrastructure, settlements, property, and livelihood.
- Injuries and danger to life
- Major travel disruptions and incidents
- Falling trees blocking major roads

The public is urged and encouraged to regularly follow weather forecasts on television and radio. Updated information in this regard will regularly be available at www.weathersa.co.za as well as via the SA Weather Service Twitter account @SAWeatherServic

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