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3 November 2020

A spell of stormy weather lies ahead

Following close on the heels of the rain and storms of the past week, a fresh spell of showers and thundershowers is anticipated over a large part of the southern African subcontinent in the days ahead.

Currently an upper-air cut-off low is positioned to the west of the Northern Cape province of South Africa (refer Figure 1). This weather system, associated with colder air, abundant moisture as well as significant instability, is expected to be the main driver of a spell of rainy and thundery weather across much of South Africa in the days ahead. As the system invades the western parts of the country tonight, a broad band of showers and thundershowers is expected to develop over the majority of the country, with the possible exception of the south-western extremity of the Western Cape, where conditions will remain dry tomorrow.

Tropically-sourced moist air, moving southward through Botswana and into the central provinces of South Africa overnight and tomorrow, will promote scattered showers and thundershowers over the North-West province, the Free State, the Eastern Cape and Gauteng as well as parts of adjoining provinces. These storms are likely to result in localised flooding and could therefore impact adversely on road infrastructure, low-water bridges, farmlands as well as informal settlements. Some of these storms may become severe, with a chance of large, damaging hail and/or strong, destructive surface winds over some areas. In particular, a Yellow level 1 alert for severe storms has been issued for the western parts of the North-West province, parts of Northern Cape (north of the Orange River) as well as the extreme western parts of the Free State, valid for Wednesday.

Progressing into Wednesday evening, the cut-off low is expected to weaken somewhat, still maintaining a steep upper-trough structure. Consequently, the development of squall-line thunderstorms (and associated surface winds of a destructive, strong and gusty nature) can be anticipated over parts of the Free State, North-West and Gauteng as the system moves east during Thursday. Parts of KwaZulu-Natal may also experience wind damage at places, due to severe thunderstorms.

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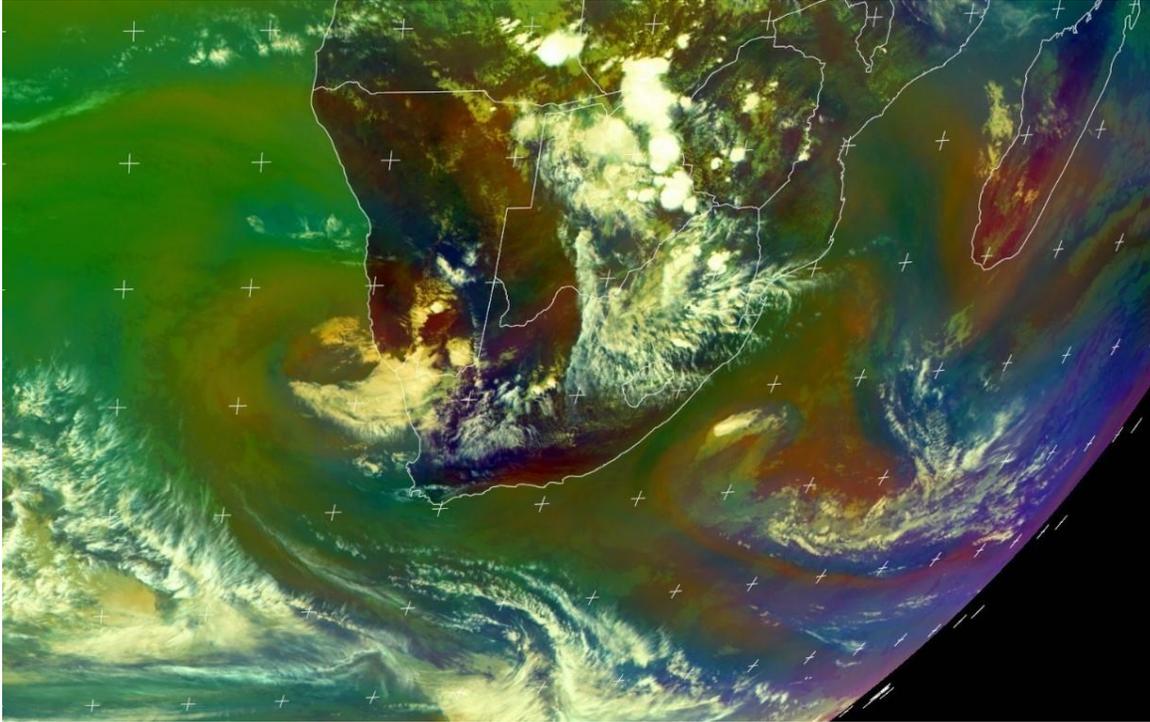


Figure 1. Meteosat RGB image of southern Africa at 13h00SAST (11h00UTC), Tuesday 3 November 2020, indicating the position of a cut-off low, intensifying in the upper-air, just west of the Northern Cape province of South Africa. Courtesy Eumetsat 2020.

The good news is that a rapid clearance of the inclement weather can be expected from the west during Thursday, with the Western and Northern Cape areas drying out and becoming sunnier. Similarly, the western parts of North West and Free State are also expected to clear from the west on Thursday.

Some showers may linger in the early morning hours of Friday over Gauteng and the eastern areas of the North-West and Free State. Storms are, however, expected to persist over the eastern provinces during much of Friday.

Following the rainy spell this week, much of the coming weekend is expected to remain rain-free, although a deterioration in weather is expected along the south-western coast of the Western Cape on Friday. This change in weather is likely to be associated with showers as well as near-gale force winds, in response to a well-developed cold front which will be approaching South Africa from the west. Sea conditions are also anticipated to roughen significantly. Consequently, conditions for mariners (especially those with small craft) will become increasingly hazardous. The maritime community is therefore urged to continue to monitor regular updates of weather forecasts issued by the South African Weather Service in the days ahead, especially with a view to possible marine warnings.

The South African Weather Service will continue to monitor any further developments relating to this weather system and will issue subsequent updates as required. Furthermore, the public is urged 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** and Facebook page **@WeatherServic**

Compiled by: Puseletso Mofokeng and Kevin Rae

For technical and weather enquiries:

National Forecasting Centre: Tel: 012 367 6041

Media enquiries: Ms Hannelee Doubell: Manager, Communications; Tel: (012) 367 6104; Cell: 072 222 6305; E-mail: hannelee.doubell@weathersa.co.za

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