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Sunday 18 September 2022

Heavy rain for parts of Eastern Cape, as well as a spell of cold, rainy weather for KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga in the days ahead

A cloudy, cold spell of persistent rainfall is anticipated for some of the eastern provinces in the days ahead, driven by a developing upper-air cut-off low system. In particular, the eastern part of Eastern Cape is expected to experience a significant chance of heavy rain and flooding today and tomorrow, where Impact-Based Warnings are already in effect. KwaZulu-Natal as well as Mpumalanga are also included in the outlook for persistent rain.

At the current time, a well-developed upper-air trough, associated with coldness and instability, is in the process of intensifying over the south-western parts of southern Africa. The South African Weather Service (SAWS) is confident that, during the coming days, this system will further deepen and intensify, forming a cut-off low over the southern and central interior. Whilst much of the interior of the African subcontinent is currently rather dry, this system is expected to introduce a welcome rainy spell to some of the eastern provinces from today onwards, through to the middle of this coming week. However, this system is expected to shift progressively eastwards, resulting in mostly clear, rain-free conditions by Thursday.

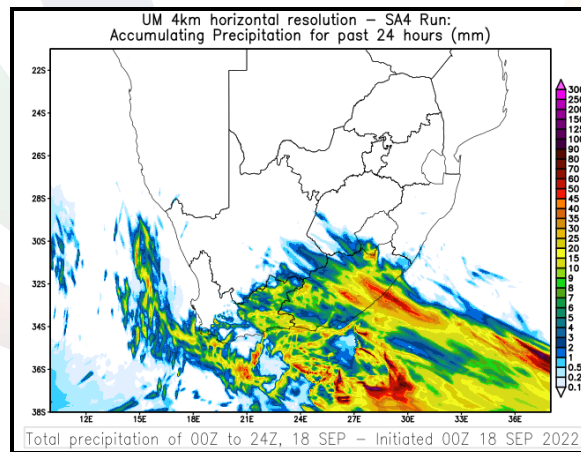


Figure 1: Numerically predicted 24-hour rainfall (mm) for Sunday 18 September 2022. Source: Unified Model.

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Document Reference: CS-CMS-LETT-003

Impact Based Warnings:

Likelihood	High	2	6	10	
	Medium	1	5	9	
	Low		4	8	
	Very Low		3	7	
		Minimal	Minor	Significant	Severe
		Impact			

- A. Yellow level 2 warning for disruptive rain leading to localised flooding of susceptible settlements, roads, low-lying areas and bridges is expected in places in the south and east of the Eastern Cape.
- B. An Orange level 5 warning for disruptive rain leading to flooding of settlements, roads, low-lying areas and bridges is expected over the eastern parts of the Eastern Cape mainly from this evening.

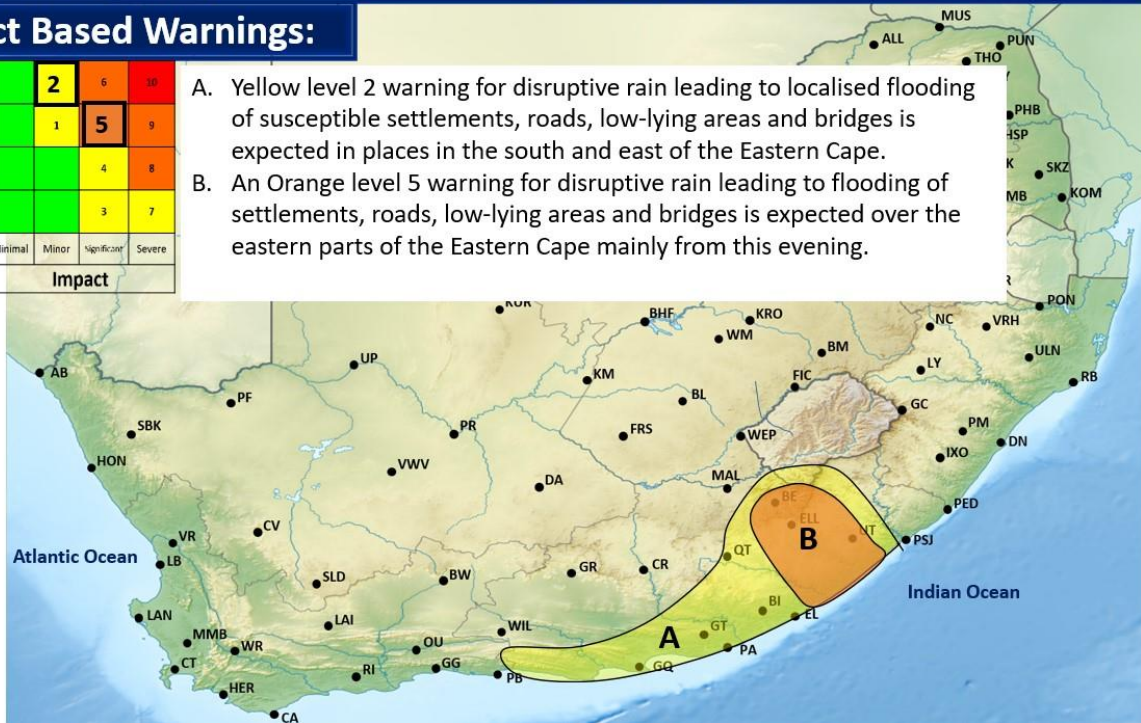


Figure 2: Impact-based warnings valid for today, Sunday 18 September 2022. Source: SAWS

Impact Based Warnings:

Likelihood	High	2	6	10	
	Medium	1	5	9	
	Low		4	8	
	Very Low		3	7	
		Minimal	Minor	Significant	Severe
		Impact			

- A. Yellow level 2 warning for disruptive rain leading to localised flooding of susceptible settlements, roads, low lying areas and bridges is expected along the coast and adjacent interior of the Eastern Cape spreading to the southern and central parts of KwaZulu-Natal in the afternoon.
- B. An Orange level 6 warning for disruptive rain leading to flooding of settlements, roads, low lying areas and bridges is expected over the eastern parts of the Eastern Cape.

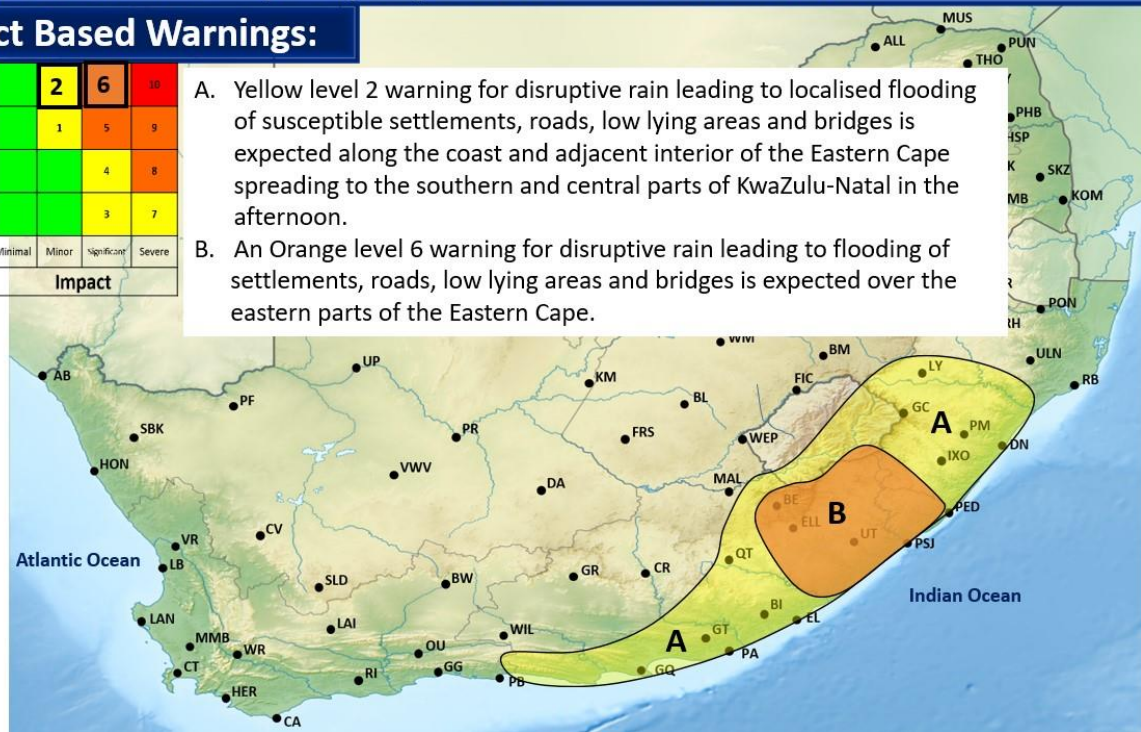


Figure 3: Impact-based warnings valid for tomorrow, Monday 19 September 2022. Source: SAWS

There is already a high likelihood of rainfall across much of the Eastern Cape province during today (refer figure 1) where level 2 as well as level 5 warnings are already in place (figure 2) for disruptive rainfall, leading to localised to widespread flooding, persisting overnight. Within the level 5 warning area, 100 mm (or more) of rainfall may occur within a 24-hour period. For tomorrow, please note that the heavy rain warning is escalated from level 5 to level 6 (figure 3), while a broad level 2 warning persists, spreading into KwaZulu-Natal.

Moreover, a spell of overcast, cold and windy weather is expected to persist over much of Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga in the period extending from Monday through to Wednesday. Rainfall during this period is expected to be mostly of a patchy nature, but generally less intense than the rainfall anticipated today and tomorrow over Eastern Cape. The residents of KwaZulu-Natal as well as Mpumalanga should therefore prepare for a three-day episode of rainfall, which may be heavy at places.

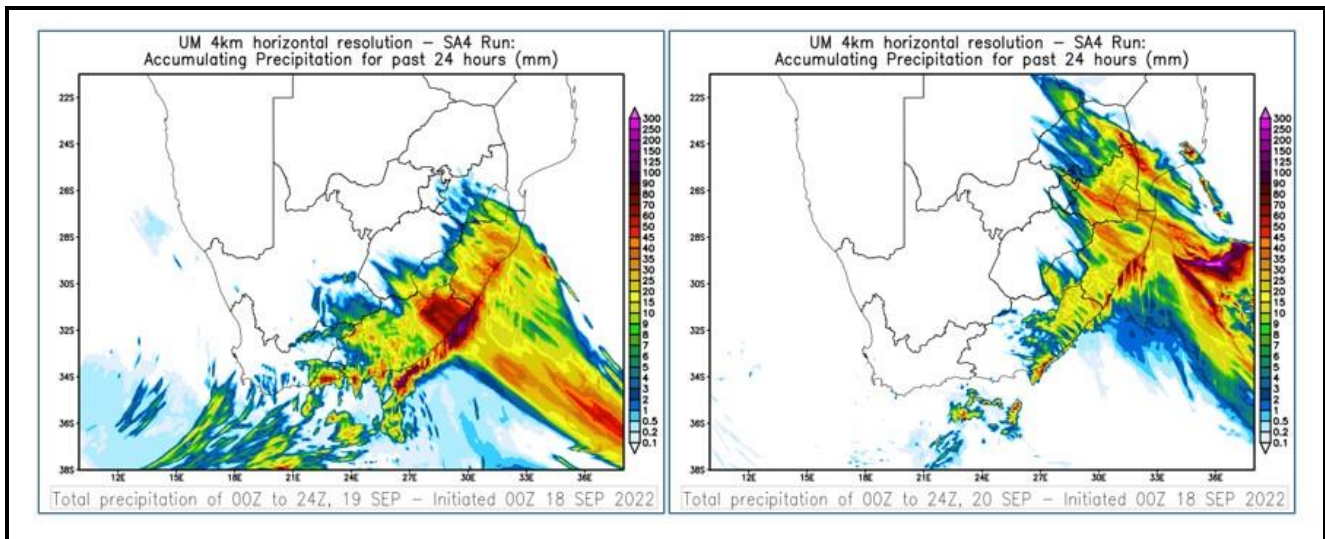


Figure 4: Unified Model (UM) prediction of 24-hour rainfall (mm) for Monday 19 September 2022 (at left) and the corresponding chart for Tuesday 20 September 2022 (at right), indicating an eastward shift of the rainfall to the east and north-east. Source: Unified Model.

Sustained rainfall over a relatively large area will inevitably lead to the ground becoming saturated, resulting in overland runoff into river and stream systems, as well as heightening the risk of localised flooding. Under such circumstances, informal dwelling structures, especially those built of mud bricks will be particularly prone to sudden collapse. The public would also be well-advised to keep jackets and blankets close at hand, as the weather will remain very chilly over the abovementioned provinces.

Light snowfalls can be expected today over some of the higher peaks of Western Cape, spreading eastwards to include the higher peaks of Eastern Cape overnight. As the upper-air cut-off low intensifies, snowfall (as much as 20-30 cm depth) of a more significant and disruptive nature should be anticipated over the eastern peaks of the Lesotho Drakensberg mountains, as well as higher peaks of the Eastern Cape, in the Barkly East and Tiffindell areas on Monday night. A yellow level 5 warning is suggested for the disruptive snowfalls.

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, members of the public are 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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