

27 February 2025

SAWS RECOVERS FORECAST GENERATING SYSTEM

The South African Weather Service (SAWS) has moved another step forward towards recovering fully from the cyber-attack that crippled its Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems in late January 2025. The attack caused widespread uncertainty about the entity's ability to provide critical weather and climate services.

In the latest positive development, the SAWS' forecast product generating (FPG) system was brought back into operation on Tuesday, 25 February 2025. The system ingests raw weather data fed into it by other information systems, processes this information and then designs and generates customised meteorological outputs before disseminating tailored products to end-users in a timely manner through appropriate channels.

As a result of the recovery of the system, the SAWS is now able to digitally transmit weather products, including forecasts, alerts and warnings to the public, Disaster Management Authorities, news media and the entity's commercial clients. This also includes making available severe weather guidance products to Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries under the SAWS' Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre (RSMC) role as designated to it by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).

"The public can now access daily rainfall, minimum and maximum weather temperature forecasts, as well as severe weather warnings via the SAWS's main website, amongst other currently used avenues of access," Chief Executive Officer, Mr Ishaam Abader, explained.

Mr Abader said the cybersecurity and ICT expert team that is helping the SAWS to return the entity's operations to normalcy is in the process of reinstating the bulk SMS and email distribution of weather information to end users. He added that the team was also working on restoring the Fire Danger Index products and Marine forecast model input.

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This development follows the reconnection of the SAWS' aviation website on Friday, 21 February 2025, enabling the aviation industry to access critical products, including significant weather charts, wind charts, domestic and international flight documentation, research products and RADAR images.

End.

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