

Over 300,000 UPS workers move closer to nationwide strike in U.S.



Rare snowfall in parts of South Africa

Weather forecasters warn of potentially dangerous cold temperatures as rare snowfall dusted parts of South Africa.

Children play in the snow at Laerskool Orion

Children play in the snow at Laerskool Orion, a school located in Brackenhurst, a suburb south of Johannesburg. [Siphiwe Sibeko/Reuters]

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A rare snowfall dusted Johannesburg and other high-lying parts of South Africa on Monday, with weather services warning of potential road closures and dangerously cold temperatures.

Residents in the business hub woke up to snowfalls lightly covering rooftops and gardens as a cold front that hit the country late last week morphed into a weather system called a “cut-off low”.

At a Johannesburg kindergarten, excited children made snowballs and attempted to catch flakes with their tongues – some having never witnessed snow before.

“We last saw this type of weather in 2012,” said Puseletso Mofokeng, a senior forecaster at the South African Weather Service (SAWS).

Mofokeng said snow was reported across southern parts of Johannesburg’s Gauteng province and was expected to continue falling throughout the day, also hitting high-lying areas of the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal provinces.

“Roads may be closed,” he said.

Johannesburg lies at an altitude of more than 1,700 metres (5,600 feet) and is in the peak of the southern hemisphere winter. But snow in the city remains a rare event – prior to 2012, heavy snowfall last occurred in 1996, Mofokeng said.

“It’s been such a long time, I feel so happy,” said Lerato Matepese, a Johannesburg resident.

SAWS warned that icy temperatures posed a risk to street dwellers in a country where poverty remains widespread.

Rough seas and strong winds were also expected to create hazardous conditions for small vessels off South Africa’s eastern coast.

New York, July 10 (RHC)-- In the United States, unionized UPS drivers and warehouse workers are moving closer to a strike after contract negotiations broke down earlier this week. More than 340,000 UPS workers represented by the Teamsters are fighting for better wages amid soaring cost of living increases and company profits. The current contract expires on July 31st.

In more labor news, thousands of Los Angeles hotel workers returned to work after a three-day strike over the busy July 4th weekend. Workers say more stoppages are to be expected until a deal is reached on fair wages, healthcare and pension benefits, and improved working conditions.

And in a major victory for baristas, the National Labor Relations Board ruled Starbucks violated federal labor law when it fired employees at several Pittsburgh stores who were organizing their coworkers. Starbucks now has over 330 unionized coffee shops.



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