**Lightning strikes 13 pupils, headman drowns [Zimbabwe]**

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A headman drowned in Mbire, while at least 13 learners at Chitenje Secondary School in Karoi were yesterday struck and injured by lightning as heavy rains wreak havoc in different parts of the country.

Houses, livestock and property were destroyed in Chinhoyi.

This followed the death of one person in Binga on Tuesday and the extensive damage to infrastructure in the area and in Chimanimani, where 181 homes were destroyed, while two bridges were swept away.

The Department of Civil Protection Unit said it was on high alert and will continue to work with relevant authorities, including the police, Air Force of Zimbabwe (AFZ), education officials, relief agencies and traditional leaders to see how they can reduce the damage caused by floods and heavy rains.

The Meteorological Services Department (MSD) has forecasted scattered afternoon and evening thundershowers to continue today in all Mashonaland, Harare, Midlands and northern parts of Manicaland provinces, while the rest of the country is expected to start experiencing a decline in rainfall activity starting today.

There were widespread rains across the country on Wednesday, with considerable amounts recorded at Mukandi (94 millimetres), Sutsuku 92mm, Nyakomba 75mm, Chimhanda 67mm, Nyanga 62mm and Mutasa 56mm.

“Zimbabwe has been experiencing significant rains since February 6, and these rains persisted in most parts of the country,” said MSD yesterday. “Heavy downpours greater than 100mmm in 24 hours were recorded at a number of stations.