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Widespread showers and thundershowers over central and south-eastern South Africa 21-22 April 2019 and caution to the Easter weekend traffic

While South Africa is currently celebrating the Easter weekend, adverse weather, with possible impacts on returning Easter weekend traffic from Sunday evening, 21 April 2019, is expected over the central and south eastern parts of the country. From Sunday, 21 April 2019, the country also will experience cooler temperatures.

On Sunday, 21 April 2019, severe thunderstorms with strong winds and hail are likely over the north-eastern areas of the Northern Cape and the extreme western parts of the North West and parts of the Free State. These storms will be accompanied by scattered showers and thundershowers (a 60% chance) over the KwaZulu-Natal, the Free State as well as the North West and the eastern areas of Northern Cape. Furthermore, widespread thunderstorms (with an 80% chance) are expected over the eastern areas of the Eastern Cape and are expected to spread to the southern parts of the Gariep District Municipality in the Free State and southern KwaZulu-Natal.

These conditions are anticipated following the development of a cut-off low pressure system over the extreme western parts of South Africa which will be supported by moist air flowing into the south-eastern parts.

More wet weather conditions, with a risk of severe thunderstorms are expected to persist on Monday, 22 April 2019, over the central provinces as well as heavy rain along the coast between East London (Eastern Cape) and Durban (KwaZulu-Natal), including the adjacent interior (refer to Figure 1).

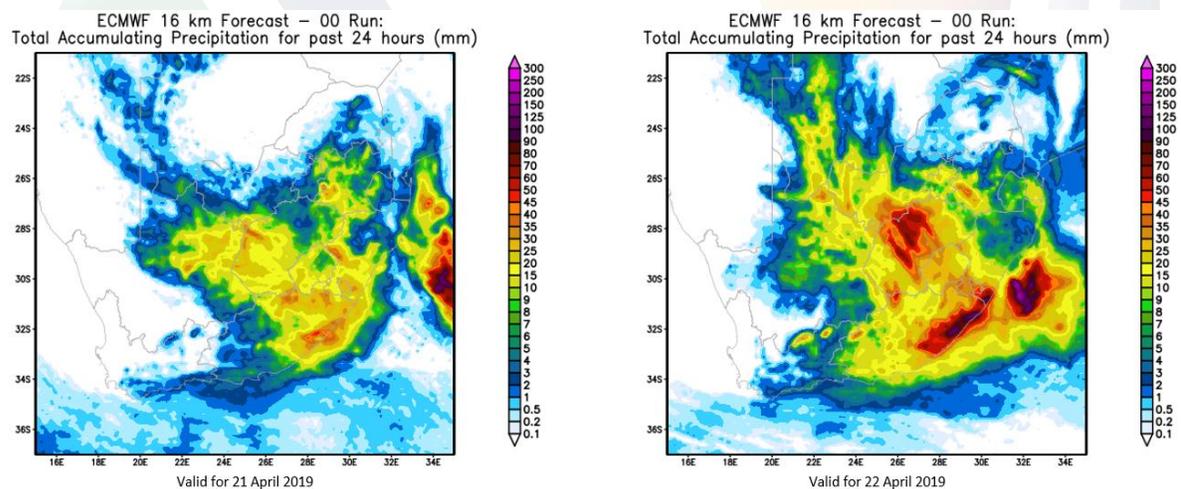


Figure 1: The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts' (ECMWF's) expected 24 hour accumulated precipitation valid for 21 and 22 April 2019. Source: SA Weather Service.

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The timing of these expected weather conditions is of concern due to the fact that heavy traffic is expected on major roads and highways over South Africa as the end of the Easter Weekend is approaching. The public are advised that difficult driving conditions that will lead to longer travel time are expected over KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape, Free State, eastern parts of the Northern Cape and in places over the North West, Gauteng and Mpumalanga from Sunday afternoon, due to scattered to widespread showers and thundershowers that will cause reduced visibility, urban flooding and pooling on roads which can lead to slippery roads.

The maximum temperatures over most of South Africa are also expected to be cooler from Sunday, 21 April 2019, as seen in Figure 2. Sleet is possible from late Sunday evening over the eastern and southern parts of Lesotho, with light snowfall over the higher peaks of the Lesotho Drakensberg. The public are advised against travelling to Lesotho for snow sightseeing, even if they have 4X4 vehicles, as road conditions could be worse than expected due to these extreme weather conditions.

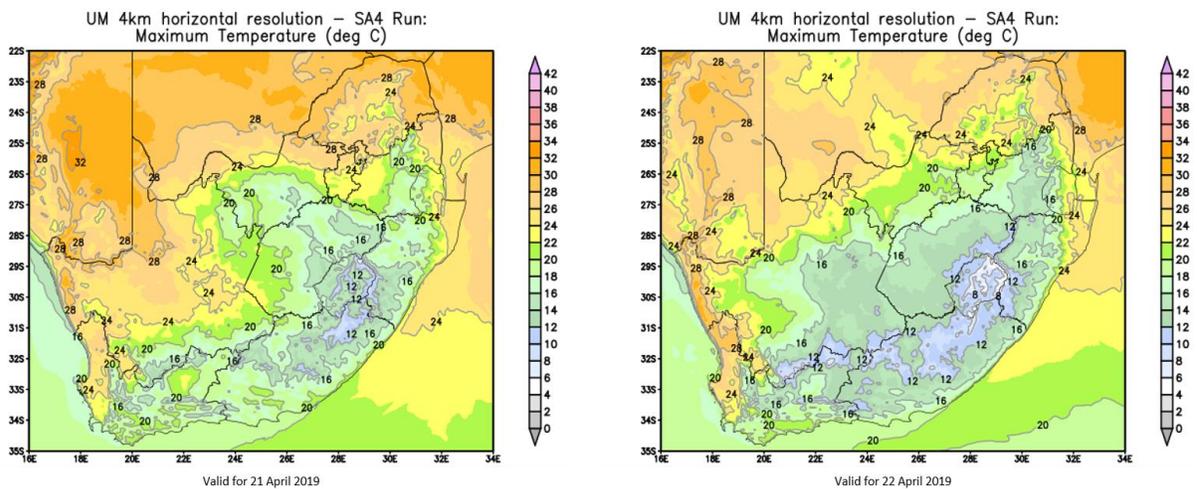


Figure 2: The Unified Model's (UM's) expected maximum temperatures valid for 21 and 22 April 2019. Source: SA Weather Service.

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 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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