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▶ 3

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▶ 28



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TRAINS in Joburg and Pretoria were halted this morning as flooding delayed hundreds of commuters desperate to get to work.

This is the result of yesterday's hailstorm, which wreaked havoc around the country, damaging infrastructure, blowing roofs from homes and delaying flights from OR Tambo International Airport.

The South African Weather Service said this morning more rain was expected.

Gauteng Metrorail spokeswoman Lillian Mofokeng confirmed trains were running behind schedule this morning.

"Heavy rains flooded and damaged infrastructure. As a result, only two of the four lines at our Pretoria stations are functional

FLOOD CHAOS



WALKING IN THE RAIN: A woman wraps herself in plastic as the storm hits Langlaagte yesterday. Though it wreaked havoc, the storm helped relieve the drought.

PICTURE: MATTHEWS BALOYI

"I've lived here for over 50 years; it's the worst storm I've ever seen"

this morning," she said.

Stations affected were Daveyton in the east of Joburg, several stations around Soweto, as well as stations in Mountain View and Garankuwa in Pretoria.

Other stations experienced power failures last night due to the storm.

In Soweto, a motorist escaped unscathed when a billboard fell on top of the bakkie he was travelling in last night.

This morning, traffic was still backed up along Chris Hani Baragwanath Road as the billboard continued to block the road.

Joburg Metro Police Department spokesman Chief Superintendent Wayne Minnaar said the man was trapped under the billboard after the heavy winds yesterday blew it down.

At the airport, operations were back to normal this morning after the hailstorm grounded some planes and caused others to be diverted to Bloemfontein and Durban.

Airports Company South Africa spokesman Collins Naidoo said passengers were only down to Joburg once the weather had calmed.

The hail, strong winds and

heavy rain destroyed infrastructure around the province yesterday, with a ceiling caving in at the Truworths store at the Southgate Mall and a roof of a Caltex filling station in Brakpan, Ekurhuleni, falling on eight cars.

Joburg Emergency Services spokesman Robert Mulaudzi said no one was injured at the mall.

Caltex Brakpan manager Estelle van Niekerk said when the storm

struck at about 4pm, "pedestrians walking in the street ran to the filling station to get shelter".

"That's when the roof fell under the pressure of the storm."

"I have lived in Brakpan for more than 50 years and this is the worst storm I've ever seen," she said.

In the north and west of Joburg, power outages continue

after a tree fell on to power lines. The areas that are affected

include Discovery, Weltevredenpark, Wilropark, Honeydew, Florida and Bryanston and parts of Malanshof and Ferndale.

After the storm, people took to Twitter to show the damage to homes and businesses, including those in Vosloorus, east of Joburg, where bricks were torn off the tops of buildings.

South African Weather Service forecaster Elizabeth Webster said preliminary figures showed 44.6ml

of rain had fallen in the province yesterday.

This she described as "a large amount".

She said there was a 60 to 80 percent chance of rain the rest of the week in Gauteng, where cooler temperatures were expected.

Following the weeks of drought and a heatwave, many around the province are celebrating the downpour, despite the havoc it has caused.

Gauteng warned to expect more wet weather



OMINOUS: Traffic quickly became heavily backed up yesterday during a temporary road closure at the Booyens exchange leading along and towards the M1 double-decker section.

PICTURE: ANTOINE DE RAS

18 months of traffic hell

JOBURG motorists can expect long queues of traffic in all directions for the next 18 months as the Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA) starts the rehabilitation of three of the city's bridges.

Yesterday the JRA blocked off a short portion of one lane on the M1's double-decker bridge in the CBD for just a few hours to show the media the structural damage.

Although not during peak time, traffic backed up for a few kilometres because of this temporary closure – providing just a glimpse

of what motorists can expect in the coming months.

"We will have numerous officers patrolling and directing traffic, but people have to start changing their transport behaviour if they don't want to spend hours in traffic," said Joburg Metro Police Department Chief Superintendent Wayne Minnaar.

The JRA's acting managing director, Mpho Kau, agreed and said there were going to be major disruptions and motorists would have to adjust their travelling

times and routes.

With construction work starting along the M1 this week, motorists faced delays of up to an hour along the M1 during peak times, he said.

The rehabilitation work, planned to cost R210 million, is due for completion in May 2017. Residents can call the JRA at 0860 562 874 for disruption details and alternative routes, e-mail hotline @ja.org.za, visit www.jra.org.za or @MyJra on Twitter. @annacox

Sheen plans to go public about HIV

LONDON: The Hollywood megastar believed to be secretly battling HIV, now named as Charlie Sheen, had become a recluse in his own home – smoking crack cocaine and watching his old movies

over and over to deal with the devastating diagnosis, it has been revealed. The actor became increasingly isolated from the outside world over the past two years, paying for porn stars to come and party with him at home and rarely venturing out, according to a source in the adult industry.

Sheen – who is due to announce his HIV status in a TV interview on the *Today* programme tomorrow – has still been taking drugs regularly and paying male and female porn

stars up to \$30000 (R431205) a night each to hang out with him at his home, the source claimed.

But the 50-year-old star has been so paranoid that someone would reveal his sordid secrets, he has set up a security command post in his garage where he forces guests to sign non-disclosure agreements and leave their cell-phones before they can enter the house.

On one occasion the former *Two and a Half Men* star was so "messed up" on drugs, he refused to leave his bedroom to attend a dinner party he had organised at his own home.

A porn director, who knows various "adult" stars who have visited Sheen, said the actor looked like he was in "very poor health" but said he continued to take drugs and have sex with



ILL: Charlie Sheen

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