

Prasa gets R172 billion for commuter system overhaul

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South Africa's rail commuter system needs a complete overhaul and, therefore, the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa) has received R172bn for a ten-year period, said Transport Minister Dipuo Peters at a media briefing on Monday.



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Peters called the media briefing to give feedback on the report that the Railway Safety Regulator (RSR) released on Friday, following an accident that had occurred last year.

Main causes of accident

On 28 April 2015, a train collided into the back of another at Denver station, in the South-Eastern part of Johannesburg. About 240 people were injured and a security guard from Metro Rail was killed. The Board of Inquiry established by the RSR further established that both drivers had, in the past, received warnings.

The report cited lack of maintenance of coaches and signalling systems, ineffective capital funding as well as poor communication as the main causes of the accident.

The Citizen reported on Friday that a power failure affected the telephone lines, the radio and voice recording system, which was the only manner of communication between the relevant trains. The only means of communicating was,

therefore, by cellphone. The control centre did not have the driver's phone number when he stopped at the Denver platform. The driver of the MetroPlus Express train 0600 confirmed that he stopped at the signal as a result of his inability to clearly see the signal.

During question time the, RSR was asked if it was true that the driver was either speeding or intoxicated. The RSR stated that it was not their job to "apportion blame", but only to investigate.

New coaches, modernised stations

Peters also used the media briefing to tell journalists that Prasa was in the process of acquiring 3,600 new coaches - the first of which would be ready for testing at Womerton Depot by the end of March this year. "It is targeted for commercial operation in October this year." In addition, 135 stations will be modernised to enhance commuters' experience of making use of public transport.

Prasa is expected to appear before parliament to give feedback on implementing its Rolling Stock Fleet Renewal Programme.

Source: Fin24

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