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## Mamelodi rail services to get R380m boost

By Barry Bateman

Metrorail is upgrading its rail and station infrastructure in the east of Mamelodi to the tune of R380-million over the next three years, it was announced on Tuesday.

Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa) chief executive Lucky Montana made the announcement as Metrorail resumed services to the Pienaarspoort station after a seven-month stoppage.

Violence gripped the area east of Mamelodi three weeks ago when commuters demanded that services be resumed. Metrorail stopped servicing the area last year - terminating the line at the Eerstefabrieke station - as it had become hazardous to their employees and their property because of escalating crime.

Some commuters had on occasions uncoupled hoses linking trains forcing the drivers to make unscheduled stops, while there had also been reports of trains being hijacked and forced to stop.

Tshwane Regional Commuter Forum chairperson Thabo Morukhuladi welcomed the planned development in the area and the re-opening of the line. "We have been wanting this for some time. It means a lot for the community because they had to walk a long distance," he said.

Morukhuladi said commuters had to walk up to 10km to the Pienaarspoort station or forked out additional funds to catch taxis to work.

He said the commuter organisation had received an undertaking from the community and the police that crime would be addressed.

Montana said a contractor had already been appointed for the first phase of the development, which entails the construction of an additional railway line to Pienaarspoort Station at a cost of R158m.

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