

Mop up operations continue on M1

PRETORIA: While a clean-up operation to remove the rubble from the aftermath of the collapse of the bridge structure on the M1 freeway in Sandton continues this morning, the Minister of Transport, Dipuo Peters, has called on authorities to conduct a thorough investigation into the incident. The highway remains closed while investigations continue and motorists are being directed to alternative routes.



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Minister Peters appealed for calm and patience while the highway remains closed to allow investigations to continue and the subsequent clean-up operation.

On Wednesday afternoon, a structure erected to enable the construction of a pedestrian bridge over the M1 freeway at the Grayston Drive off-ramp collapsed. The bridge, which was due to be completed by the end of the month, was being constructed for the estimated 10,000 pedestrians who cross the Grayston off-ramp from Alexandra to Sandton and vice versa daily.

Three people were killed and more than 20 were injured.

Construction company Murray and Roberts, the Department of Labour and the City of Johannesburg have launched investigations to determine the exact cause of the incident. Minister Peters on Thursday said there was a need to unearth the reasons behind the tragic incident in order to prevent a recurrence in the future.

She said the construction of the bridge was an important aspect of the overall development of economic infrastructure currently underway to improve access to Sandton. "Sandton is a critical economic hub, not only for South Africa, but the continent and the world at large. It's for this reason it's called 'the richest square mile in Africa'. Seamless accessibility into Sandton is critical for both motorists and pedestrians hence the need for such infrastructure," said the minister.

She commended the City of Johannesburg and the Gauteng Provincial Government for their swift response to the incident, adding that availing free public transport services to affected people was an act of proactive leadership.

"I wish to convey my sincere and heartfelt condolences to the families of the people who sadly perished due to the incident. I equally wish a speedy recovery to those who sustained injuries," says Peters.

Gauteng Premier David Makhura has also expressed his condolences to the families of those who lost their loved ones and wished a speedy recovery to those who sustained injuries. He said he was shocked at the news of the incident.

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