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RSZ railway track rehab on course

By Times Reporter

THE implementation of the development agreements by Railway Systems of Zambia Limited (RSZ) is on course and the firm has now launched the second phase of rehabilitation involving 450 kilometres track, the general manager Babe Botana has said.

Mr Botana said in Kabwe that RSZ had gone beyond the target in terms of the agreement made with the Government, having started the second phase of the rehabilitation exercise last month.

Reacting to Communications and Transport Minister Abel Chambeshi, who on Wednesday moaned the slow pace at which the firm was rehabilitating its track, Mr Botana said the exercise was on course.

He said the railway company completed its first rehabilitation phase in June this year, which was according to the agreement and pledges made by the company.

The first phase involved the renovation of 250 km of the track in the northern region.

He said the northern part of the railway track was more derailment-prone than the southern and accounted for most of the mishaps in the last one year or so. Hence, the move to start with that.

Mr Botana said that the second phase would cater for the southern part of the railway from around Mazabuka district heading to Livingstone involving the rehabilitation of about 450 km stretch of the rail line.

The RSZ run the railway network of about 1,000 km track from Livingstone to Chililabombwe and the current rehabilitation is aimed at stretches of the track, which are in a deplorable condition.

Visiting the site at which the Livingstone bound passenger train overturned on Tuesday in Mazabuka's Magoye area, Mr Chambeshi said that Government thought the concessioning of Zambia Railways would improve service delivery.

Mr Botana however, said that management would wait for the report on the matter because it did not know what happened, he outlulled overloading.

He said that in railway transport, there was no incentive for overloading. He said the area where the recent derailment happened in which some passengers were injured, was not derailment-prone area, although it will be catered for under the second phase of the rehabilitation exercise.

He said that it was for that reason that there was need to wait for the team which is currently studying what could have led to the accident.

He said that there were a lot of theories with some people suspecting over-speeding while others attributed the situation to sabotage.