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Minister moves on graft

Action pending against senior officials implicated in corrupt dealings involving leases

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PUBLIC Works Minister Thulas Nxesi has taken measures to curb fraud and corruption in his department.

Nxesi told Parliament during his budget speech yesterday that action had been taken against officials implicated in corruption involving leases, prestige projects and renovation of ministerial houses.

The department was investigating overpricing in the renovation of ministerial houses.

The department would centralise all prestige projects and create a direct line to the director-general, Mziwonke Dlabantu.

"All prestige projects are now undergoing investigation. We have extended the investigation to Cape Town, where R1000m was spent on renovating 11 ministerial houses," Nxesi said.

The investigations into the renovation of ministerial houses in Pretoria is complete and the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) has recommended disciplinary action against officials involved in wrongdoing.

Nxesi said that they were taking strong action against officials implicated in corruption involving leases.

The department was mired in scandals involving fraudulent leases.

After that the department roped in the SIU to probe a number of irregular leases.

Nxesi said 40 investigations were conducted and to date they had managed to complete 23 probes.



CURBING FRAUD AND CORRUPTION: Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi is investigating overpricing in the renovation of ministerial houses. PICTURE: GERRIT VAN DER MERWE

The findings of the investigations have led to the suspension of six officials and the dismissal of three others, including a director-general.

"We have instituted court actions to recover monies wrongly paid by the department. We are also awaiting reports from disciplinary hearings involving one deputy

director-general and one chief director," Nxesi said.

He said the SIU investigations and the findings of the Competition Commission come to the same conclusion about overpricing and collusion between officials and some people in the construction industry.

ANC chief whip, Mathole Moshabela, welcomed Nxesi's department.

The department is currently investigating all prestige projects, has stopped a number of over-priced projects and has moved to ensure that all projects under the prestige branch

fall under the direct control of the director-general to curb potential fraud and corruption," Mothapo said.

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