

Disciplinary hearings against 10 Public Works officials begin

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'Fall guys' to face Nkandla music

MATTHEW SAVIDES

THE saga of the refurbishing of President Jacob Zuma's Nkandla home with taxpayers' money enters a new chapter today as disciplinary hearings against 10 Department of Public Works officials begin in Durban.

The Sunday Times revealed yesterday that millions more are to be spent on security and infrastructure upgrades at the president's KwaZulu-Natal homestead.

The Presidency has denied the Sunday Times allegations.

The Pietermaritzburg High Court has ruled that the disci-

plinary hearings should be open to the media.

The application was brought by The Times' owner, Times Media, Media24 and the Mail & Guardian.

Judge Piet Koen said in his ruling last year that the public nature of the Nkandla upgrading demanded that citizens have access to all the facts so that they could make informed choices.

Public Works officials have been described as the "scapegoats" and "fall guys" in the allocation of blame for the R246-million of public money spent on the Nkandla upgrading.

Zuma was censured by the Con-

stitutional Court and ordered to pay back R7.8-million.

Sibusiso Chonco, deputy director for utilisations and contracts in

The public will get access to the hearings after High Court judge ruling

the Durban office of the Department of Public Works, is the first person to face action in respect of the upgrading. His disciplinary hearing is set for today and tomorrow; the hearings of other officials will be next month.

Twelve officials were originally charged for their role in the awarding of the contract to architect Minenhle Makhanya, who is being sued in the High Court for R155-million.

One official, identified as director of projects, Itumeleng Molosi, pleaded guilty last year. He was

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suspended without pay for three months.

Public Works chief director of legal services Barnie Ntlou confirmed that Molosi had pleaded guilty. Molosi was given a "final written warning and [told] never to be involved in any form of tender process until he has undergone training on procurement".

A second official, Belinda Motola,