

Mthatha court upgrade on track

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The dilapidated Mthatha high court which is deemed a security risk to officials is receiving a much-needed R101.4m revamp.

Public works minister Thulas Nxesi on Friday inspected the work and said he was happy with the progress made.

The minister also met with the department's Mthatha regional staff who raised concerns about acute shortage of staff.

The Transkei Society of Advocates (TSA) had since 2012 been vocal in their criticism of the state of the court building and wrote several letters to the justice and public works ministries, pleading with government to renovate it.

They complained of leaking and damaged roofs, dysfunctional airconditioning systems, and a lack of security facilities. They also requested CCTV cameras to be installed. This is the first time post-democracy that the court building which was built in 1986 has been renovated.

The revamped court complex has six courtrooms, eight judge's chambers, a library, a cash hall, prison cells with secured drop off and pick up of prisoners and administration offices.

The project commenced in August last year and is expected to be completed by end of August next year.

Nxesi said security has been beefed up with the upgrading of security installations, including CCTV cameras, access security to



CHECK THIS: Public Works minister Thulas Nxesi and his delegation do a site inspection of the R100-million revamp of the Mthatha high court on Friday. Picture: LULAMILE FENI

judge chambers and other offices. Security was one of the major concerns that court officials had for more than a decade been complaining about.

"Security will be top-notch," Nxesi said, adding that there was also a security control room.

Entrances to court for judges and for vans ferrying prisoners have been separated with a high wall which is bullet-proof.

The scope of the work also included:

- Repair and renovation of the existing court building including repairs to glass facade, offices, courtrooms;
- Construction of a guard house;
- Repairs and upgrading water, sewer and storm water services; and
- Electrical installation repairs and upgrading.