

# A great opportunity was missed, says Rajbansi

**NATHI OLIFANT**

MINORITY Front leader Amichand Rajbansi said yesterday that he harboured no bitter feelings at being left out of Premier Zweli Mkhize's new-look provincial executive council, but said the province had missed a golden opportunity of multi-party government.

Rajbansi, whose party stayed away from yesterday's inauguration in Pietermaritzburg, has also turned down an invitation to head the conservation and environmental portfolio committee. He said it had also been offered to his wife, Shameen, who also turned it down.

Rajbansi's exclusion comes in the wake of a letter he wrote to Mkhize urging him to retain him at the sport and recreation portfolio. The "Bengal Tiger" said that there needed to be continuity in the work he had started and that there was a lot that still needed to be done.

"I fully support Dr Zweli Mkhize and the cabinet he has picked. However, one also feels



**RAJBANSI**

there are good people who were left out, especially women like Makhosi Khoza, Belinda Scott and Nomusa Dube, who have made tremendous contributions," he said.

"I welcome Weziwe Thusi (who replaces Rajbansi) and will help her with the ropes at her new portfolio," he said.

Rajbansi said the MF would

continue to work with the ANC in several other spheres and that his exclusion from the executive council would in no way affect coalitions at local government or national level.

"However, I feel a great opportunity has been missed in terms of multi-party democracy. Helen Zille did it in the Western Cape and President Jacob Zuma has done it at national level. Everyone knows that my department received two unqualified audits, was ranked the best-run sport department in the country by minister Makhenkesi Stofile and we are the only sport department that developed sports in rural areas," he said.

Explaining why the MF turned down the chairmanship of conservation and environment, Rajbansi said if his merits as MEC for sport did not count, he saw no reason why he should serve in those other capacities.

Rajbansi said he would explain to the legislature within 90 days why the MF abstained from yesterday's inauguration.