

ould
November.
er."
after Radio
s application
printed in the Gov-
ment Gazette, Icasa
received two objections.
"In view of these objec-
tions and the station's
late application, a public
hearing will be held on
March 9 to determine the
station's future," Maistry
said.

Francis Naidoo, who
founded Radio Phoenix
in 1996, told the Sunday
Times two weeks ago
that he had objected
to the granting of a
new licence to Radio
Phoenix.

He said he was unhap-
py with the way the
station was being run.
The station's manager,
Sergie Naidoo, said the
closure of the station
was "a temporary set-
back and did not spell
the end of Radio
Phoenix".

"It is a minor glitch.
The mood at the station
is positive.

"We have emerged
from similar situations
before unscathed," a de-
fiant Naidoo said.

"The hearing for the
four-year licence had not
been held and we took it
for granted that the tem-
porary licence would be
extended. Icasa then told
us we would have to
re-apply and we were,
therefore, late in submit-
ting the application."

Naidoo urged Radio
Phoenix listeners to
attend next month's
hearing.

Dinesh Maharaj, chair-
man of the board at Radio
Phoenix, said he had been
negotiating with Icasa
over the licence applica-
tion for some time.

"In terms of applying
for a one-year licence, we
followed the correct pro-
cedure. They (Icasa)
closed us down prema-
turely as hearings for the
application for a four-
year licence have not yet
been held," he said.



NOT INTERESTED: Asha Devi says the Raj can keep her saris and jewellery
Picture: JACKIE CLAUSEN

Tiger offers olive branch to ex-wife

BUDDY NAIDU

BEFORE tying the knot for a second time, Chatsworth politician Amichand Rajbansi has extended an olive branch to his ex-wife of 30 years, Asha Devi.

The 59-year-old Minority Front leader, who last week announced he planned to remarry around Easter, wants to return his ex-wife's expensive collection of saris and about R300 000 worth of classic Indian jewellery.

But the woman who was embroiled in a public spat with her husband has rejected his goodwill gesture.

According to Asha Devi, the saris and jewellery were a bone of contention during the couple's messy divorce, which was finalised last August.

She claims he withheld the items when he ejected her from their former marital home in Arena Park.

"Why does he now want to meet me and hand them over? Especially after stating in earlier media reports that he did not have them," she said this week.

"I have told my attorney that he can have it all. I am trying to rebuild my life and support myself through my political work. I do not need handouts from him."

Rajbansi said he wanted to return the items to her since they were considered her personal assets, as stipulated in their divorce settlement.

"For a long while, they were lying at home. Last week I contacted her attorney to ask her to collect them," he said.

Rajbansi said he wished his ex-wife well, adding that if she did not want the items, he would give them to his daugh-

ters. "I certainly can't use them," he said.

He said Asha Devi had indicated to him that she wanted all her belongings returned to her, and had made arrangements with his daughter to pick them up.

The man known as the "Bengal Tiger" caused a stir last week when he announced his imminent marriage — without revealing the identity of his new love.

Speculation is rife that she is his fellow member of the provincial parliament and Phoenix pharmacist Shameen Thakur.

Rajbansi said he had not popped the question yet, but said that he had a choice between a Durban North medical practitioner, a Durban teacher and Thakur.

Thakur, a widow, is the most likely candidate. She and Rajbansi have been inseparable since she joined the party in 1998 and are frequently spotted together at social events.

Information sought for Timol book

THE family of apartheid martyr Ahmed Timol have appealed for information relating to his life to help with the compilation of a book marking the 30th anniversary of his death, writes **TASCHICA PILLAY**.

Timol fell — his family say he was pushed — to his death from a 10th-floor interrogation room at John Vorster Square police station in October 1971, five days after being arrested with political pamphlets.

is an Indian, and Gita has interests in the MD position", said on Friday that she was awaiting the investigation.

"If the minister wants to know what's going on, we welcome that. He's the minister, he has to know the internal things that are going on," she said.

Ngcobo laughed when asked if she would apologise to Pather, before hanging up.

Pather said she was not interested in apologies. "They have missed the moment," she said.

The racism debacle this week sparked a wave of protest from the arts community, who gathered on the steps of the Durban City Hall to show

GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS: Members of Durban's arts community staged a protest outside the city hall this week in the wake of a racist attack on a prominent theatre personality

solidarity with Pather.

In a memorandum which was handed to a representative from Ngubane's office, they said they supported a public investigation into allegations concerning the conduct of executive members of the board of the Playhouse Company.

The ANC in KwaZulu-Natal this week also joined the fray, saying they welcomed steps by Ngubane's office to probe alleged racism at the Playhouse.

"The ANC welcomes this move as an important step in fighting the

demon of racism in our country, regardless of the culprit," the party said in a statement.

Ngubane, who said he was shocked at the allegations, has appointed Doreen Ntetha, chief executive officer of the National Arts Council, to head the investigation.

Ntetha's brief is to establish whether the board members acknowledged the accuracy of the transcript of the meeting and to obtain an explanation for the remarks allegedly made.

Ntetha is expected to present her findings to Ngubane by next Friday.

'Son hired hitmen to kill dad's manager'

THE multimillionaire son of a former Inkatha Freedom Party MPP hired three hitmen to kill his father's administration manager — and then hired one of them to take out the other two, the Durban High Court heard this week, writes **RONNIE GOVENDER**.

In a bizarre twist in the trial on Friday the state's star witness, Enoch Nsele, testified how Effingham Heights trucking boss Pravesh Romalall forked out R1 000 for his petrol and food expenses to find someone to kill two of his hired hands.

Romalall, 30, a father of two, and his co-accused, Siyabonga Mfeka, 20, are charged with

killings Roshini Singh, 36, who was gunned down on February 26 1999.

The state alleges that Romalall wanted Singh killed because she stood to inherit about R200 000 from Romalall's father, Haripersad, a Phoenix MPP, who died in a helicopter crash.

Former accused and now state witness Nsele, 25, testified that Romalall had sought his help, along with two others, to kill Singh and offered each R30 000.

He told the court although he did not initially intend to kill his

colleagues, he changed his mind "in order to put this thing right".

"It was Romalall who said that if the two witnesses were killed, the case would be over," said Nsele.

On Thursday he told the court that, a few weeks after the hit, Romalall had paid a policeman who knew about the murder R40 000 to keep quiet.

He also told the court other policemen had extorted R300 000 from Romalall.

The trial continues tomorrow.

Prayer house shut down

THE Muslim community is angry over a Johannesburg City Council decision to shut down a house that was converted into a prayer facility in the southern Johannesburg suburb of Ridgeway, writes **YUSSUF NAZEER**.

The council obtained a High Court interdict to close the prayer facility at 130 Riverside Drive after complaints by white residents.

The Ridgeway Muslim community formed a body called Anwaarul

Islam, which bought the house in 1995 for prayer after failing to obtain land for a mosque.

The Anwaarul Islam committee said more than 750 Muslims needed a place to perform their prayers and to conduct religious classes for their children.

The committee received a letter from the council's attorneys this month advising it to "discontinue the unauthorised use of the facilities immediately, if it has not already done so".

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