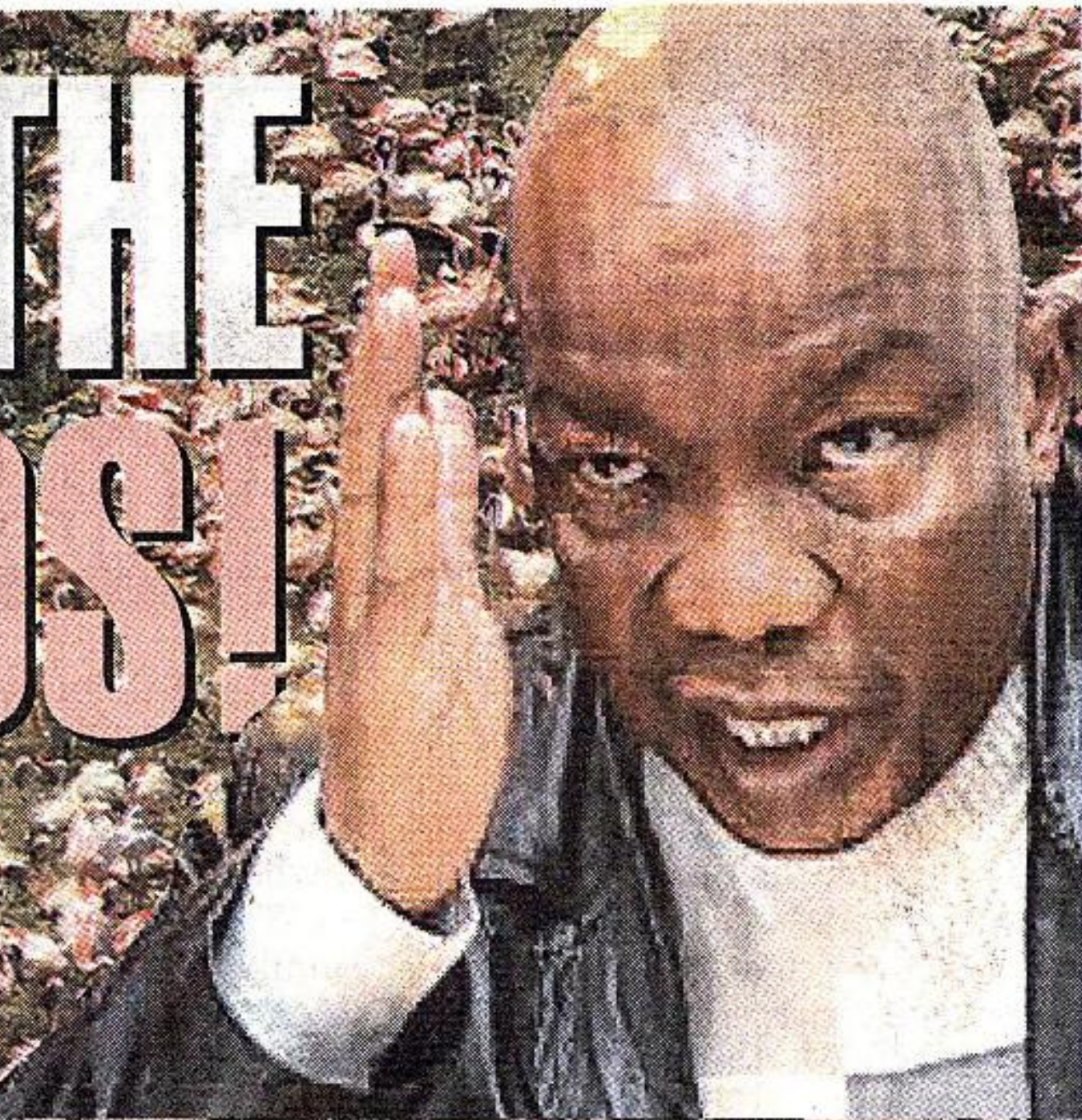
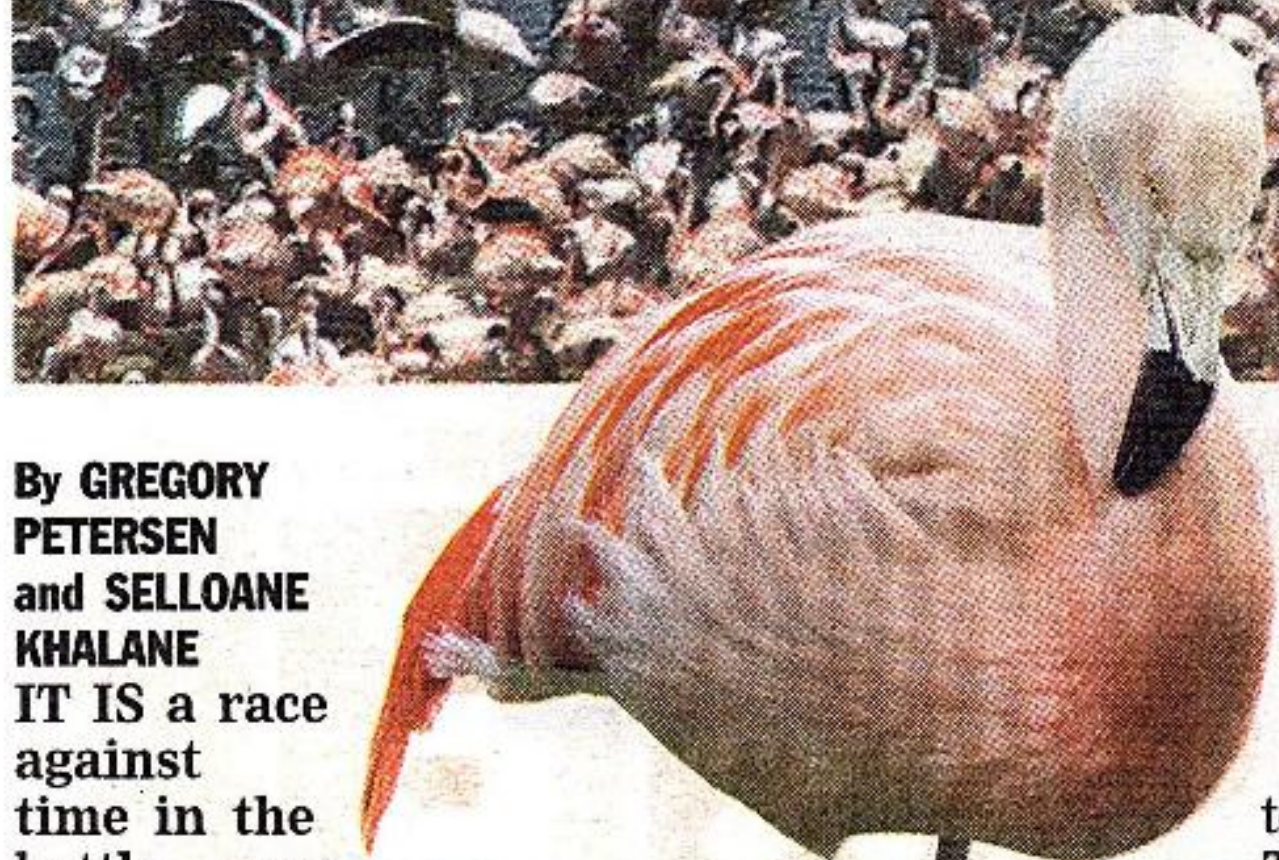


The flamingo breeding ground at Kamfer Dam is threatened by the municipality's proposed building of 6 000 houses.

BATTLE . . . OF THE BIG PINK BIRDS!



By GREGORY PETERSEN and SELLOANE KHALANE
IT IS a race against time in the battle over the big pink birds . . .

And all this is raging in Kimberley, Northern Cape.

There is a big wetland which has become home to hundreds of rare pink flamingos, making this Kimberley's greatest beauty site.

Now the local mayor wants to build house units near the wetland.

He said the development will help poor people.

He also said they'll do anything to protect the flamingos.

The mayor went further on TV, saying that anybody who tries to stop the R2 billion housing project does not care much about poor black people!

"The proposed housing develop-

ment at Kamfer Dam and Northgate will continue as agreed with the developers," Sol Plaatje municipality mayor Patrick Lenyebi told *Daily Sun*.

The mayor spoke to the People's Paper after a huge campaign by an organisation called Save the Flamingo.

According to the organisation, the proposed housing development that is to see 6 000 units built near the dam will be bad news for the endangered birds.

Save the Flamingo is now looking at other organisations to join in their battle against the municipality's plan.

Kamfer Dam – a national heritage site – is a 400-hectare wetland in the northern part of Kimberley.

The organisation is outraged by evidence that sewage is already leaking into the wetland.

They say this is very bad for the flamingos.

The mayor, though, insists that the lives of the birds are important.

He admitted that as a municipality they are having sewerage problems, but that it would be fixed soon.

Lenyebi would not comment when asked why the municipality had not chosen to build the planned houses in another part of the city.

He said his municipality has taken measures to ensure the wetland wildlife is not disturbed.

A brick wall or an electric fence will be built a kilometre away from the dam to protect the birds.

The mayor said the housing project would create at least 2 000 jobs . . . and the municipality would benefit through the rates and taxes.

"This is meant to live up to what was said by the housing minister's (Lindiwe Sisulu) 'breaking new ground for developments' speech.

"We want people in the area to have facilities at their doorstep so they do not have to travel too far," he said.

Patrick Lenyebi, mayor of the Sol Plaatje municipality, says people are important too. Photos by P Elano

What you think



Neil May

Some local residents said that they were fine with the development – so long as the sewerage problem was solved.

■ Neil May (27), a security guard, hoped the development would create more jobs.

"I will be happy, but they must also move the sewerage from the people – it's not good for us."



Simone Arries

■ Simone Arries, (25) mother of one, said: "I have been jobless for seven years. Maybe that will change if they develop the place."