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## Daily News

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### A prudent decision

President Mahinda Rajapaksa deserves plaudits for insisting that all Government circulars must be sent in Tamil to areas predominantly populated by Tamil speaking masses.

This is one of the major grievances voiced by Tamil speaking people in the North and the East, since they cannot read and comprehend the circulars sent in Sinhala or English.

It is the right of every citizen to correspond with Government departments in the language of his/her choice and denying this is a violation of a cherished fundamental right.

One of the most effective ways of addressing this problem is to have more public servants who are fluent in both vernacular languages. A good knowledge of English can be considered a boon in such circumstances. It was indeed heartening to note that more than 1,000 public servants have sat for the recent Tamil proficiency examination while a marginally fewer number of Tamil public servants have sat for its Sinhala version.

Sri Lanka on a Mission to crush Terrorism:

### Where is the SAARC Convention on terrorism?

To the SAARC, our urgent call is to speed up the implementation of the Convention to Suppress Terrorism. Sri Lanka has embarked on a mission most successful to crush LTTE terrorism in the region. The beneficiaries of that victory will not only be Sri Lanka but, also our immediate neighbour India. Why? Both nations have lost Heads of State or Government, Troops, Men, Women and Children at the hands of brutal LTTE terrorism.

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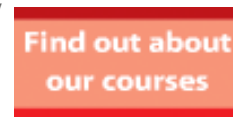
### The language link to peace and unity

It was not unexpected sections of the Tamil Diaspora in the North America, that still believe in the LTTE and funds its terror, much against US and Canadian law; had chosen the same day that President Rajapaksa addressed the UNGA to hold a demonstration near the UN targeting Sri Lanka and its President.

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### Accountability and the financial system

A sad day for Wall Street,



This is a good omen for a country which is emerging out of a conflict. With terrorists driven out of the Eastern province and normality restored, the ordinary people are going about their day-to-day to business.

They have to interact with Government departments and if the Tamil civilians have to deal with Sinhala speaking public servants and Sinhala documents, the whole exercise of restoring civil administration would come to nought.

The same process of liberation is being repeated in the North and in the months to come, the Government will need more Tamil speaking public servants there. Police stations and Kachecheris are the obvious candidates for extra recruitment of Tamil speaking personnel.

In the long term, we should be looking at moulding a truly bilingual population. As far as we know, students, tomorrow's leaders, are now being taught both vernacular languages as well as English from the primary grades.

This programme must be strengthened by making the maximum use of electronic and printed media to literally spread the word. Fluency in both vernacular languages at every level of society all over the country will be an impetus to the drive to establish unity and peace.

### **World Animal Day**

**M**ahatma Gandhi once said that the greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated. This is indeed true. Today, World Animal Day, is an opportunity for Sri Lankans to reflect on how we treat our animals, wild and domestic.

One of the most glaring differences between

but it may be a glorious day for democracy. Hopefully Congress will now devise a plan that is not based on trickle-down economics. A plan that identifies the real sources of the problem and does something about them - a real stimulus to the economy.

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Peace  
Process of  
**SRI LANKA**

developed and developing countries is that animal cruelty laws are very advanced in the former countries. Such laws are either non-existent or archaic in the latter.

In England, for example, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) plays a pro-active role in preventing cruelty to animals and bringing offenders to justice. It publishes appeals against animal cruelty in newspapers with photographs and its army of volunteers spread throughout the British isles help homeless, stranded or abandoned animals.

Here in Sri Lanka, there is no such society or mechanism to look after pets and other animals. To its credit, this Government has taken several enlightened measures to ensure animal welfare. Stray dogs are no longer killed, but are subject to birth control and anti-rabies measures.

There is also a proposal to remove import duties on foreign beef so that local cattle may be saved from slaughter. Large-scale cattle slaughter is a blot on our Buddhist heritage and indeed, there is a drastic drop in the number of people who eat beef. It is no secret that the most primitive and excruciatingly painful methods are used to slaughter cattle in this country. It is essential to introduce humane methods but in the long term, the authorities must ponder the possibility of minimising the slaughter of cattle and fulfilling most of the demand through imports.

Our wild elephant population is also dwindling fast, primarily as a result of the human-elephant conflict. The battle for food and living space between humans and elephants has reached a crucial point and a solution must be evolved. A world without elephants will indeed be a dull place and all possible steps must be taken to prevent their extinction. In fact, our island has many

endangered species who should not be allowed to go the way of the Dodo.

Closer home, there are two animals who occupy a prime space in our living rooms - and hearts. Cats and dogs have been living with humans for thousands of years and are a constant source of delight in our lives. Dogs love their masters more than they love themselves. Cats, on the other hand, are fiercely independent creatures who consider themselves masters of all they survey, humans included. When your dog wags its tail to express its happiness or your cat purrs its heart out to you, surely there are only a few greater joys in life.



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