

New signals between Syria and Israel

After four decades of hostility, Syria and Israel have started taking cautious steps towards reaching an understanding that may eventually lead to the signing of a peace treaty...

In the ultimate analysis, it is the change of government in Tel Aviv that has altered the scenario, followed by the acceptance of the UN Security Council's resolution No 242 by Rabin.

However, one must not underestimate the difficulties which lie ahead as the two countries begin their search for peace. The immediate issue relates to the return of the Golan Heights...

There should be no illusion in Tel Aviv that a peace treaty signed with Damascus will bring the Arab-Israeli conflict to an end.

What is not in doubt, a peace treaty signed between Israel and Syria would put a new lease of life in the peace process.

Gender Oppression

Violence has for long been capturing the headlines as well as the large among whatever happen in a day or week or month — both nationally and locally.

Let us take such a box of news published in a national vernacular daily. The lead item is headlined — divorces on increase in Tangail.

It is interesting that there are, apart from another four in the box, four more reports in the same page, but outside box.

In Gopalganj 16 year-old Kanchanrani has committed suicide frustrated by her parents' endless quarrelling.

The whole society is suffering from women oppression. Meh included, when one's daughter is raped and someone else's wife kidnapped, one cannot but be oppressed.

Let's Welcome the Summit's Signal of Interest in SAARC

During their one-day conference in Karachi last week, opposition leaders from five of seven countries in South Asia talked a lot of sense.

The countries — Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and the host Pakistan — are all founder-members of SAARC.

As expected, the declaration called for political solutions of the outstanding issues among the countries in the region.

Notwithstanding the reaction of governments to the call to states to fund major parties, one hopes that political groupings will not keep their policy planning or training of their workers — two most neglected areas in most SAARC countries — in abeyance until financial assistance is available from the states.

It was during their speeches at the conference that the opposition leaders were positive and most constructive, judging by press reports and a couple of phone calls from Karachi.

Here, their views ranged from Sheikh Hasina's suggestion that the SAARC opposition forum should "complement" the efforts of the official body as well as of governments in different countries to the forthright position

Here is an opportunity to broaden the involvement of the seven-nation alliance and move towards creating a consultative council which one day can pave the way for a SAARC Parliament. Meanwhile, let there be more interaction among leaders, like what we saw in Karachi, to defuse tension among nations in this volatile region.

taken by India's VP Singh to reduce the arms race between New Delhi and Islamabad to divert funds for development. In between these opinions, one can place the view of the Nepalese opposition leader Manmohan Adhikari that the whole of South Asia should become a 'zone for development'.

There were, of course, lapses, deliberate or otherwise, an unfortunate one being the omission of the name of the late President Ziaur

If this is so, what happens — or rather should happen — next? The Karachi declaration said that the leaders would meet periodically and exchange information on a regular basis 'about the role of the opposition and the impediments to democratic dispensation in SAARC countries.'

By eschewing a negative or an aggressive posture, the opposition leaders have, in effect, put the ball in the court of the SAARC secretariat and at the same time, offered governments in South Asia an opportunity to recognise the importance of the Karachi Summit.

To start with, the group's secretariat and governments concerned should be pleased with the commitment the opposition leaders have made to SAARC, with suggestions as to what the alliance should do to reduce poverty and hunger from countries in South Asia.

AT HOME AND ABROAD

S. M. ALI

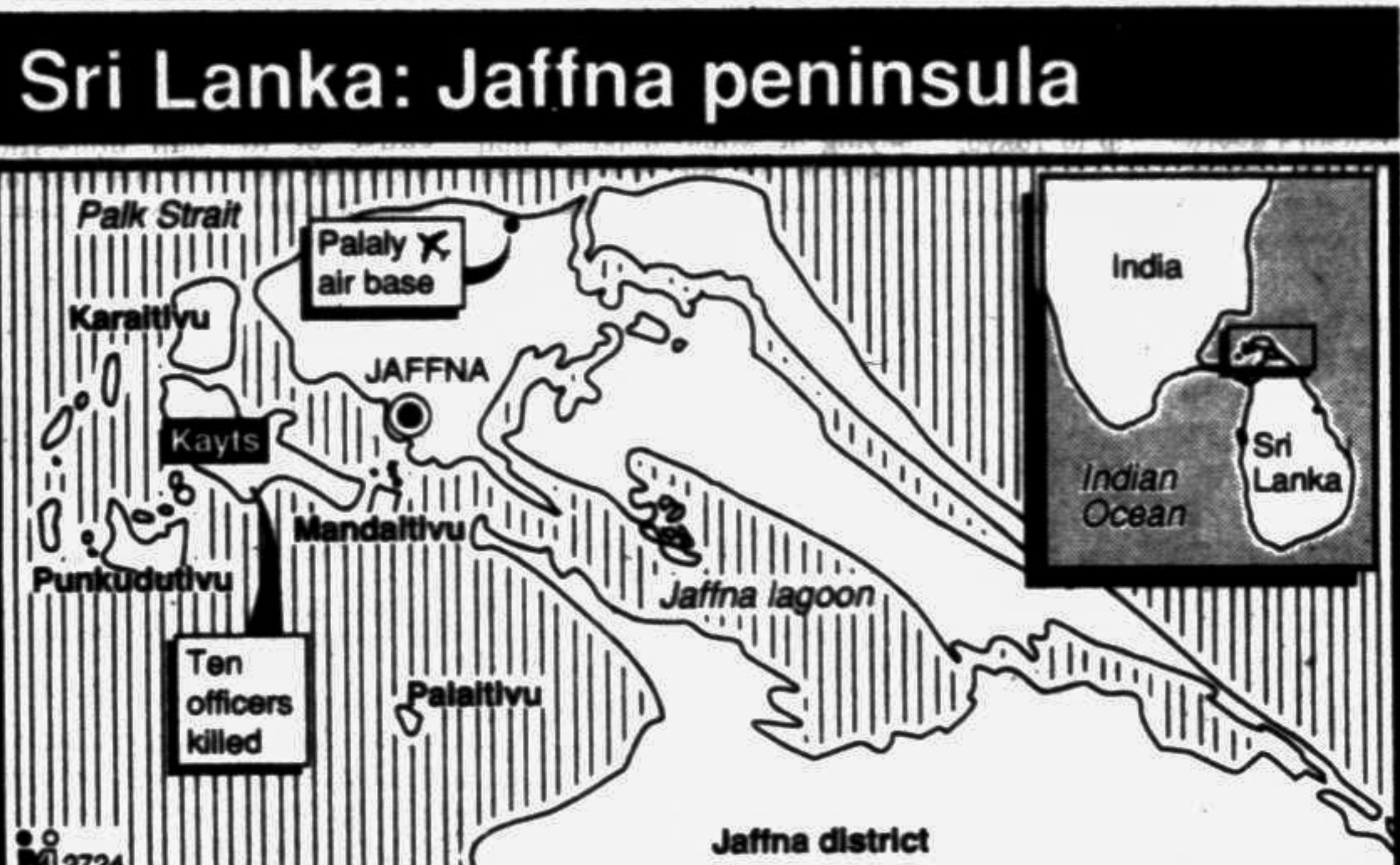
Rahman from the list of Sheikh Hasina of assassinated leaders of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Going by the agency report, the Awami League leader brought up this list by way of making a passing plea for the repeal of the Indemnity Bill.

perimeter was established at six miles. If the security forces capture Jaffna the Tiger movement will be doomed, India has said it will not intervene again.

Mass Killing of Officers Raises Sri Lanka Tension

Gamini Navaratne writes from Colombo

The death by landmine of ten top officers, including the commander of the Northern sector where the Tamil war still rages, has raised the political temperature again in Sri Lanka. An army uprising is feared. There is no military solution to the ethnic war. Yet a political one seems as far away as ever.



posedly planted two years ago, blew up when it was hit by their vehicle. Strangely, trucks and vans had been using the same route for two years without anything happening.

The official version is that the vehicle, a long-wheelbase Land Rover, was of a heavier weight and so triggered off the bomb. But some people suspect that a bomb may have been planted in the vehicle to

kill Kobbekadwe, who was a relation of former prime minister Sirima Bandaranaike, leader of the opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party.

The city of Jaffna has been heavily bombed by the air force, causing immense damage to life and property. The LTTE remains unbowed. Its leaders, 38-year-old Velupillai Prabhakaran, says he will settle for nothing less than a separate state to be named Eelam.

Jaffna is the heartland of the Tamil minority. Repeated appeals to surrender have always been spurned. The Indian intervention in 1987, ostensibly to prevent the 'genocide' of the Tamils at the hands of the Sinhalese majority, ended in fiasco.

The Tiger objective now is to knock out the Palaly air force base at the extreme north of the Jaffna peninsula. From there helicopter gunships fly daily to pound Tiger camps. A few months ago they had approached to within two miles.

To the Editor...

Letters for publication in these columns should be addressed to the Editor and legibly written or typed with double space. For reasons of space, short letters are preferred, and all are subject to editing and cuts.

Hasan Shahid Suhrawardy

Sir, I join you to thank Dr Anisuzzaman for his illuminating biographical sketch of famous scholar Hasan Shahid Suhrawardy, but I am inclined to disagree with you that your 'My World' lacks a sense of direction (28.8.92).

1956, when he, as the prime minister of Pakistan ridiculed Jawaharlal Nehru for his Kashmir policy, for more than an hour even without once mentioning his name.

Abdul Kader, Purana Paltan, Dhaka

Monetary loss and its recovery

Sir, In all banks, post offices, and other places where cash is handled continuously, cheques and demand drafts are passed throughout the day.

flux, that would not last long. Soon the tension would get diffused. Thus, we can lessen our agonies.

Md Abdur Rouf Sergeant, Zahurul Haque Hall, DU

Shah Jalal University

Sir, The Shah Jalal University of Science and Technology in Sylhet had started functioning little more than a year ago. But till now only a few subjects have been opened.

Saplings need care

Sir, Presently the tree plantation, programme, believably, is going on in full swing throughout the country.

M Zahidul Haque Publicity and Press Secretary, BSCE, Dhaka

Meanwhile, the newly planted saplings need proper nursing and protection for their natural growth. Hence the newly planted saplings should be properly fenced by bamboo or brick fencing.