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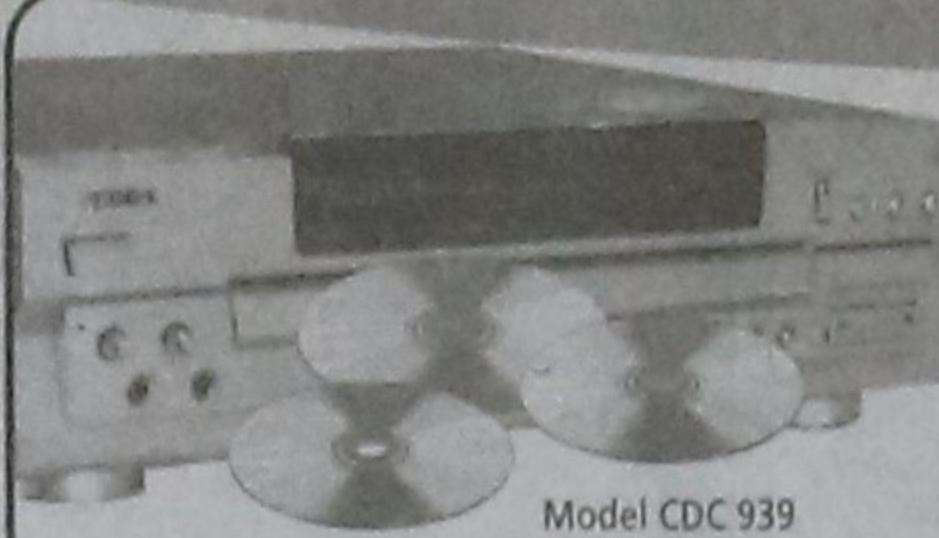
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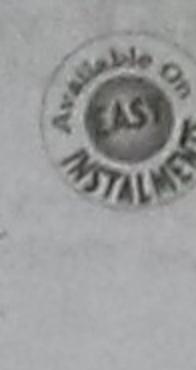
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Declaration of Strategic Partnership signed

Delhi, Moscow won't join any military or political blocs

NEW DELHI, Oct 3: Indian and Russian leaders signed a declaration today pledging not to join any military or political blocs and to avoid treaties or agreements that would infringe on each other's national security interests, reports AP.

The "Declaration of Strategic Partnership," signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin and India's Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, moves relations between the two countries even closer than the "friendship and cooperation" of Soviet times.

"Today's meeting was extremely important and brought exceptional results," Putin said at a joint news conference. "The talks have shown that the long-term national and geopolitical interests of Russia and India coincide."

Since relations between India and the United States had warmed up after the Cold War, analysts said Russia may have feared its longtime South Asian friend was tilting toward Washington. Moscow is already upset about the expansion of NATO to

its borders in Europe and wants to head off any alliances to the south.

The terms of the declaration, far more specific and binding than any of the statements about future relations made between Vajpayee and US President Bill Clinton last month, show that the Indian-Russian ties developed 50 years ago have not loosened.

Putin called the document "the foundation of our relations."

The declaration, signed at the outset of Putin's three-day visit to India, pledges the two countries to avoid armed conflict directed at one another.

But it goes further, ensuring that neither country will join any alliance or association, or sign any understanding that infringes on the other's territorial integrity or sovereignty.

That guarantee could help India in its dispute with Pakistan and China over borders. The agreement appears to commit Russia to India's side, a reiteration of the stand taken in 1955 by Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, who declared that all of Jammu

and Kashmir are an integral part of India.

Pakistan, which has fought two wars with India over Jammu and Kashmir, also claims the region in its entirety and a UN declaration calls for a referendum in the region.

Putin has been said to be contemplating a visit to Pakistan, reversing decades of Soviet policy. However, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, traveling with him, told reporters the visit has not been planned yet.

The latter appears to be a concession by India, whose government has repeatedly said it supports global elimination of nuclear weapons, but opposes the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty that limits them to the United States, Russia, France, China and Britain.

Reuter adds: Putin today called for concrete efforts to restart peace talks between India and Pakistan and defuse tension in the region.

There was no immediate reaction to the comment from New Delhi, which has traditionally balked at third party intervention in its difficult relations with Islamabad.

In the agreement, Putin and Vajpayee also promise that their countries would inform each other of planned foreign policy initiatives in the international arena and hold regular political and foreign office consultations.

Putin said, "The traditional partnership between India and Russia has been tested by time and it is the most important

stabilizing factor, not only for the Asian region, but for the whole world."

The declaration, signed in Hyderabad House, a former mansion of one of India's princes, also commits India and Russia to close cooperation at the United Nations and to working together for reduction, and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons, and nuclear nonproliferation.

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INSTANT IMPACT: India's young left-arm fast bowler Zaheer Khan, who took three wickets on his debut, unsuccessfully appealing against Kenya's top batsman Ravindu Shah during the opening match of the ICC Knock Out tournament at the Nairobi Gymkhana ground yesterday. -- AFP photo

JCD activist beaten to death in Sirajganj

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 3: A JCD activist was beaten to death in front of his residence at village Dakatiapara under Sadar upazila of the district at 6.30 pm today.

The dead was identified as Jahangir, 24, son of Abu Zafar Mollah and a student of Karipur RIM Degree College, police said.

A gang of armed miscreants numbering ten led by opponent Jel Hossain stabbed and beat him mercilessly.

He died on the spot and four others who tried to save him were also beaten by the miscreants.

Local people said, the incident was a sequel to yesterday's clash between two groups one led by Jahangir and other led by Jel Hossain. Ten people were injured during the clash.

A case was lodged with Sirajganj Sadar thana.

Fans break into gunfight at football match

A frenzied brawl between football fans supporting two teams erupted into a gunfight at the west gallery of Bangabandhu National Stadium last night, reports UNB.

A dozen people including some hawkers were injured.

The soccer violence ensued as the supporters of Arambagh and Rahmatganj sporting clubs shouted and provoked each other while cheering their teams to win the match.

Hundreds of spectators at the gallery panicked on hearing sudden gunshots amid the melee, an eyewitness said.

The rival fans chased each other inside the gallery and at one stage police swooped wielding batons and clubbed the unruly fans.

Police brought the situation under control after about three minutes.

Rahmatganj won the match a tiebreaker.

Fire from exploding transformer burns 3 trucks in city

By Staff Correspondent

Fire from an exploding overhead transformer swept down on three trucks loaded with imitation bangles and drums of chemicals, completely destroying two and partially damaging the other at Armanitola in the city.

One of the trucks escaped with partial damage when its driver managed to drive it away from the inferno.

The fire also partially gutted a nearby warehouse. The highly inflammable imitation bangles and the chemicals kept burning for about two hours spreading toxic fumes in the congested area of the old town under Kotwali thana.

Fire fighters said the fire started at around 6 a.m. and continued till 7.45 a.m. before they could bring the blaze under control with the help of five fire brigade vehicles.

Fire fighters were yet to estimate the extent of damage till writing this report.

Star Report

said a senior EC official.

A crucial meeting of the 15-member inter-ministerial technical committee is due today at the commission's conference room to select the competent bidders for publication and preparation of the database.

Initially, the commission will set up a central database providing eight basic information of each voter at the EC Secretariat and expand it up to the district level through Wide Area Network (WAN).

"We have collected almost all information regarding the voters, excepting from some thanas in the Rajshahi Division to finalise the list within the stipulated time," said an official involved in the preparation of voters' list.

Terming the task of designing the database as new and complicated, he said, "We have to look for the most competent bidders

who have sufficient logistic supports and experience in compiting."

The database will have the following basic information about the voters: serial number, identity card number, name, father's/mother's/husband's name, profession, date of birth, age and address.

Apart from the central database, the EC will store basic facts about the voters in CDs.

More than 1,000 businessmen are bidding for the tender for the voters' list and their database. The bidders have also been invited to attend today's meeting

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New voters' list will be ready by Oct 26: EC

Star Report

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Number of voters go up by 24pc

By Staff Correspondent

The number of voters in the country has increased by more than 24 per cent compared to that before the last general elections.

In Bhola district, the increase is more than 50 per cent.

Electoral Commission (EC) sources said the rise in number of voters was due to a "well planned and well organised" door-to-door drive to register voters which continued from May 15 to June 24.

As per the draft voter list, there are now 7,46,75,749 voters

in the country. In 1995, there were 6,01,41,877 voters.

An EC official said that in 1997, population of the country was 12.43 crore. And as per the 1991 population census, there should be 7,41,82,240 voters -- people aged 18 years and above -- in the country now.

In Bhola, the number of voters has risen from 7,3584 to 10,60670. The sharp rise prompted the EC to investigate the matter.

A team of EC officials who

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One held in Ctg on charge of killing his Kuwaiti employer

A Bangladeshi national who allegedly killed his employer in Kuwait a year ago was arrested from Mirsharai in Chittagong yesterday, police sources said.

They said Billal Kabir Miah, 39, son of Sabit Miah of Ekhlaishpur village in Begumganj upazila of Noakhali, worked in the house of Haji Ali Mousa Al-Mohamed in Kuwait.

He allegedly killed his master on October 10 last year, put the body in a refrigerator and fled to Bangladesh using a friend's passport.

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Sutrapur double murder case : 2 accused held

By Staff Correspondent

Police yesterday arrested two FIR listed criminals in connection with the double murder case in Sutrapur in the city.

A team of Ramina police accompanied by its officer-in-charge ABM Sultan Ahmed arrested Arif, 25 and Shah Alam, 26 from Segun Bagicha area at about 4 in the afternoon.

Police said that the two FIR listed youths were absconding since the murder, which took place inside the Rifle club at Sutrapur on September 16.

Teenagers Moshin and Saem were called out from their residence and their mutilated bodies were recovered from the sewerage line on the following day.

Export Promotion Bureau

Information Division

122-124, Motijheel C/A

Dhaka-1000

Dated: 01-10-2000

Tender Notice

Sealed tenders are hereby invited by 3:00 PM on 10.10.2000 from renowned advertising agencies/designers to design and print the following publicity materials for the Dhaka International Trade Fair-2001. Tender schedule can be purchased from the common service section of Export Promotion Bureau during office hours till 9-10-2000 at Tk 400 (four hundred) only (non-refundable).

a) Folder : 5000 (five thousand) copies
b) Poster : (1) Bangla-2000 (two thousand) copies
(2) English-2000 (two thousand) copies

c) Application Form : (1) For local participants-1500 (one thousand & five hundred) copies (Black & White)
(2) For foreign participants-1000 copies (three colors as per specification)

2. Design lay-out of folder and posters along with sample of paper have to be submitted with the tender proposal.
3. Publication section of the Bureau may be contacted for more details.

Abdul Mazid Bhuyan

Member-Secretary, Publicity Sub-Committee
Dhaka International Trade Fair-2001 & Director, Export Promotion Bureau

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