#### Indian population to cross 1b by century-end

NEW DELHI. Nov 21: India population will cross the one billion mark by the end of this century if the present birth rate continues for the next six years, said the registrar-general of India. R M Vijayanunni.

reports Xinhua. Vijavanunni told journalists at a "meet-the-press" programme on Sunday that the population figure in India will stand at 1.01 billion by the vear 2000.

india's current annual population growth rate in at about 20 per thousand. India may become the most populous nation by the mid 21st century

HYDERABAD. Nov 21: Baba has the power to do the India's ruling Congress Party. needful."

Sai Baba has a worldwide following and is one of India's best known gurus,

The Congress official, Human Resources Development Minister Arjun Singh, and the chief ministers of the Congress-ruled Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka states, which vote for new assemblies later this month, also plan to visit Sai Baba.

Rao, for whom defeat in the two politically influential states would be a significant personal setback, had earlier started the campaign trail with a visit to Tirupathi, the holiest Hindu Shrine in southern India.

A defeat in Andhra Pradesh. his home state, would be a particularly would be a particularly serious problem for Rao within the Congress party, whose northern contingent accuse him of neglecting the Hindispeaking heartland.

The power centre of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is Congress Party has shifted south from its traditional northern base over the last two general elections in 1989 and which has never won power in 1991, and many senior northany Southern state, could ern Congressmen see defeat in emerge as the single largest

the two southern states as being to their advantage.

not likely to bring him all the

Hindu votes, comprising some

80 per cent of the electorate.

as the Hindu nationalist

Opinion polls say the BJP.

a serious contender.

party in Karnataka. In Andhra Pradesh, pollsters say the regional Telugu They believe that Rao would Desam party could keep have to put more effort into power, with the BJP taking reviving Congress in the north votes from Congress. if he suffered setbacks in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

Congress campaign managers say they have turned to Rao's spiritual forays were Muslim voters accounting for some nine per cent of the votes, to tilt the balance. "We have an edge over the

> cial said. "But then Muslims are also divided between the Congress and other non-BJP opposition groups."

BJP there," the Congress offi-

The way in which Congress has tried to win Muslim votes

Congress seeks guru's blessing to win polls Chief Election Commissioner N Seshan, who last week de-

manded the resignation of Welfare Minister Sitaram Kesri for alleged violation of election Seshan has accused Kesri of trying to influence Muslim vot-

ers by advocating job quotas for India's largest minority community. But Congress officials were certain that Rao's visit to the

likely to rile Seshan. "Seshan himself was in Puttparthi last week, seeking the blessings of the Baba." a Congress official said.

Sai Baba's hermitage was not

#### Malaysia may send more troops to Bosnia

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 21: The Malaysian cabinet is studying a plan to send more troops to Bosnia following a decision to withdraw peacekeepers from Somalia, Defence Minister Najib Tun Razak said today, reports AFP.

"If the study shows the government can afford to and should expand our military involvement in the Balkan country, additional troops will be sent there next year". Nalib

Malaysia, which strongly sympathises with the plight of Bosnia's Muslims, has already sent about 1,500 troops to the rump Yugoslav state.

# BRIFFIY

predicted to lose key southern

state elections, is seeking help

from a popular Hindu cult

chief to help swing its for-

tunes, Congress campaigners

They said Prime Minister

PV Narashimha Rao, a devotee

of Satya Sai Baba, would attend

the birthday celebrations of

the bushy-haired, saffron-clad

these elections." a Congress

campaign manager said. "The

Congress party knows that Sai

"We need magic to win

said. reports Reuter.

guru today.

Rabin-Arafat meet on Thursday: PLO leader Yasser Arafat is to meet Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Thursday in Spain, a Palestinian official said

on Sunday, AFP reports from Gaza City. The official said the meeting had been planned before last Friday's clashes between Islamic fundamentalists and police in which 15 Palestinians were killed

Crosby in critical condition: David Crosby of the rock group Crosby, Stills and Nash received a new liver on Sunday in a seven-hour operation and was in

critical condition. AP reports from Los Angeles. The musician's condition was normal for organ transplant patients, said Warren Robak, spokesman for the University of California at Los Angeles Medical Centre.

Rabin goes to ROK Dec 14: Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will visit Seoul on December 14-17 for the first summit between an Israeli and South Korean leader, the presidential office said yesterday, AFP reports from Seoul.

Rabin will be the first Israeli head of state to visit South Korea since the two nations established diplomatic ties in

Tunisian FM to visit Seoul: Tunisian Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahia will visit Seoul tomorrow through Friday to discuss the situation on the Korean Peninsula and improve bilateral ties, the Foreign Ministry said Monday, AP reports from Seoul.

Yahia will pay a courtesy call on President Kim Young-sam, meet with Foreign Minister Han Sung-joo and sign an aviation pact and an agreement to boost cooperation in science and technology, the ministry added.

Seminar on Pacific culture: An international seminar on safeguarding the cultural heritage of the Pacific islands opened yesterday at the territorial museum of Noumea in New Caledonia, officials said, AFP reports from Noumea.

Over five days, some 26 officials from pacific museums and cultural centres will discuss three main topics documenting cultural heritage, the methods for collecting it. and the choice of objects for preservation.

Clash marks Mexican Rev Day: Police and indigenous groups clashed in the impoverished southern state of Chiapas on Sunday as Mexicans marked the 84th anniversary of the beginning of their revolution, AFP

reports from San Cristobal De Las Casas. Demonstrations in honour of the 1910 uprising had caused tension in the state one of Mexico's poorest and the home of a new year's day insurrection by the Zapatista National Liberation Army. A ceasefire has been in effect since mid January.

4 newsmen asked to leave E Timor: The government on Monday ordered four Western journalists to leave the troubled province of East Timor, where they were covering pro-independence demonstrations. AP reports

from Dili The journalists did not have the required work permits to be in the area unlike dozens of other journalists reporting on the events during the past 10 days, said Johanes Sri Triswoyo, head of the immigration office in Dili, the provincial capital

20 hurt in Canadian train fire: As many as 60 passengers were injured when a train heading to Montreal from Toronto hit something on the tracks and

caught fire. AP reports from Brighton. Sue White, an administrator at Trenton Memorial Hospital said more than a dozen people were being treated for cuts and bruises. Ambulance crews had advised the hospital to be ready for burn victims, she said. Other passengers were taken to a hearby school, where they were to be bused to Montreal.

IRA admits shooting: The Irish Republican Army (IRA) on Sunday admitted responsibility for the fatal shooting of a postal worker in Northern Ireland on November 11. AFP reports from Dublin.

in a statement issued in Dublin, the outlawed nationalist paramilitary group said: 'IRA volunteers acting on instructions were involved in this incident.

Quake hits East Indonesia: An earthquake jolted a far east Indonesian province early Monday, destroying 12 houses and injuring at least 28 people, officials said. AP reports from Jakarta.

The quake, with a preliminary magnitude of 5.6, occurred at 1:59 am(1759 GMT Sunday) in Irian Jaya province, 3,700 kilometers (2.300 miles) northeast of Jakarta.

Russia launches 3 satellites: A Proton rocket carrying three Russian satellites blasted into space from the Baikonur cosmodrome in northern Kaza khstan. AP reports from Moscow

The navigation satellites, the Cosmos 2294, Cosmos 2295 and Cosmos 2296 were launched Sunday. All equipment was reported functioning properly.

Indians in Fiji scapegoat: Fiji's leading ethnic indian politician said Monday that repetition of the "monstrous lie" that his people controlled the Pacific nation's economy is comparable to the Nazi "big lie" propaganda-

tactic. AP reports from Suva, Fiji. Opposition leader Jai Ram Reddy told Parliament that Fiji's Indians were constantly made scapegoats to explain the lack of economic progress by indigenous Fijians.

Seminar on water pollution: A threeday seminar began in Bali yesterday to brief specialists from 12 Asia Pacific countries on how to use mussels to measure water pollution levels. APP reports from Tokyo.

A statement released by the Tokyo-based United Nations University, which is sponsoring the seminar, outlined the pollution detection plan, which is supported by the UNESCO oceanographic commission.

Jaw stuns Taiwan TV viewers: A rightist running for mayor in Taipei stunned television audiences Sunday when he charged that Taiwan's president plans to declare the island's independence before 1997. AFP

reports from Taipei The accusation which apparently caught television broadcasters unaware was swiftly and strongly rejected by the presidential office yesterday Jaw Shau-Kong, a new party candidate for the December 3 Taipei mayoral elections, alleged in the island's first televised campaign forum that President Lee Teng-Hus would assert independence in the first half of 1997, before Hong Kong reverts to Chinese rule

## Former Pak MP, brother held on drug smuggling

PESHAWAR, Nov 21: The police here yesterday arrested an alleged narcotics smuggler said, reports AFP.

Lal Karim, a former member of the Pakistani Parliament, was arrested with his younger brother. Mohammad Yusuf. an efficial said.

cotics smuggling to foreign countries and proliferation of drugs in the country.

His brother is also accused of complicity in drug trafficking in the country.

Pakistan and the US have an extradition treaty but it was not immediately clear if the US will seek to extradite Karim.

Karim is also under investigation for his suspected financial backing of a revolt in the tribal area earlier this month, official sources said. He has been handed to the para-military Bajaur scouts in connection with the investigation, the sources said.

Bajaur, located 210 kilometers (130 miles) from here, was torn by strife when tribesmen demanding Islamic \*laws took up arms and clashed with the security forces before the revolt was quelled. Many were reported killed.



Miss World 1994 Aishwarya Rai of India poses for photographers a day after winning her crown at Sun City on - AFP photo Sunday.

#### 8 soldiers, 20 Khmers die in Cambodian clash

PHNOM PENH, Nov 21: Eight Cambodian soldiers and at least 20 Khmer Rouge guerillas were killed during a rebel assault on an army post in the country's northwest, a senior government official said today, reports Reuter.

About 100 guerillas launched the attack last Tuesday on the post in Py Tasek village about 35 km (20 miles) northwest of Battambang, the provincial capital, Battambang's vice governor Nam Tum

"This is not most serious (recent) attack - but it's the first time we lost eight soldiers," he said.

"According to people who were forced to carry (Khmer Rouge) dead and wounded soldiers, they (Khmer Rouge) lost at least 20 fighters in the clash," he said. One rebels was captured in the 90-minute

Tum said he was worried about the fate of villagers who had been ordered by the Khmer Rouge to act as stretcher-bearers to carry their dead and injured.

"Those who are suspected of serving as government militiamen haven't returned to their homes'yet," he said.

Late last month in Battambang province. Khmer Rouge guerillas executed as many as 46 Cambodian villagers, part of a group of 72 local people who ventured into a rebel-controlled area foraging for bamboo and gravel for road mak-

#### Hekmatyar's men rocket Kabul: 12 killed

ISLAMABAD, Nov 21: A barrage of rockets hit several parts of Kabul yesterday killing 12 people and wound ing 11 others, Kabul radio re ported, says AFP.

About 30 rockets were fired by troops of the Hezb-l-Islami faction, headed by former Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, said the govern ment-controlled radio, monitored here.

The radio also said the gov ernment had ordered its forces to observe a one-week ceasefire in response to an appeal from United Nations agencies.

The ceasefire call was apparently meant to facilitate a medical vaccination campaign currently underway in Kabul and surrounding areas.

Reports from Kabul said more than 40,000 children and women have been vaccinated at the start of one-week operation organised by the Health Ministry with international assistance.

Hekmatyar and the forces of his ally. Uzbek warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostam, have been fighting since January in a bid to topple Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani from power.

During the last two months alone, more than 1,000 people have been killed and more than 20,000 injured in battles for control of Kabul, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

# China to build two N-reactors in Iran

TEHRAN, Nov 21: China is to build two 300-megawatt nuclear reactors in southern Iran, next to another power plant being completed by Russian experts, a senior official said, reports AFP.

Beijing signed an agreement with Tehran in February 1993 for the sale of two 300megawatt reactors, but there had been no official information on where the reactors would be built.

Mehralizadeh, vice-president of the Iranian Atomic Energy Organisation (IAEO). said a loan of 2,120 billion rials (1.2 billion dollars) had been anticipated for building the two reactors in the port of Busher by the year 2005.

According to informed Chinese sources in Tehran. work on the new project had been long delayed for lack of finances.

Itan, which is going through a cash crisis, had asked for a loan from Beiging to

purchase the reactors, but China refused, they said.

Mehralizadeh did not say how the problem of finances had been resolved.

The new plant will be built next to Iran's first nuclear power station, which the German company Siemens started building before the 1979 Islamic Revolution but left

unfinished. Work was halted after the revolution and during the 1980-1988 war with Iraq when the plant was bombed. In 1992. Germany refused to resume work on the project, cit ing the "sensitive" nature of

The official added that fram planned to complete the first power plant with Russian help and had set aside a credit of 2,000 billion rails (1.1 billion dollars) for the project.

the technology involved.

Tehran has repeatedly stated that its pursuit of nu clear technology is solely for civilian purposes.

# Off the Record

Eating rats — secret of good health?

SHANGHAI: Eighty-year-old Wu Zhenglu can carry 50 kg (110 lbs) on his back and run as fast as young men in his wi lage. The secret of his good health? eating rats, apparently reports Reuter.

The Liberation Daily on Monday reported that Wu sells rats for a living and has been eating them for decades, with a preference for fresh ones just caught.

Wu lays traps in the homes of his native village in Jiangxi province. South China, and collects the catches, sometimes so many that he has to preserve them with salt for sale during the off season.

He is in excellent health and has a clear mind and fast reactions, the paper added

### 21-yr ban on dancing goes

TRUMANN: You can drink and shake a leg in Trumani now; but you better keep your fists to yourself, reports AP The City Council lifted a 21-year-old ban on dancing at three taverns where alcohol is served. However, Alderman Donnie Taylor warned that the bars could lose their dancing privileges if patrons throw punches mstead of kicking up their heels.

Jerry's Tavern owner Jerry Pillow, who proposed lifting the ban, acknowledged that dancing and drinking years ago created problems, including fights. That's all in the past

"Dancing should not be against the law, but the police should be allowed to stop it if there is fighting." Pillow said The council lifted the ban November 14 in a 9-1 vote. The

town has only four taverns; the owner of one wasn't inter ested in allowing dancing. "We had kind of a bad reputation back then." Mayor

Gosswett said. Today, Jonesboro has plenty of private clubs that serve al

There is hardly room in Jerry's Tavern to dance Pillow said he does not plan to expand, or hire any live bands to play But, he says. "I felt like people just have a basic right to be

### Maps help people get lost?

BEIJING: If nearsighted shoppers start going to Tiananmen Gate looking for new eveglasses or people start trying to order food from the army guards at Mao Tse-tung's mausoleum, blame it on the maps, reports AP Maps of Beijing and Shanghai are full of errors like the

ones that put the Daming Spectacles Shop on top of the old city gate that faces Tiananmen Square and mislabels the final resting place of revolutionary leader Mao as Yuesheanzhai. restaurant that specialises in beef and is located down the road from the mausoleum, according to a report in Monday's Guangming Daily. The Shanghai government office in charge of maps has re

ceived scores of letters pointing out more than 150 errors in the officials Shanghai city street map. .

Errors in Beijing maps include moving 2,000-square kilo meter (1.240-square mile) Changping county, a community of 300,000 people, from the outskirts of Beijing to the next province, and mislabeling the Beijing Library as the Beijing Drawing Gallery and the China Hisfory Museum as the Wangfujing Branch Store:

## UN official in Myanmar to talk HR situation

ral Rafeeuddin Ahmed has arrived in Myanmar for talks on the human rights situation and other issues, the second senior UN official to visit the country this month, reports

able to dance.

Sunday night, official Yangon radio confirmed Rafeeuddin Ahmed's arrival, saving only that he was visiting at the invitation of Myanmar Foreign Minister Ohn Gyaw.

He arrived four days after

said the talks would be the first between the United Nations and the junta He is also to meet Khin Nyunt who isofirst secretary of the junta officially known as The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC).

and other officials, the sources

Diplomats and other analysts

The UN official is expected to ask to see leading opposition figure Aung San Suu Rvi now in her sixth year of house arrest, although the junta declined earlier requests from Yokota and visiting US and British representatives, saying

the departure of the UN special reporter on human rights. Yozo Yokota, who met junta figures, including Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, and leaders of some political parties.

# charges

who is also wanted by the United States authorities on drug-related charges, officials

Karim, who hails from the Bajaur tribal area, faces charges of involvement in nar-



## Tamil Tigers offer fresh ceasefire Kumaratunga to restart talks

COLOMBO, Nov 21: President Chandrika Kumaratunga has sent a message to Tamil rebels to restart peace talks that were suspended after the assassination of the opposition presidential candidate, officials

said on Monday, reports AP. The details of the message. sent through the International Committee of the Red Cross. were not disclosed.

"President' Chandrika Kumaratunga sent a message to the rebels on Sunday regarding a new date for resuming talks," said Navin Gunaratne, a member of the government nego-

tiating team. The four member government negotiating team will meet Kumaratunga this week to discuss reopening the dialogue, Gunaratne told The Associated Press (AP) in an interview. Kumaratunga who was

sworn in as Sri Lanka's first woman president nine days ago, won a landslide victory in the November 9 voting on a pledge to end the country's 11-year civil war by negotiating with the separatist guerillas. More than 34,000 people

have been killed in the lighting between government troops and rebels who want an independent nation for Sri Lanka's 3-million-strong Tamil minority in the north and east of the country. They accuse the majority Sinhalese of discrimina-

On Friday, rebel, leader Velupillai Prabhakaran broke

off an unilateral six-day ceasefire after accusing the government of not responding to it.

be the same as it was when

talks were suspended," added

The agenda will probably

Gunaratne. AFP adds: Tamil Tiger rebels have offered a fresh ceasefire in exchange for an inquiry into the mutilation of one of their top leaders killed

by security forces, defence sources said today. LTTE announced through their clandestine radio network late Sunday that they will hall attacks for a week if the government ordered a probe into the beheading of self

styled Tiger Lieutenant Colonel

Malli, the sources said.

# Iranian demonstrators storm Palestinian embassy: 20 held

NICOSIA, Nov 21: Iranian demonstrators on Sunday stormed the Palestinian "embassy" in Tehran demanding its closure in protest over Gaza Strip clashes between Yasser Arafat's police and Muslim fundamentalists, reports

'Down with Israel" and "Arafat is a tool in the hands of the Zionists" shouted the crowd of several hundred youths, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

Before breaking into the building, they read a statement which demanded the closure

Scepticism over

Angolan truce

Angolan government and

UNITA rebels, fresh from

signing an accord to end their

ruinous civil war, have ex-

pressed hope for a lasting

ceasefire despite scepticism at

home and abroad, reports

nearly 20 years, on Sunday

signed a historic accord in the

Zambian capital Lusaka.

The two sides, at war for

But some African officials

expressed scepticism over

whether the truce would take

hold or crumble like previous

ones, noting that UNITA

leader Jonas Savimbi had not

signed the agreement in per-

things will work out and all

will observe the ceasefire," as

senior Angolan army comman-

We hope that this time

son as originally planned

der told Reuters.

Reuter.

LUSAKA, Nov 21: The

of the mission. Arafat's hands were stained with the blood of Gaza worshippers" and for this rea son his employees should not be allowed to remain in Iran. the statement said, according to IRNA.

The agency, monitored in Cyprus, said police intervened and ejected demonstrators from the building, arresting at least 20 of them. All the de tainees later were freed.

In Syria, thousands of Palestinians took part in an anti-Arafat demonstration in

the Yarmouk refugee camp. Supporters of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad chanted "Out of Gaza you go, Arafat, for you have given in to the will of the israeli government."

Israel had been pressing Arafat to crack down on extremist factions, whose activists have killed 30 people in recent suicide attacks on Israelis.

An alliance of 10 anti Arafat Palestinian factions is based in Syria one of the four Arab partners in peace negotiations



From L to R. General Eugemo Manuvakola on behalf of UNITA, UN special representative Alioune Bluodin Beye and Angolan Foreign Minister Venancio de Moura, sign the long-awaited peace accord in Lusaka on Sunday to end almost two decades of fighting. - AFP photo

#### Informed sources said that YANGON, Nov 21: United Ahmed would discuss human Nations Undersecretary Generights in talks with Ohn Gyaw

In a short broadcast on

the timing was "inopportune