

# WorldWatch

by Staff

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## *AIDS*

Experts say India's billion people are in the beginning stages of an AIDS epidemic. Though it currently affects an estimated 5 million people, less than 1% of the population, it is the highest of any country in the world, and the government estimate is likely very low. The World Bank predicts that already struggling medical systems in developing countries like India will be so swamped by AIDS that people with other diseases will not get care.

## *China*

The official *China Daily* gives a grim employment forecast of 16 million people out of work or 11% of the urban work force. If the usually ignored 130 million rural unemployed are counted, China's jobless rate would be above 17%.

## *Europe*

Following the successful introduction of the euro as the European Union's common currency, Germany opened its six-month presidency of the EU with pledges to push for political union in Europe, co-ordination of national tax policies and an overhaul of finances to prepare for more members.

## *Global Warming*

Barrow, Alaska, the nation's northernmost community, endured its hottest year on record in 1998. What made the mildness remarkable was not that it surpassed a mark of annual warmth that had stood since 1940, but rather by how much—the old record fell by 3° and the 30-year temperature average was shattered by 7°.

## *Middle East*

Jordan has declared "a state of drought," and the nation's Cabinet has approved a loan package to help livestock breeders buy barley and grain. Water rationing will continue to the public, but it was not clear if the current program of pumping water to families one day a week will continue. Iran is also suffering severe drought. Thousands in the holy city of Qom prayed for rain as the country's reservoirs reached critically low levels and agriculture is being devastated.

## *Technology*

» The *Ottawa Citizen* reports that the Canadian government wants to be ready to invoke martial law across Canada if Y2K or the "millennium bug" causes major problems. Government documents reveal that the "federal government should consider invoking the Emergencies Act if the millennium bug causes widespread chaos."

» A national ID card is scheduled to be issued to all Americans on October 1, 2000. The card will serve as a total health history and a national, rather than state, driver's license. Individuals will not be allowed to screen what information is stored on it. Recently, Congressman Ron Paul of Texas introduced the Freedom and Privacy Restoration Act of 1999 on the floor of the House to block what his office calls a "grievous intrusion" on Americans.

### ***Too Much TV***

A plan to educate orangutans on the joys of family life by watching TV backfired after the apes became more interested in the tube than each other. The *Moscow Times* says keepers at the St. Petersburg Zoo rigged up a TV outside the cage of orangutans Rabu and Monika to show them videos on being good parents when they started to neglect their offspring. Rabu, the male, became so engrossed in watching TV that he began to ignore his mate, Monika, who became upset over his neglect. Says zoo director Ivan Korneyev, "We'll reduce the time of TV watching in order to keep the family together."