

• **Facts about China**

- The Great Wall of China is NOT visible from the moon. Although it is 2500 km [1500 miles] long, it is only 6 m [20 ft] wide. So from the moon, 384,000 km [239,000 miles] away, the Great Wall appears no wider than the 3 mm [1/8 inch] cable connecting a mouse to a computer as viewed from a distance of 192 km [120 miles]. Astronauts in low earth orbit are 1000 times closer to the earth's surface than is the moon. They can spot the Great Wall without much difficulty.
- China's remaining 80 million hectares [32 million acres] of forests will all disappear in 10 years at current rate of logging. Denuded slopes cannot retain rainwater, thus aggravating last summer's floods. As a result Beijing has banned logging and ordered the replanting of trees on a major scale.
- 1.2 million Mainland Chinese were connected to the Internet in late 1998, and that number is expected to grow to 10 million by the end of 2002.
- Having lost the bid to host the 2000 Olympics to Sydney, Beijing has formally applied to be the site of the 2008 Olympics. The number 4 is unlucky, since it sounds similar to "death" in Chinese, so Beijing did not compete to host the 2004 games.
- In the past 20 years, 300,000 Mainland students have gone overseas, but only 1/3 of them has yet returned. A century ago, Chinese students preferred to go to Japan, which is closer and has a similar written language and Confucian tradition.
- There will be 6 billion people in the world by mid-1999, 21% of them will live in Mainland China. The population will peak at 1.6 billion in 2030 before declining.