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## Bangladesh population now 101.5 m?

By A Staff Reporter

What is the exact population of Bangladesh now? In its data sheet for 1985 the Population Reference Bureau, USA, has put the population of Bangladesh at 101.5 million and the rate of natural increase at 2.8.

According to estimates made by the Government of Bangladesh the rate of natural increase was 2.36, and on that count the population of the country should now stand at 98.27 million.

The Population Reference Bureau has for decades been considered the most authoritative source on population situation around the globe, and most demographers in Bangladesh too rely on the bureau's data sheet.

While releasing the final report of the Bangladesh Population Census, 1981, last year, Planning Minister Dr Abdul Majeed Khan said that in 1984 the population of Bangladesh was 96 million and that the rate of natural increase was 2.36 per cent.

If the data sheet issued by the internationally reputed bureau is to be believed, another 2.8 million heads will be ad-

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## Population

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ded to the population of Bangladesh during the current year.

In an article sent to the Times, Mr. Hasse B. Gaenger, representative of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) in Bangladesh, has said based on the date of the PRB about 4.5 million babies will be born in the country this year. That means 380,000 new-born per month, 12,600 per day, 528 per hour and nine per minute.

With 101.5 million inhabitants on a surface of 55,598 square miles there are now 1,825 persons per square mile. The PRB has put the average life expectancy in Bangladesh at 48 and the fertility rate at 6.4 crore birth date has been estimates at 45 per thousand and mortality rate at 17 per thousand.

Mr. Hasse B. Gaenger has, however, pointed out that the date sheet did not mention an important positive point relating to Bangladesh. Excepting Barbados in the Caribbean Bangladesh has the highest percentage of cultivated land in the world. And if it also had the world record in crop yields per acre, the picture would be a bit more positive.