

CHINA'S BIRTH RATE HITS LOWEST LEVEL SINCE 1949

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Demography of the World - Population Trends

China's birth rate dropped last year to its lowest level since the Communist country was founded in 1949, adding to concerns that an aging society and shrinking workforce will pile pressure on a slowing economy.

To avoid a demographic crisis, the government relaxed its one-child policy in 2016 to allow people to have two children, but the change has not resulted in an increase in pregnancies. In 2019, the birth rate stood at 10.48 per 1,000 people, down slightly from the year before, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) released on Friday. The number of births has now fallen for three consecutive years, still, there were 14.65 million babies born in 2019.

He Yafu, an independent demographer based in southern Guangdong province, said the number of births was the lowest since 1961, the last year of a famine that left tens of millions dead. U.S.-based academic Yi Fuxian, senior scientist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, said that even though China has abolished its one-child policy, there has been a shift in the mindset of the population. He believes that China's population is over-estimated, and according to his work, the real population "began to decline in 2018".

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