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China's Birthrate Sinks to Record Low

BY HANNAH MIAO

Note
China's population shrank for a fourth consecutive year as its birthrate fell to a record low, underscoring the demographic challenges facing the world's second-largest economy.

China's total population fell to 1.405 billion at the end of 2025, down from 1.408 billion recorded in 2024, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

New births in the country fell to 7.92 million, down from 9.54 million in 2024.

The number of births per 1,000 people fell to 5.63, from 6.77 in 2024.

That is the lowest number of births and lowest birthrate reported since records began in 1949, the founding of the People's Republic of China.

The number of deaths rose to 11.31 million, up from 10.93 million in 2024.

The steep drop in births in 2025 can be attributed in part to an increase in births the year prior.

Most of 2024 fell in the Year of the Dragon, which is seen as an auspicious one for marriage and births in Chinese culture.

Aside from 2024, births have been dropping steadily since 2017. In 2022, deaths overtook births.

Decades of China's onechild policy, which ended in 2015, have contributed to a rapidly aging population with fertility rates well below replacement level, threatening to hinder future economic growth.

Chinese leaders have been rolling out new initiatives designed to encourage births, such as child-care subsidies.

Demographers largely believe such policies aren't able to halt population decline at this point.

In other countries with aging populations, immigration often helps offset low birthrates and keep the population younger, but China has virtually no immigration.

China was long the world's most-populous nation until 2023, when it was surpassed by regional neighbor and sometime rival India.