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Covid-19 impacts

A study in India has confirmed that two infant babies suffered brain damage because they were born to mothers who contracted Covid-19 when they were pregnant. The study has been conducted by University of Miami. It said neither of the babies had tested positive for Covid-19 at birth, but they had developed high levels of antibodies to the coronavirus in their blood.

Foreign preachers at Iran Qur'anic expo seek to promote Islamic culture worldwide



Sadeq Dehqan
Staff Writer

EXCLUSIVE

The international section of the 30th Tehran International Qur'an Exhibition is hosting Qur'anic experts from various countries around the world. The expo is currently underway in the Iranian capital Tehran. The annual exhibition, which is held during the holy month of Ramadan, kicked off on April 1 and will continue until April 15. The expo's international section was launched to make visitors familiar with Qur'anic activities in the international arena.

Al-Mustafa International University runs the event's international section. It is an international academic, Islamic and university-style seminary in the Iranian city of Qom that was established in 1979. It has international branches and affiliate schools. The institute seeks to promote Islamic sciences, educate religious scholars and disseminate Islamic thought. It provides services in various fields of Islamic and human sciences. The students of this institute are mainly selected from countries with Muslim communities. Num Patan from Thailand is one of the students of the institute. In the Thai

pavilion, the 44-year-old told Iran Daily about Qur'anic and Islamic activities in his country in the holy month of Ramadan. "Although Thailand is not an Islamic country, Muslims are the biggest religious minority in the country and account for almost 10 percent of its population. Although Muslims are scattered in Thailand, most Muslims live in the south in the areas bordering Malaysia," he said. Num said he lives with a Muslim family in a small town near Bangkok. He said he has been interested in religious teachings since childhood. The student said he is a Shia Muslim and has come to Iran to

boost his knowledge about Shia Islam. "I became interested in Shia Islam because of good and moral characteristics of Imam Ali (the first Shia Imam)," he said. He said Al-Mustafa International University is a center of Islamic sciences for foreign seminary students, adding that most of them are students from African and southeast Asian countries. "I have been studying in Iran for nearly 20 years. Presently, I am completing the final stages of my doctorate in the field of interpretation of Qur'anic sciences. Students in this center are dispatched to their hometowns or other places as ambassadors

of Islamic culture and education to disseminate religious sciences. After completing my education I will return to my country and set up a department at the Thai University for teaching religious sciences. Recently, scholars and clerics who have studied in Iran published a translated copy of the Qur'an in the Thai language, which will help promote the teachings of the holy book," he said. Mohammad Ouedraogo is a Qur'anic preacher from Burkina Faso who has been studying in the field of interpretation of the Qur'an. He said his country has a population of 22 million, 70 percent of whom are Muslim.



Grand Mosque of Natanz

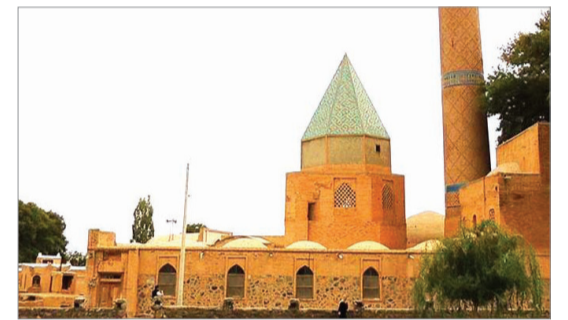
Iranica Desk

The Iranian city of Natanz, located in the central province of Isfahan, is among the country's tourist destinations. It is known as the "city of gardens," for it has a large number of gardens. Natanz also has hundreds of natural attractions and historical monuments.

were constructed in the 14th century. This mosque has three entrances and is connected to a narrow alley from the north, east and south. This alley leads to a rather large entrance facing the minaret.

Prayer hall

Visitors see a vestibule as they enter through the mosque's door which



Grand Mosque of Natanz
sufiran.com



Minaret of Grand Mosque of Natanz
NAIEMEHHOSSEINI-NAM/kojara.com

The complex of the Grand Mosque of Natanz is among these monuments. It includes a mosque, a 37-meter-high minaret and the tomb of the 8th century mystic, Sheikh Nour al-Din Abdolsamad Isfahani Natanzi. The dome of the Grand Mosque of Natanz was built in the 11th century, while other sections

is one and a half meters lower than the alley. On the right side of the vestibule, there is a small corridor that leads to the domed octagonal shabestan (prayer hall). The shabestan of this mosque is older than other sections and dates back to the pre-Ilkhanid era, the Seljuk period (11th to 12th century).

Iran on the edge of a demographic trap

EXCLUSIVE

Social Desk

Iran is currently facing a demographic trap that could have serious economic and social consequences for the country in the coming years.

This "demographic trap is much closer than what people and responsible authoritative institutions feel," according to Kazem Foroutan, the secretariat of the National Population Rejuvenation Headquarters, who spoke to IRNA on Saturday.

Simply put, a demographic trap is a situation where a country's population growth slows down but its dependency ratio, i.e. the proportion of non-working people to working people, remains high, which leads to economic and social challenges. This can occur when a society experiences a decline in birth rates without a corresponding increase in productivity or employment opportunities, resulting in an aging population that relies heavily on the workforce for support.

Iran's population growth has indeed slowed down significantly in recent decades, and its dependency ratio remains high as more and more people become elderly and there are fewer young workers to support them.



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"We do not have much time to escape this demographic trap, and only with integrity, planning and acting on then it's possible to change the population culture," Foroutan further warned. According to the latest census data, Iran's population grew by only 1.2 percent between 2016 and 2021, the lowest rate in decades. At the same time, the percentage of people aged 65 and over increased from 5.2 percent to 6.2 percent, while the percentage of people aged 15 to 64 decreased from 70.4 percent to 68.8 percent. However, citing recent policies on population rejuvenation, Foroutan stated that things might change "with positive and principal implementation" of those policies. This demographic shift happen-

ing in Iran is putting a strain on Iran's public finances, as more and more people retire and start drawing on pensions and healthcare services. The government is already struggling to fund social welfare programs, and the situation is likely to get worse in the coming years. Concerns about Iran's demographic shift is nothing new. Previously, many experts have warned about the dire consequences of losing Iran's still open demographic window. Speaking to Tasnim News Agency in 2021, Maryam Ardabili, a futurologist said, "We are really worried about a demographic trap or low birthrate trap." She called the generation born from 1981-1991 a great gift for

the country and stated that "The golden scenario would only materialize if this generation enter the managerial, transformation, and trend-setting processes." Noting that Iran has little time to set cultural trends in terms of childbearing, she added, "Setting cultural trends is a time-consuming process and we don't have much time. If we lose this golden opportunity, we'll have to invest 100 times more than what we need today just to gain half of what we can today." Despite all the concerns, the aging population in Iran will soon affect the labor market - if it hasn't already. With fewer young people entering the workforce, there may not be enough workers to fill all the available jobs. This could lead to labor shortages, wage inflation, and reduced economic growth. Moreover, the healthcare and social services sectors are particularly vulnerable to the effects of an aging population. As more people require medical care and social support, there may not be enough trained professionals to meet the demand. The demographic trap would also have social consequences in Iran. Family structures may change, with fewer people available to care for elderly relatives. This can lead to isolation and loneliness for older people, and put additional strain on healthcare and social services.

Iran's 'A Poetess' awarded at US film festival



MEHR - Directed by Iranian filmmaker Saeed Dashti, the short film 'A Poetess' was awarded at the World Music & Independent Film Festival (WMIFF) in Washington D.C, the U.S. Amir Jafari, Sahra Fathi, Linda Kiani, and Nima Shabannejad are the cast of Dashti's short film. The film has already won the Best Foreign Film

Award from the jury in the California Women's Film Festival. 'A Poetess' depicts the life of Sara. Considering arguments and issues with her husband, Sara is hesitant to choose immigration or staying in her country. By realizing the truth about her husband, she makes up her mind and plans for a new future.