

Japan birthrate fall world's No. 1

Kyodo News

Japan is graying and its birthrate is falling faster than any other country in the world, a government white paper warned Friday.

People aged 65 or older accounted for 22.1 percent of Japan's total population as of last October, while those aged up to 14 represented only 13.5 percent of the total.

The productive population, or those aged 15 to 64, is expected to decline from 81.64 million in 2009 to 45.95 million in 2055.

Japan's total fertility rate — the average number of children born to a woman aged between 15 and 49 — is projected to have inched up to 1.34 in 2007 from the previous year and is believed to have risen further in 2008, said the white paper.

But the uptrend warrants no optimism, the paper said, noting the fertility rate in Japan is lower than in Europe and the United States.

75% born after war

The number of people born on or after Aug. 15, 1945, the day of Japan's World War II surrender, has just exceeded three-fourths of the population, the Internal Affairs and Communications Ministry said.

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