Text 3

Japan's population declines for first time since 1920s

Adapted from: http://www.theguardian.com

An official census has evidenced that Japan's population has fallen by almost one million. According to new statistics it is the first decline since official census records began in the 1920s.

The country lost 947,345 people, this is more than the population of San Francisco, between 2010 and 2015. The _____ of 0.7% to 127.1 million has been predicted by the government annually but the new statistics confirm the trend. It is an indication that as the nation gets older, and people have fewer children at a later age, that a demographic crisis is looming.

According to the United Nations, Japan's population is likely to shrink to 83 million by 2100, with 35% of them older than 65. Economists fear that the decline in population spells trouble for the world's most indebted economy.

Prime minister Shinzo Abe's government has tried to tackle the coming crisis by installing lawmaker Katsunobu Kato as the 'minister for 100 million active people'. Kato is tasked with stabilising Japan's birthrate at 1.8.

Experts, however, view the efforts as futile. "What they are talking about and what they are going to try and get minister Kato to do is not achievable," Michael Cucek, an assistant professor in the faculty of Social Science at Waseda University, told the Guardian.

"They have a goal of 1.8 births per woman, but to maintain a population of 100 million would require 2.1 births per woman," he added. For Cucek, the determining factor is that women are marrying later in Japan and only 2% of births take place out of wedlock.

According to the census in 39 areas of the country, the population has shrunk. Greater Tokyo, which continues to attract more residents, is now home to 28.4% of the population; the nation's nine major urban areas account for 53.9% of Japanese.

Rural areas, however, are migrating to the City. Fukushima, the site of the nuclear disaster in 2011, was among the worst hit regions. The entire Tohoku region in northern Japan, of which Fukushima is a part, saw a population decline of about 5%.

21. **The number of people in Japan has fallen by approximately …**
    a. 1 million people
    b. 100 million people
    c. 127.1 million people

22. **What is the reason for the decline in population?**
    a. Fewer people are having babies at a later age.
    b. People are living longer.
    c. People are dying faster.

23. **What is the United Nations' prediction for 2100?**
    a. Japan's population will decrease by 35%.
    b. Japan will have a population of 83 million.
    c. Most Japanese people will be over the age of 65.

24. **Michael Cucek believes that the problem with Katsunobu Kato's goal is that …**
    a. 1.8 babies per woman is not enough.
    b. 2.1 babies per woman is not enough.
    c. women are having babies too young in Japan.

25. **The text suggests that …**
    a. more people are moving to rural areas.
    b. more people are moving to urban areas.
    c. Tokyo is the fastest shrinking city in Japan.

26. **There is a word missing from the second paragraph. It should be …**
    a. number
    b. total
    c. decline