

Srebrenica victims commemorated in Tehran: 'Immortal March'

Social Desk

The remains of 30 victims of the Srebrenica genocide in Bosnia were laid to rest yesterday, as thousands commemorated the atrocity's 28th anniversary. Bosnian Serb forces captured the ill-fated eastern town – then a UN-protected enclave – on July 11, 1995, and in the following days summarily killed some 8,000 Muslim men and boys, in an act of genocide under international law, AFP reported. The remains of most of the victims were later found in mass graves in eastern Bosnia, where the perpetrators moved them from original burial sites to cover up the crime. Many of the 30 victims buried on Tuesday were identified in previous years, but the families chose to wait until more of their remains were recovered. Relatives of the victims can bury only partial remains of their loved

ones as they are typically found scattered over several different mass graves, sometimes miles apart, as per ABC News. Such was the case of Mirsda Merdzic, who will bury her father on Tuesday. "Only a very few bones of his were retrieved because he had been found near the Drina River," she said while huddling next to a casket shrouded in the green burial cloth. "Maybe the river washed him away." In Iran, the arts department of the Islamic Republic, organized the 'Immortal March' event in memory of Srebrenica genocide, according to Borna News. The organization hosted the memorial event on Tuesday evening in order to pay tribute to the victims of the Srebrenica genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The event served as a platform to commemorate Iranian soldiers who partici-

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pated in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while also shedding light on the tragic Srebrenica massacre and the unique bond formed between Iranian art and media activists and the Bosnian people during the 'Death March'. Hamed Asgari, a renowned Iranian poet moderated the proceedings. The 'Immortal March' offered a unique opportunity for fighters and attendees to share their personal recollections and memories.



Anxiety screening of more than 160k Iranian children

Social Desk

Masoumeh Tavakoli, deputy of counseling and psychological affairs of Iran's State Welfare Organization (SWO), revealed that over 160,000 children aged five and six were included in the national anxiety screening program last year.

Tavakoli explained that parents can now register their children for the anxiety screening by filling out a questionnaire on the

system's website, IRNA reported.

Upon completion, they will receive an SMS notification about their child's condition. If the child is suspected of having anxiety, the system will recommend counseling centers and psychological services supervised by SWO. Parents are then expected to accompany their children for further evaluations and to receive necessary counseling and psychological services.

The official emphasized that childhood anxiety disorder is not a fleeting

issue. If left untreated, it can persist into adolescence and adulthood, leading to a host of problems. Due to their nature, childhood anxiety disorders are often underdiagnosed and, consequently, undertreated. These disorders can lead to depression, drug use, selective mutism, and physical illnesses.

Tavakoli further noted that research has shown that untreated anxiety disorders during adolescence can significantly disrupt a person's social, academic, occupational, and other important func-

tional areas. This disorder can also negatively impact the child's growth and personality development, as well as their relationships with parents and siblings.

The deputy also highlighted that adults who suffered from these disorders in their childhood often face significant challenges in their marriages and relationships.

Tavakoli underscored that one of the main objectives of the deputy of counseling and psychological affairs is to promote mental health and prevention. To

this end, the deputy has prioritized the design of early childhood interventions in its programs, including the anxiety screening for five- and six-year-old children. Early detection of disorders and reducing the burden of diseases can significantly improve the mental health of society.

Finally, Tavakoli stated that screening programs, while providing cost-effective services to society, also help reduce the occurrence of subsequent problems due to their nature of early diagnosis.



Iran in need of quick solution to its aging population

Social Desk

The deputy of health at Iran University of Medical Sciences, Mohammad Tabatabaie, has warned that the country is on the brink of a demographic crisis, with projections indicating that by 2051, approximately 30 percent of the nation's population will be elderly.

This demographic shift, he explained, signifies the closing of the country's demographic window, a term referring to the period when the working-age population is larger than the non-working-age population, according to ISNA. Tabatabaie highlighted the urgency of the situation, stating that the country has less than eight years to address this impending crisis, considering the re-

productive age of the population.

He also drew attention to the issue of infertility in Iran, citing a 2018 national survey that revealed approximately 3.5 million infertile couples in the country, with an additional 88,000 couples joining this figure annually. He differentiated between primary infertility, experienced by couples who have never conceived, and secondary infertility, which affects couples unable to conceive a second time after a previous pregnancy.

The high costs of infertility treatments, particularly invasive procedures such as In Vitro Fertilization (IVF), place significant financial strain on couples, Tabatabaie noted. However, he pointed out that the

recent enactment of the population youth law has led to insurance coverage for all diagnostic and therapeutic measures related to infertility. As a result, 90 percent of expenses in government centers and 70 percent of costs in private infertility treatment centers are now covered by basic insurances.

Tabatabaie emphasized the importance of culture in addressing the population crisis, stating that the Ministry of Health, along with other organizations, plays a crucial role in this endeavor. He underscored the need for educational and cultural programs to inform the public about the population crisis and the necessity of maintaining a young population. He further discussed the country's fertility rate, or

Total Fertility Rate (TFR), which is currently at 1.65, below the replacement level. This rate, he warned, if sustained, will lead to a decrease in population and an increase in the elderly demographic. He revealed that the country's population growth rate has halved from 1.2 in 2016 to 0.6 in 2021, indicating a rapid progression towards an aging population.

Tabatabaie's comments underscore the urgency of addressing Iran's demographic challenges, as the country grapples with a declining fertility rate and an aging population. The next few years, he stressed, present a critical window of opportunity to reverse these trends and ensure a sustainable demographic balance.

