

1. The 2019 Revision of World Population Prospects (noun) – the twenty-sixth round of official United Nations population estimates and projections that have been prepared by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.
2. redouble (verb) – make something more intense.
3. populous (adjective) – densely populated.
4. surpass (verb) – be greater than, exceed, outdo/eclipse.
5. in perspective (phrase) – judge a particular thing's real importance by considering it in relation to everything else.
6. alarmist (adjective) – pessimistic, negative, cynical.
7. malthusian (adjective) – relating to a theory of exponential population growth and arithmetic food supply growth (by Thomas Robert Malthus FRS who was an English cleric and scholar, influential in the fields of political economy and demography).
8. inability (noun) – lack of ability, incapability, insufficiency.
9. in favour of (phrase) – in support of, to the advantage of, approving of.
10. sustainable (adjective) – reliable, dependable, acceptable.
11. open up to something (phrasal verb) – to accept something.
12. sustain (verb) – maintain, support, bolster up.
13. exploitation (noun) – utilization, use, capitalization.
14. fertility rate (noun) – a rate which measures the average number of children per woman.
15. seek (verb) – try, endeavour, strive.
16. set your minds to do something (phrase) – if you set your minds to do something, you are determined to do it.
17. singularly (adverb) – especially, particularly, extremely.
18. life expectancy (noun) – an average life time of a human being.
19. imperative (noun) – necessary/essential condition, requirement, requisite.
20. bound to (adjective) – certain/sure, very likely, guaranteed.
21. certainty (noun) – inevitability, necessity, foregone conclusion, predictable result.
22. cater to (verb) – accommodate/serve, provide for, satisfy.
23. mobility (noun) – transportability.
24. roadmap (noun) – schedule of a complex program.
25. nutrition (noun) – nourishment, nutriment, nutrients.
26. remunerative (adjective) – profitable, lucrative, rewarding/gainful.
27. political will (noun) – political intention/desire (to complete a scheme/project even if it is not admired/welcome in the beginning).

A stable planet: on World Population Prospects 2019 report

**India is set to become the most populous nation; improving the quality of life
is crucial**

The key message from the UN's *World Population Prospects 2019* report is that national leaders must redouble their efforts to raise education, health and living standards for people

everywhere. [India is projected to become the most populous country by 2027](#) surpassing China, and host 1.64 billion people by 2050; the world as a whole could be home to 8.5 billion people in just over a decade from now, and the number could go up to 9.7 billion by mid-century. The projections should be viewed in perspective, considering that alarmist Malthusian fears of inability to provide for more than a billion people on earth did not come true. Yet, there are strong arguments in favour of stabilising population numbers by raising the quality of life of people, and achieving sustainable development that will not destroy the environment. The UN report shows migration to countries with a falling ratio of working-age people to those above 65 will be steady, as those economies open up to workers to sustain economic production. Japan has the lowest such ratio, followed by Europe and the Caribbean; in over three decades, North America, Eastern and Southeastern Asia will join this group. India meanwhile will have a vast number of young people and insufficient natural resources left for exploitation. Preparing for the changes and opportunities migration offers will depend on a skills revolution.

At the national level, achieving a reduction in fertility rates in States such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh — which are high as per Sample Registration System data — is a challenge for India as it seeks to stabilise **population** growth. This is possible if the State governments set their minds to it. They must singularly focus on improving education and health access for women, both of which will help them be gainfully employed. On the other hand, a rise in life expectancy has brought with it a policy imperative that is bound to become even more important in coming decades. A growing population of older adults is a certainty, and it opens up prospects for employment in many new services catering to them. Urban facilities have to be reimagined, with an emphasis on access to good, affordable housing and mobility. The Sustainable Development Goals framework provides a roadmap to this new era. But progress in poverty reduction, greater equality, better nutrition, universal education and health care, needs state support and strong civil society institutions. Making agriculture remunerative and keeping food prices stable are crucial to ensure nutrition for all. India is set to become the most populous nation. For its leaders, improving the quality of life for its people will be a test of political will.