

Definition

What does it mean?

Morphology/Origins (breaking down the word)

us

WORD OF

FUNCTION

THE WEEK

Synonyms

Expand your vocabulary!

In a sentence

How may you use it?



Japan turns to AI to boost birth rate slump



AI do: Weddings conducted by robots have been available to Japanese couples since 2010. © Reuters

Should we replace romance with relationships arranged by AI? The Japanese government sees artificial intelligence as the answer to falling birth rates – and other countries may copy it.

Q & A

Q: What do we know?

A: It is generally agreed that most countries are faced with falling fertility rates. There are 23 whose populations are expected to halve by 2100, including Spain, Portugal, Italy, Thailand and South Korea, while China's is predicted to drop from 1.4 billion to 732 million. An exception is Nigeria, where a rise from 208 million to 791 million is forecast. One expert predicts that, far from discouraging immigrants, countries will end up competing for them.

Q: What do we not know?

A: One main area of debate is around whether declining populations are a bad thing. The reason for falling fertility rates is generally applauded: more women are working and being educated, and – with greater access to contraception – are choosing to have fewer children. Some environmentalists argue that not having children is the best thing you can do for the planet. But economists worry about how societies will function with fewer and fewer young people looking after more and more old people.