

Social Desk

Iran has to brace itself for the impacts of population ageing in the following years.

Some experts believe Iran will have to grapple with the tsunami of population ageing in the future. They forecast that Iran will host around 20 million elderly individuals in less than 30 years, which will comprise a quarter of the country's population.

Hesamodin Allameh, an ageing researcher, believes the crises pertaining to ageing will begin from 2031 because old people will constitute 14 percent of the country's population as of that year.

He says old people currently account for 11 percent of the population in Iran. Estimates by the Statistical Center of Iran show the country's population would reach 88.358 million in 2026 and 95.278 million in 2036.

Allameh says the increasing number of old people who rely on their pensions will trigger deep crises for retirement funds.

He believes lack of sufficient medical treatment facilities will add insult to the injury

Iran could face tsunami of population ageing

causing severe problems not only for the government but also for the elderly and their families.

Ageing in Iran is the concern of lonely or unmarried older people who live in families with a small household dimension.

The only-child phenomenon, the high rate of immigration among young people, a decreasing marriage rate, divorce (especially among those of middle age), and death of a spouse are among the factors that might contribute to loneliness among the older population in the near future.

Loneliness will lead to the prevalence of depression in the older population.

The ageing of the population brings concerns about the speed of economic growth of the country, increasing health system costs, the quality performance of the healthcare system, the financial resilience of the pension system,



Only-child phenomenon is among factors that will contribute to loneliness among the older population in the near future. ● IRNA

and the wellbeing and quality of life of older people. A rapidly ageing population means there are fewer

working-age people in the economy. This leads to a supply shortage of qualified workers, making it more

difficult for businesses to fill in-demand roles. To tackle such challenges, policy makers need to carry

out evidence-informed policy interventions. Targeted measures are needed, such as setting healthy ageing as a priority for the government and developing a healthcare delivery model for the ageing population. Modifying the retirement system to ensure long-term financial and social security for older people should be placed on the agenda. Adopting policies to facilitate the use of voluntary services and the provision of home care-giving is also helpful.

It is essential to strengthen the performance and funding of day-care centers and retirement homes for older people, provide long-term healthcare insurance plans tailored to the needs of older people, invest in palliative care, and increase awareness of health-promoting behaviors of self-care and healthy nutrition for older people.

Population ageing refers to

changes in the age composition of a population such that there is an increase in the proportion of older persons. This is caused by declining fertility rates and rising life expectancy.

An older person is defined by the United Nations as a person who is over 60 years of age.

Low birth rate

Low birth rate is also among demographic challenges in Iran.

Iran had made significant success in its demographic programs until the year to March 2020 when birth rate in the country dropped by 0.2 points to 1.6, one of the lowest in 8 years.

The figures caused the government to offer more incentives to the couples, including free fertility treatment and other allowances and payments, to reverse the trend.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has hailed efforts by the government and other institutions in Iran to boost birth rate.

He has repeatedly asked for more support to programs meant to tackle Iran's demographic challenges.

AI taking over the world: Should we be afraid?

By Zohreh Qannadi
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EXCLUSIVE

You've probably seen or heard of 'The Matrix', a movie which was made in 1999, in which advanced artificial intelligence (AI) enslaves humanity by trapping their minds in a simulated reality, or 'The Terminator', another movie made in 1984, in which Skynet becomes self-aware and launches a nuclear attack on humans, leading to a war between humans and machines.

There are many movies that explore the dangers of AI in human life. There are many more out there that you may find interesting. Now should we be scared of AI technology in real life? On the one hand, AI has the potential to revolutionize the way we live and work, making our lives easier and more efficient. On the other hand, there are concerns about the potential dangers of AI, including the possibility that it could become uncontrollable and even threaten our existence.

Below, we will take a look at some of the pros and cons of AI:

Job market

The widespread adoption of AI and machine learning (ML) technologies may lead to some significant changes and challenges in human life, including the job market.

AI and ML technologies can automate many tasks that were previously done by humans, leading to job displacement or changes in job requirements. In a not-too-distant future, the streets will be full of driv-

erless cars. Automated customer service systems will replace the need for human customer service employees. These developments and thousands of similar cases will significantly impact millions of jobs.

by the working force in some countries, along with investments. Accordingly, with the removal of the labor force, the source for paying the salaries of retirees could face problems if a proper policy is not adopt-

ed by governments. However, some governments will likely continue to provide some form of pension or social security payments to those who are no longer able to work. One possible scenario is that as AI technology becomes more prevalent, governments may choose to implement a universal basic income (UBI) or similar program. A UBI is a system in which every citizen is guaranteed a certain amount of income regardless of their employment status. This could provide a safety net for those who are displaced by AI or other technological advancements.

exercising their mental abilities and rely too much on technology to provide solutions. This could potentially lead to a decline in critical thinking skills and creativity as individuals become accustomed to letting machines handle their cognitive tasks, further aggravating the problem of human laziness.

On the other hand, AI also has the potential to engage humans intellectually and challenge them to think in new and innovative ways. As AI systems become more complex and capable, they will require humans to develop new skills and knowledge in order to understand and interact with them. This could create exciting opportunities for individuals to expand their intellectual horizons and develop expertise in areas such as machine learning, natural language processing, and robotics. Additionally, AI can help individuals tackle complex problems and make more informed decisions by providing valuable insights and data analysis that would otherwise be impossible for humans to achieve alone. Overall, AI can be both a threat and an opportunity for human intellectual engagement, depending on how it is used and integrated into our daily lives.

What is clear is that the use and integration of AI in our daily lives is inevitable. It is important to be aware of its limitations and potential biases, and to use AI in a responsible and ethical manner.

In the future, we may either will live in a world where AI fulfills all our needs and desires as our servants or we may find out that it no longer needs us at all.



● VERIHUBS

It's important, however, to note that AI and ML can also create new job opportunities, especially in fields such as data analysis, software engineering, and AI research and development. Additionally, AI and ML can augment human capabilities and improve job performance, leading to increased productivity and job satisfaction. Therefore, while there may be challenges and even changes in the job market as a result of AI and ML adoption, it's important to focus on adapting and upskilling in response to these changes rather than fearing them.

Pension payments

It is difficult to predict exactly how governments will handle pension payments in a future where AI has replaced humans in certain jobs. Pension plans are funded

ed by governments. However, some governments will likely continue to provide some form of pension or social security payments to those who are no longer able to work. One possible scenario is that as AI technology becomes more prevalent, governments may choose to implement a universal basic income (UBI) or similar program. A UBI is a system in which every citizen is guaranteed a certain amount of income regardless of their employment status. This could provide a safety net for those who are displaced by AI or other technological advancements.

Another possibility is that governments may choose to provide re-training programs or education subsidies to help workers adapt to a changing job market. This could help ensure that workers remain em-

ployable even as their jobs become automated. Ultimately, the specific policies that governments implement will depend on a variety of factors, including the pace of technological advancement, the impact

Relying too much on technology

Some people may also express concern that advancements in AI may lead to people relying too much on technology and becoming less intellectually engaged as a result. With the potential to revolutionize the way we live and work, AI makes our lives easier and more efficient. Yet, there are concerns about the potential dangers of AI, including the possibility that it could make humans reliant on machines to do their thinking for them, admitting it has the potential to enhance human wisdom in many ways.

With the increasing use of AI and automation in various industries, individuals may be less motivated to

WHO: Avoid sugar substitutes



● STOCK PHOTO/GETTY IMAGES

People who are trying to lose weight should avoid using zero calorie non-sugar sweeteners, according to a new recommendation released by the World Health Organization. Zero calorie non-sugar sweeteners, including artificial and natural sweeteners like aspartame and stevia, have not been shown to help with weight loss long-term in children or adults, and their use may bring side effects like increased risk of cardiovascular diseases, Type 2 diabetes and death in adults, the WHO said in its finding, Yahoo News wrote.

"Replacing free sugars with NSS does not help with weight control in the long term. People need to consider other ways to reduce free sugars intake, such as consuming food with naturally occurring sugars, like fruit, or unsweetened food and beverages," Francesco Branca, WHO director for nutrition and food safety, said in a statement announcing the recommendation. «NSS are not essential dietary factors and have no nutritional value. People should reduce the sweetness of the diet altogether, starting early in life, to improve their health.» The WHO defines artificial sweeteners as "all synthetic and naturally occurring or modified nonnutritive sweeteners that are not classified as sugars found in manufactured foods and beverages, or

sold on their own to be added to foods and beverages by consumers."

The only exception to the recommendation, according to the agency, is for "individuals with pre-existing diabetes."

The WHO said it issued the recommendation after a "systematic review" of over 280 studies involving the use of artificial sweeteners in adults, pregnant women and children.

Due to a growing obesity epidemic worldwide, non-sugar sweeteners are becoming increasingly common ingredients found in soft drinks, "diet" foods and other processed products. Low-calorie sugar alternatives have been found in at least one study to change the gut microbiome, the collection of microbes in the gut that help protect humans against disease and enable us to digest food.

Saccharin, sucralose, aspartame and stevia were the four substances tested in the study on gut health, published last year in the medical journal Cell. Overall, the healthiest sweetener to use is no sweetener at all.

People who are overweight or obese are at an increased risk for many serious health conditions, including cancer, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, gall bladder disease, osteoarthritis, mental illness and other health problems.