Ministries test the AI waters

IMAGING: AJAY MOHANTY

SYNTHETIC TRANSITIONS

■ The Coal Logistics Plan and Policy will entail building AI-powered dedicated logistics platform for the fossil fuel

■ Department of Telecom has taken initiatives to use AI and facial recognition tech to identify fraudulent mobile connections

■ Corporate affairs ministry is looking to build systems using AI for flagging non-compliance, as well as raising alarm and issuing notices to errant companies

■ Agri ministry has developed 'Kisan e-Mitra' — an AI-powered chatbot for addressing farmers' queries about PM-KISAN

Try out use cases in a bid to reduce workload

RUCHIKA CHITRAVANSHI & ASHUTOSH MISHRA
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As the world advances towards the next stage of evolution with artificial intelligence (AI), the government has started taking steps to prepare for the future.

Sources in the government and industry have said that various ministries are trying out use cases for AI in their departments to test the waters.

"A case study is being carried out across ministries by a dedicated wing consisting of experts to figure out AI use cases under the AI mission," a senior government official said.

The idea is to improve the processes to make them faster and user-friendly as well as ease the workload of the government. For instance, in order to transport coal seamlessly across the country, the Union Ministry of Coal recently drafted a logistics plan and policy in consultation with all stakeholders in the supply chain. That will entail building an AI-powered dedicated logistics platform, which would integrate all the existing central and state-level coal transport-tracking systems. "The logistics platform will be powered with AI and machine learning (ML) tools. This will help us build data sets for planning. Based on the learning, coal supply can be better managed in coming years," said an official.

Similarly, the telecom ministry is making efforts to curb spams through AI.

Thursday. Climate, environment and the concerns around the planet, which has reached a tipping point and needs urgent attention, will have panellists discussing how India's growth can be sustainable through responsible energy generation. Among the panellists will be leading figures from green energy businesses and environment-focused research organisations.

How India can ride the AI wave to become a global powerhouse. The contribution of sports in catapulting India to the developed nations' club by 2047. How luxury, from designerwear to hotels, resorts and retail support, can play a role in sprucing up India's image. Why agriculture needs focused attention and innovative interventions. What the startup environment in a developed India would look like. These and many more areas will be covered at the summit, which will conclude with a scintillating conversation between Arvind Subramanian, former chief economic advisor, and Montek Singh Ahluwalia, former deputy chairman of the Planning Commission. The two economists will try to thrash out the contours of the Centre-state relations necessary for India's successful journey towards 2047.

AI waters…

In June last year, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) directed all operators to deploy AI- and ML-based detection systems to identify and act against unregistered spam callers and message senders. Under one of the AI-ML systems, telecom operators have to share the details of spammers with other carriers using blockchain technology, and, in turn, creating a common database, officials said.

The Department of Telecommunications has started initiatives such as AI- and facial recognition-powered Solution for Telecom SIM Subscriber Verification (ASTR) to identify fraudulent mobile connections.

"This is a top-driven exercise. Ministries get to pick a use case for AI and figure out what worked and what did not. This experimentation is really positive because it is not going to get done in one big bang, but will be a learning process," a senior industry expert said.

While it is still early days, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs is building systems using AI for flagging non-compliance as well to raise alarm and issue notices to errant companies. It will also use AI and ML to send reminders about due dates on compliances. A ministry official, however, said this would not take the "human touch" out of the process.

The agriculture ministry has developed "Kisan e-Mitra", an AI-powered chatbot for addressing farmers' queries about the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme. The ministry is working on a model based on AI and ML to detect crop issues and developing a National Pest Surveillance System. "This initiative is expected to result in healthier crops, potentially boosting yields and improving farmers' livelihoods," the ministry had said in a statement.

Earlier this month, the Department of Telecommunications launched the Digital Intelligence Platform, which provides a single, unified space for banks, payment wallets, social media platforms and telcos to share data about suspected fraudulent connections using AI.
(With inputs from Shreya Jai, Subhayan Chakraborty, and Sanjeeb Mukherjee)

Investors…

"It is difficult to pinpoint the reasons as the flows depend on various factors, given the diverse investor base. However, what we have generally seen is that lump sum inflows gain momentum when the market corrects," said B Gopkumar, managing director and chief executive officer of Axis MF.

The equity market has been volatile in recent months, with the largecap index Nifty moving into a consolidation phase. The index swung 2.4 per cent last month and registered over a 0.5 per cent decline in three sessions.

The National Stock Exchange Nifty Smallcap 100 Index was even more volatile as the regulator showed concerns over the growing valuations in the small and midcap space. The index declined over 4 per cent on February 12. It was