India can benefit a lot from AI in agriculture: Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, who is on a two-day visit to India, on Monday interacted with the software engineers working at the Hyderabad campus, one of the largest R&D centers being run by the company outside its Redmond headquarters.

Though the event was kept out of media glare, Microsoft India put out some pictures of Nadella's interaction with young employees and also Nadella's interview by NDTV's Prannoy Roy there. Employees were the sole audience at the interview session between the Microsoft CEO and Roy.

Nadella reportedly spoke about the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in improving efficiency in agriculture. "Taking AI to the oldest industry on our planet, agriculture, is something we have already been doing in collaboration with local stakeholders like ICRISAT (International Crop Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics), which just at a little distance away from the campus. If you can increase the yield (with the help of AI) in agriculture, the kind of impact it will have on economies like India will be huge," Nadella said.

On apprehensions about AI taking control of humans, Microsoft CEO said humans will remain in the loop as long as humans design AI to keep themselves in the loop. While artificial general intelligence (AGI)- which makes machines adapt to a learning curve involving human-like abilities such as common sense, perception, planning — is still some time away, humans can still contribute a lot to their fellow humans in areas that machines cannot do even at that stage.

Interaction with employees at the Hyderabad campus was obviously centered around his book, Hit Refresh, which talks about the transformation of the company from being a provider of a computer operating system to being one of the global leaders in all the cutting edge technologies, and services including AI and cloud. Read more..