



Communications and Information Minister Yaacob Ibrahim (seated) announced the new AI programme by the National Research Foundation. PHOTO: **THE STRAITS TIMES**

\$150 million boost for artificial intelligence in next five years

✓ **LESTER HIO, THE STRAITS TIMES**

Hospitals may be understaffed but imagine still having your own health assistant who can monitor and provide medical advice.

That may be possible with the use of artificial intelligence (AI). For example, AI software can be used to make more accurate glucose measurements for diabetic patients, based on analyses of their medical histories.

To make the push in using technology to solve big nationwide problems, the National Research Foundation (NRF) yesterday launched a programme to boost the use of AI.

The NRF will invest up to \$150 million over five years in this initiative, dubbed AI.SG.

Unlike other research programmes that focus on particular areas, the grants made available under AI.SG will be problem-driven and aimed at solving “grand challenges”,

said its executive chairman, Professor Ho Teck Hua.

“The ultimate output will be solutions that solve these grand challenges, not just a research publication,” said Prof Ho, deputy president of research and technology at the National University of Singapore.

He said the actual problems to be solved will be announced before the year end, following consultations with lead users, researchers and agencies.

Besides developing intelligent health assistants that can advise patients, AI.SG will also look into transport issues.

One example might be to find ways to reduce vehicle travel time by 10 per cent. Prof Ho said this could be done by using AI in traffic lights to better manage traffic flow.

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