

INAUGURATION DAY-1: DataFest-2024:

“Unleashing the Power of Data for Development”

“Empowering Decisions with Data”

Islamabad, October 21, 2024 – The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) proudly hosted Data Fest-2024 at the Pak China Friendship Centre, bringing together experts, researchers, and data enthusiasts from diverse fields to explore the critical role of data in shaping policies and driving innovation for a better future. **The main strategic partners for DataFest-2024 are UNICEF, UNFPA, the World Bank, ILO, UNHCR, FAO, ADB.** These organizations bring extensive expertise in global development, public health, and education.

Under the theme **“Data for Life and Equity”**, the festival addressed key areas such as **Fiscal Resilience, Governance and Growth, Climate Change Adaptation, Disaster Risk Management, and Data Integration and Visualization.** The aim was to foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and actionable strategies to tackle pressing challenges in Pakistan, including healthcare access, social equity, and sustainable development.

The event was inaugurated by the Honourable Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal. He commended PBS for organizing Data Fest-2024, highlighting its potential to develop data-driven solutions for Pakistan's challenges. He stressed the importance of collaboration among experts to tackle issues like demographic growth and urbanization, which require innovative strategies. He emphasized the government's commitment to leveraging data for national progress. He underscored the importance of data-driven decision-making in addressing key issues such as poverty alleviation, education, and healthcare while encouraging collaboration between public and private sectors. He highlighted the importance of utilizing big data and data analytic for the prosperity and well-being of Pakistan's future.

Chief Statistician Dr. Naeem-uz-Zafar (سٹارہ امتیاز), welcomed all honorable guests and emphasized the significance of collaboration and knowledge sharing in advancing data science. Secretary, Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Mr. Awais Manzur Sumra in his remarks at Data Fest, highlighted the event's role in uniting experts to explore data innovations. He appreciated PBS efforts for organizing succesful Data Fest-2024, and thanked all international delegations of Nepal, Oman, Thailand, Australia, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Iran for their participation and all university students for joining this event.

In a major step to enhance collaboration across sectors, multiple **Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs)** have been signed with organizations in technology, academia, finance, and government. These partnerships aim to advance key initiatives, including collaborative research on cutting-edge data technologies like **artificial intelligence and big data**, and to **develop educational programs** that up-skill professionals in data science. The agreements will also **establish data-sharing frameworks** to foster innovation and **support internship opportunities for students.** "Partnering through these MoUs will enable us to leverage our strengths to drive innovation in data utilization," said Mr. Muhammad Sarwar

Gondal (ستاره امتياز), PBS spokesperson. The event featured inspiring talks from prominent data scientists and statisticians, hands-on workshops, exhibitions, and a data visualization competition, highlighting the transformative power of data in policy-making and innovation

Key Activities of the event were, **Thematic Discussions** comprising engaging sessions on governance, climate resilience, and more, with participation from stakeholders including UNICEF, UNFPA, the World Bank, NADRA and SUPARCO. Further **Keynote Speeches** were delivered by international and regional experts from organizations such as the United Nations, IMF, and Asian Development Bank. Total 32 workshops conducted across 8 dedicated workstations, covering various data science topics. The event featured 100 stalls showcasing cutting-edge data products and tools, including participation from organizations like Oracle, Jazz, and Telenor.


Panel Discussions on two significant panels focused on, **harnessing demographic data to inform policies addressing Pakistan's high population growth rate and welfare monitoring** for better policy decision-making, featuring insights from leading experts.

The festival welcomed delegations from regional statistical offices, including, Maldives Bureau of Statistics, Nepal Statistical Office, National Center for Statistics and Information, Oman, Delegates from the Asian Development Bank and UNICEF.

Government and Semi-Government institutions including PBS, NADRA, FBR, SUPARCO, NITB, PSEB, PITB and Radio Pakistan, in **Private Sector**, major IT and telecom organizations like Ufone, Jazz, and PTCL participated and displayed information on stalls. Various foundations and social welfare organizations also participated in the event. From **Academia**, institutions like LUMS, FAST, NUST, and Quaid-e-Azam University attended DataFest-2024

It is believed that DataFest-2024 will increase awareness and utilization of data for policy planning. It helps in strengthening collaboration among government, private sector, academia, and civil society. This festival will lead to innovations in data analytic and visualization techniques and will enhanced data literacy and analytical skills among participants.

Data Fest 2024 marked the beginning of numerous collaborative projects aimed at utilizing data for societal betterment. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics invites all stakeholders to join this vital initiative to leverage data for improving lives and driving sustainable development across the nation.


Muhammad Saywar Gondal (ستاره امتياز)
Member (Support Service / RM)
Spokes Person (PBS)