

Robotics Royalty and More Diverse Data Systems as DeepFest 2025 Points to AI-Driven Future

RIYADH, RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, February 10, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Amongst humanoids, ominous-looking robotic dogs, and even a cute, automated panda, DeepFest 2025, the world's leading artificial intelligence (AI) conference, got underway on Sunday in Riyadh showcasing how AI will shape the future and demonstrating Saudi Arabia's ambitious drive to become a global leader in the field. Running from 9-12 February at Riyadh International Exhibition and Convention Centre in Malham, the four-day show is co-located alongside LEAP, the Kingdom's award-winning global tech event. Organised by Tahaluf and powered by the Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority (SDAIA), this year's edition was officially opened by His Excellency Dr Esam Alwigait, Director of the National Information Centre at SDAIA.

Calling DeepFest 2025 "an event where we can see the future unfold before our eyes", Alwigait outlined the Kingdom's key role in the development of AI, detailing how the future-focused country was ranked 14th in the Global AI Index 2024, is the fastest country to invest in AI worldwide, is No1 for government AI strategy globally, and No1 for AI governance in the Gulf region.

"Over the next four days, we will explore how AI ethics and regulations go side-by-side with innovation and how AI is transforming healthcare institutions, sports, urban messaging, and



society. We'll see that AI is not just a tool, but a massive power that enables us to solve complex problems and create opportunities."

Following Alwigait on the DeepFest Main Stage was Marc Raibert, Founder and Executive Director of the AI Institute and chairperson of Boston Dynamics, renowned for its pioneering work in the development of robotic dogs. Wearing a colourful shirt and a beaming smile, Raibert said he has "the luxury of having fun every day by building robots"



packed room a video of his creations dancing ballet, performing pirouettes and backflips, and leaping from box-to-box with the agility of a parkour expert.

Yet while attendees gawped, Raibert played down robots' abilities, calling them "really stupid" and "as dumb as door knobs", adding: "I could take any person in this room, show them a mechanical task, and teach them in 10-20 minutes how to do it, but it takes a room full of very skilled scientists and programmers to do the simplest things."

Raibert's AI Institute is working on improving that through the development of cognitive AI – whereby a robot can watch someone perform a complex series of tasks, understand why they are done, and then replicate them – but the tech pioneer dismissed the nightmarish vision played out in popular culture of robots going out of control and taking over the world. "I really don't think that's a serious concern," he said.

Pressed on the matter and asked how humanity can survive if robots exceed our intelligence, he replied: "I'm not a philosopher, so I don't know, but computers can estimate trajectories better than we can, cars can drive faster than we can move, planes can fly and we can't... I just don't see a dystopian future. Our lives will continue in many ways as they have for the past 500 years. My advice? Calm down and don't believe the hype. Life is a pleasure."

Later in the day, as QSS Robotics exhibited its automatic baristas, load-bearing child-sized robots, and impressive drone technology, UBTech displayed its own creations, including Walker, a service robot in the form of a doe-eyed panda. Nearby, Michael Spranger, the President of Sony AI took to the stage to discuss ethics, creativity, and human imagination.

"You might think of Sony as an electronics company, but today we are actually an entertainment company," he said, explaining that music, film, and gaming make up 60 per cent of the company's revenues. Ethics in entertainment is a key focus, he explained, detailing how the company's novel, multi-dimensional measure for skin colour has helped expand the range of how people measure diversity in AI data sets and AI models. The result is a better representation

of the world's diversity and helping create more robust systems that can eradicate biases.

The primary focus of Spranger's presentation however was Gran Turismo Sophy, a revolutionary superhuman racing driver that has, through AI development, mastered the highly realistic game of Gran Turismo Sport and is now helping train the world's best esports drivers as they seek to improve. But that is not the end goal, said Spranger. "AI is helping creators create better games, pictures, and music. Sophy, for example, is now a part of the story of Gran Turismo, catering to all racing enthusiasts across the world."

Annabelle Mander, Executive Vice President, Tahaluf, which co-organises LEAP with the Saudi Ministry for Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) and the Saudi Federation for Cybersecurity, Programming, and Drones (SAFCSP), said: "The first day of DeepFest 2025 has proved, once again, the critical role of AI in the future of technology. Co-located with LEAP 2025, which today announced multi-billion dollar investments totaling US\$14.9 by domestic and global heavyweights, DeepFest serves as a crucial platform and an important pillar in Saudi Arabia's AI roadmap, convening global leaders and innovators, offering attendees unparalleled access to the latest innovative technologies, and driving the understanding of AI's future potential." Bringing together AI innovators and transformation leaders, DeepFest 2025 will feature more than 150 speakers, 120 exhibitors, and attendance exceeding 50,000 participants from around the world. For more information, visit [DeepFest.com](https://www.deepfest.com)

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