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## UAE Mission 2 to lift off on March 2

Launch 'scrubbed' due to a technical issue at last minute

**DUBAI**

**BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN**  
Senior Reporter

The launch of UAE astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi's Crew-6 mission to the International Space Station (ISS) has been deferred to March 2, after the scheduled launch yesterday was called off due to a "technical issue" just two

minutes before blast-off. Nasa and US billionaire Elon Musk's spacecraft manufacturing company SpaceX 'scrubbed' the launch due to a "ground systems issue". Scrubbing refers to calling off a rocket launch for a later day.

The mission teams "decided to stand down to investigate an issue preventing data from confirming a full load of the ignition source for the Falcon 9 first stage Merlin engines, triethylaluminum triethylboron [or TEA-TEB]," Nasa explained. After the postponement

of the space mission, Shaikh Hamdan Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of the Executive Council of Dubai, tweeted a message of support and motivation.

**'Ambitions remain high'**

"The launch has been postponed, yet our ambitions remain high. Wishing a safe and successful mission to Emirati astronaut @Astro\_Alneyadi and the entire Crew-6 team. #ZayedAmbition," he posted.

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# Why March 2 is the new date for Al Neyadi's space mission

LAUNCH CALLED OFF DUE TO 'TECHNICAL ISSUE' TWO MINUTES BEFORE LIFT-OFF

**DUBAI**

**BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN**  
Senior Reporter

**M**arch 2 has been set as the new target date for the lift-off of the UAE astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi's Crew-6 mission to the International Space Station (ISS) after the scheduled launch yesterday was called off due to a "technical issue" just two minutes before blast-off.

Nasa and SpaceX 'scrubbed' the launch due to a "ground systems issue". Scrubbing refers to calling off a rocket launch for a later day.

## Motivating message

Following the news, Shaikh Hamdan Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Dubai Crown Prince and Chairman of Dubai Executive Council, tweeted a message of support.

"The launch has been postponed, yet our ambitions remain high. Wishing a safe and successful mission to Emirati astronaut @Astro\_Alneyadi and the entire Crew-6 team. #ZayedAmbition," he said.

Shaikh Hamdan was at the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre's ground station to watch the historic lift-off to the International Space Station (ISS), which was scheduled at 10.45am UAE time, from Kennedy Space Centre's Launch Complex 39A in Florida, US.

## What happened?

The mission teams "decided to stand down to investigate an issue preventing data from confirming a full load of the ignition source for the Falcon 9 first stage Merlin engines, triethylaluminum triethylboron [or TEA-TEB]," Nasa explained.

Nasa and SpaceX decided to forgo the next launch opportunity today due to an unfavourable weather forecast.

## When is the next launch?

The next available launch attempt will be at 9.34am UAE time on Thursday, March 2, "pending resolution of the technical issue preventing Monday's launch", the two agencies announced.

"I'm proud of the Nasa and SpaceX teams' focus and dedication to keeping Crew-6 safe," said Nasa Administrator Bill Nelson. "Human spaceflight is an inherently risky endeavour and, as always, we will fly when we are ready."

Yesterday, hours of excitement in the lead up to the launch



Courtesy: Twitter

■ **Top:** Sultan Al Neyadi (right) in the capsule with his Crew-6 team minutes before the launch. **(Above left):** The Falcon 9 rocket at the launch site. **(Right):** Al Neyadi braces for lift-off.

**The launch has been postponed, yet our ambitions remain high. Wishing a safe and successful mission to Emirati astronaut @Astro\_Alneyadi and the entire Crew-6 team. #ZayedAmbition."**

**Shaikh Hamdan**

changed to moments of uncertainty when the ignition system malfunctioned due to suspected "ground control anomaly". Prior to that, Commander Stephen Bowen had confirmed it was a "Go" for propellant launch at around 9.50am.

Around the same time,



Al Neyadi's Twitter account shared an emotional post in which he said: "On this planet, I leave behind everyone I love and take off to space...I leave behind a country that has forged its way to stars and lit its path with Zayed's Ambition... I leave you all behind until we meet again from space... Your brother, Sultan Al Neyadi."

## Pre-launch traditions

Al Neyadi also spent a few moments with his family before boarding a Tesla vehicle to the launch pad. He was seen giving fist bumps to his children.

All four crew-members underwent the pre-launch traditions that included leaving the quarantine quarters in designated vehicles, looking up at the rocket (which is known as the 'astro lean'), and signing on the White Room wall before accessing the capsule.

## 255-storey elevator

They rode the 255-storey elevator to the access arm and entered the capsule and completed the final preparations.

All of them remained calm and comfortable even after the launch was cancelled. They exited the Dragon spacecraft for crew quarters after SpaceX completed the removal of propellant from the Falcon 9 rocket. "Both the Falcon 9 and Dragon are in a safe configuration," SpaceX confirmed.