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Al Neyadi: I recall each moment spent in microgravity

UAE ASTRONAUT-TURNED-MINISTER SHARES PICTURES AND ANECDOTES ON FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF ISS MISSION

DUBAI

BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Senior Reporter

UAE astronaut-turned-minister Dr Sultan Al Neyadi yesterday recalled his experience with microgravity as he marked the first anniversary of his record-setting space mission.

Dr Al Neyadi, who is Minister of State for Youth Affairs, conducted the longest Arab space mission and became the first Arab to do a space-walk outside the International Space Station (ISS).

He took to social media to commemorate the launch of his historic mission. "A year ago, I experienced my first moments aboard the ISS. I still recall each moment in microgravity with the crew," he said.

Dr Al Neyadi was part of Nasa's SpaceX Crew-6 mission that launched on March 2, 2023, on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida.

Inspirational post

On Friday night, Dr Al Neyadi shared another post recalling how the first launch attempt of the Crew-6 mission had to be scrubbed due to a technical glitch.

"Last year, just two minutes before our scheduled launch to the ISS, our mission was scrubbed due to technical reasons. This experience taught me that life doesn't always go the way we want. There are challenging days when some might view obstacles as the end of their journey or as inevitable failures. However, others might see these setbacks as a brief pause that precede towards succeeding their goals," he said.

He then posed a question to his followers: "Which side are you on?" He also attached a photo that was taken at Cape Canaveral, Florida, before the second launch attempt.

Journey of exploration

As he celebrated the milestone, Dr Al Neyadi also highlighted the country's ongoing journey of exploration and discovery in space with two new astronauts all set to graduate in a couple of days.



■ Dr Sultan Al Neyadi shared pictures of his experience with microgravity on the ISS over a period of six months.

TWO MORE ASTRONAUTS READY FOR SPACE

The Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) on Friday announced that Emirati astronauts **Nora Al Matrooshi** and **Mohammad Al Mulla**, from the second batch of the UAE Astronaut Programme, will graduate from the 2021 Nasa Astronaut Candidate Class training programme on March 5 at the Johnson Space Centre in Houston.



Al Matrooshi and Al Mulla's training that began in January 2022 encompassed spacewalking, robotics, space station systems, T-38 jet proficiency and learning Russian.

The 2021 class features 10 Nasa candidates alongside Al Mulla and Al Matrooshi, who is also the first female Arab astronaut. At the graduation ceremony, each candidate will be awarded an astronaut pin, signifying their graduation and qualifying them for future space missions.

—S.S

"This anniversary also coincides with a significant milestone: the graduation of @Astronaut_Nora and @Astro_AIMulla from NASA's Astronaut Candidate Class, just two days away," he said.

He was referring to the second batch of Emirati astronauts Nora Al Matrooshi and Mohammad Al Mulla who are scheduled to graduate in Houston on March 5.

6 months

spent by Al Neyadi on the ISS. The Crew-6 mission launched on March 2, 2023

"The journey continues," Dr Al Neyadi added. He also shared images showing the rocket and the spacecraft in which he blasted off to space, the big family of Expedition 68 crew and a group photo of him along with his UAE astronaut colleagues Hazzaa Al Mansoori, Al Matrooshi and Al Mulla.

Sultan of Space

The entire country had eagerly celebrated the historic space mission of its second astronaut, Dr Neyadi, who was affectionately dubbed the 'Sultan of Space'. Landmarks across the nation were adorned with messages promoting the UAE Mission 2.