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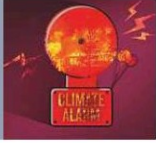
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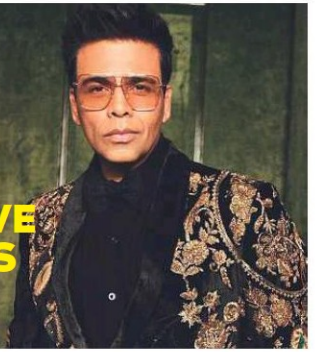


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■ Nora Al Matrooshi during the Nasa training. Astronauts like her undergo a series of demanding exercises.

## 2 UAE astronauts get spacewalk training

They were among 10 candidates selected from more than 12,000 applicants

### DUBAI

Emirati astronauts Nora Al Matrooshi and Mohammad Al Mulla are undergoing spacewalk training as part of Nasa's 2021 astronaut candidate class training programme, at its Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory (NBL) at the Johnson Space Centre in Houston, Texas.

Following a series of demanding exercises, including survival training at Alabama's Fort Novosel and a detailed orientation at the Marshall Space Flight Centre in the USA, Al Matrooshi and Al Mulla's training in the NBL is a crucial phase of the astronaut training.

### World's largest

NBL is the world's largest indoor pool used for simulated spacewalk training, spanning 202ft in length, 102ft in width, and 40ft in depth.

The NBL's primary function is to prepare astronauts for space missions involving Extravehicular Activities or spacewalks. Neutral buoyancy is a core part of this train-

ing, simulating the weightlessness experienced in space. The facility allows astronauts to become neutrally buoyant, allowing for the manipulation of large objects, similar to the conditions of microgravity in space. The NBL currently provides the most accurate training medium for spacewalks. Spacewalks are a cornerstone of both current and future space exploration missions. The International Space Station, for example, requires hundreds of hours of spacewalks for assembly and maintenance.

Al Matrooshi and Al Mulla, who are part of the second batch of the UAE Astronaut Programme, were among the 10 Nasa candidates selected from more than 12,000 applicants. Both continue to display remarkable resilience and determination, reflecting the UAE's ambitious vision for space exploration. — WAM



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■ Mohammad Al Mulla is part of the second batch of the UAE Astronaut Programme and is undergoing training in the US.