

## SULTAN REVEALS 'BEST THING' HE GOT IN SPACE

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## Al Neyadi reveals 'best thing' he received during ISS mission

Sultan of Space says parents, UAE leaders played a pivotal role in his achievements

**DUBAI**

BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN  
Senior Reporter

Getting a handwritten message from his mother, who had never gone to school, was the “best thing” he received in space, UAE astronaut Dr Sultan Al Neyadi revealed yesterday.

The Emirati astronaut, who created history twice by completing the longest Arab space mission and by becoming the first Arab spacewalker, was addressing the 21st Arab Media Forum in Dubai during a session titled ‘From the Desert to the Stars’.

This was his first public appearance in Dubai after his return to the UAE earlier this month following his space mission onboard the International Space Station (ISS).

In attendance in the packed hall was Shaikh Ahmad Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Second Deputy Ruler of Dubai and Chairman of Dubai Media Council along with other senior officials.

### Grateful to parents

Al Neyadi credited his parents for all that he has achieved and thanked them for raising their children with values in life even though they were not highly educated.

“My mother never went to school, and my father did not complete his education and joined the military service early,” he said. “After we graduated, my mother learned



Virendra Saklani/Gulf News

■ Astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi addresses the audience during a session titled ‘From the Desert to the Stars’ yesterday.

“After we graduated, my mother studied by herself. She learned to read and write and memorised the Quran. The best thing I received on the International Space Station was a handwritten message from my mother.”

**Sultan Al Neyadi | UAE astronaut**

to read and write and memorised the Quran. The best thing I received on the International Space Station was a handwritten message from my mother,” he said to a loud round of applause.

Asked about his sons’ ambitions, the 42-year-old father-of-six said: “One wants to become a professional diver, one a football star and another one wants to be a mechanic,” he said, with a gesture of repairing things, sending a ripple of laughter among the audience.

Speaking about his own ambition going forward, he said he had told Salem Humaid Al Amiri, director of the

Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre that “we should go to the Moon next”, soon after his re-entry to Earth. “It is not just me. We mean, all of us, Sultan, Hazzaa and everyone.”

### President’s support

Referring to President His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, he said: “Abu Khaled always supported us. It was not just for the sake of creating an event. It was for all the Emiratis.”

“The ambition of our leadership in this sector is great. Our leadership is planning things beyond the second and third mission,” he said.