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UAE aims for space trips every 3 or 5 years

Country gears up for future moon exploration through Rashid Rover 2

DUBAI

After astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi's return to Earth, the UAE will seek to secure a spot on a space flight every three to five years, a high-ranking official has said.

Salem Humaid Al Marri, Director General of the Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC), said the UAE Astronaut Programme that send Al Neyadi to Space has greatly enhanced the country's reputation and that of the Arab world.

Al Neyadi is currently on the longest space mission in Arab history, spending six months aboard the International Space Station (ISS).

Building an astronaut team

Al Marri said the programme is a long-term initiative aimed at creating a team of Emirati astronauts to achieve the country's goals in scientific exploration, take part in manned space missions, and contribute to global space ventures.

During his mission, Al Neyadi accomplished significant milestones, notably becoming the first Arab to conduct a spacewalk during Expedition 69. He ventured outside the ISS, successfully completing his spacewalk while holding the UAE flag, making the UAE the 10th country to perform such a task on the ISS.

Regarding the UAE's am-



■ Salem Humaid Al Marri

bitious space exploration, the MBRSC Director-General explained that the UAE Astronaut Programme has qualified four astronauts, including Hazza Al Mansouri and Sultan Al Neyadi. Noura Al Matrooshi and Mohammad Al Mulla have finished training at Nasa's Johnson Space Centre in Houston, preparing for future space journeys.

Arab space collaboration

In terms of Arab collaborations in Space projects, he emphasised that the UAE has established partnerships with Bahrain and Kuwait, while discussions are underway with Egypt and Saudi Arabia regarding satellite-building training. The successful launch of the UAE-Bahraini Light-1 CubeSat from the ISS earlier this year exemplifies these partnerships. The UAE is also gearing up for future moon exploration through Rashid Rover 2, its second lunar mission. The MBRSC is actively engaging with Kuwait and other Arab nations for similar initiatives.

—WAM