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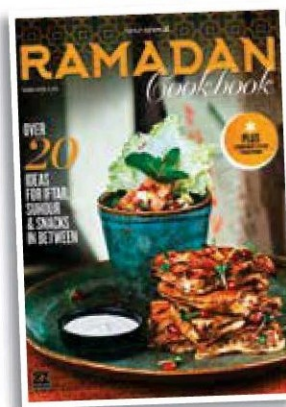
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**5 killed in India poll violence**

**NEW DELHI**

At least five people were killed by gunfire in election-related violence at two polling stations in India's West Bengal state, police and officials said yesterday.

Security forces caused the majority of the casualties - four killed and four wounded - while trying to control a crowd outside a voting centre in Cooch Behar district, said senior police officer Vishal Garg.

**Results out on May 2**

In a separate incident, unidentified gunmen fired at voters at a polling station in the same district, killing one person. Local elections in West Bengal are being held in eight phases. Voting in four states and a union territory began in late March and are spread over a month. Results will be declared on May 2.

- AP

**SEE ALSO P13**

# DUBAI NON-OIL TRADE CROSSES DHI TR

Exports last year rose 8% to Dh167b while imports touched Dh686b

**DUBAI**  
Gulf News Report

Dubai's non-oil foreign trade crossed Dh1.18 trillion last year despite challenges posed by the global economic downturn due to Covid-19 and suspension of business activity across the world.

The total trade volume reached 100 million tonnes last year, driven by a 6 per cent year-on-year volume growth in the second half of the year.

Overall value of exports in 2020 grew 8 per cent to Dh167 billion, while imports accounted for Dh686 billion and re-exports totalled Dh329 billion.

"The exceptional growth performance of Dubai's external trade sector reflects the emirate's impressive resilience and its ability to recover and grow amidst international crises. Dubai has set an example for the world in dealing with both the economic and health repercussions of the pandemic," said Shaikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Dubai Crown Prince and Chairman of The Executive Council of Dubai.

Dubai's direct trade in 2020 totalled Dh711 billion, while trade through free



zones reached Dh464 billion and customs warehouse trade weighed in at Dh7 billion. Airborne trade accounted for Dh559 billion. Sea trade reached Dh421 billion while land trade touched Dh203 billion.

**Momentum to further accelerate**

Dubai's trade sector impressively overcame the impact of a global trade downturn in 2020. With the gradual opening

of borders, Dubai's trade volumes started recovering and growing quickly in the second half of 2020.

The resumption of trade with Qatar, the start of trade engagement with Israel, the positive spin-offs from hosting EXPO 2020 Dubai and the launch of the Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan will all contribute to accelerating the growth momentum.

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“ We announce the first Arab female astronaut, among two new astronauts, selected from over 4,000 candidates to be trained with Nasa for future space exploration missions. Congratulations Noura Al Matrooshi and Mohammad Al Mulla.

**Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum**  
| Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai

# UAE'S NOURA AL MATROOSHI NAMED AS FIRST ARAB FEMALE ASTRONAUT

Two more Emirati astronauts join Hazzaa Al Mansoori and Sultan Al Neyadi to take UAE Astronaut Programme to the next frontier

**DUBAI**  
BY FAISAL MASUDI  
Chief Reporter  
TAWFIQ NASRALLAH  
Senior News Editor

The UAE yesterday announced two new Emirati astronauts, bringing the total number to four. The announcement was tweeted by Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. Shaikh Mohammed said: “Today we announce two new Emirati astronauts, among them the first female Arab astronaut — Nora Al Matrooshi and Mohammad Al Mulla. They were selected from more than 4,000 applicants and their training will soon begin for international space flights. We congratulate them and count on them to raise the name of the UAE ever higher in space.”

The new batch of astronauts will continue the scientific march that the UAE launched years ago with the aim of strengthening the space sector and developing a national team of astronauts capable of achieving the country's aspirations in scientific exploration and participating in manned space exploration.

## HOW THE SECOND BATCH WAS SELECTED

- Out of 4,305 applicants, 2,099 passed the IQ, personality and technical assessments
- 122 then went through virtual interviews
- 61 went through preliminary and advanced medical examinations
- 30 went through preliminary rounds of interviews
- 14 passed a final round of interviews and evaluations
- Four passed fitness, communications, and teamwork tests
- The final two were then selected.



The two new astronauts join astronauts Hazzaa Al Mansoori and Sultan Al Neyadi to form a team of four under the UAE Astronaut Programme.

### In service of humanity

The future missions for Emirati astronauts will provide



As of 2020, of more than 550 astronauts who have gone to space, only 65 were women.

the scientific and global community with new scientific knowledge and will support the advancement of the space industry in the Arab world and contribute to making a better future for humanity.

Yousuf Hamad Al Shaibani, Director General, MBRSC, said:

“Today we continue on our journey to script a new scientific history for the Arab region in the field of space exploration, which was launched thanks to the vision of our wise leadership and guidance towards realising our dream of being at the forefront of the space sector.

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Hazzaa Al Mansoori

Noura Al Matrooshi

MEET THE NEW ASTRONAUTS

**Noura Al Matrooshi**

Born in 1993, Al Matrooshi holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from United Arab Emirates University. Al Matrooshi is an engineer at the National Petroleum Construction Company and was also the vice-president of the Youth Council for three consecutive years at the company.

Al Matrooshi is a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. She has a proven record of volunteer work and excellence in the scientific field and she ranked first in the UAE for the 2011 International Mathematical Olympiad. Her passion in space began at a young age, as she enjoyed going to stargazing events.

She lives by the motto of "Do what makes you happy".



**Mohammad Al Mulla**

A commercial pilot licence holder, Al Mulla was born in 1988. He also holds a flight instructor licence from the Australian Civil Aviation Authority. He has a bachelor's degree in law and economics and has obtained an Executive Master of Public Administration from the Mohammad Bin Rashid School of Government.

Al Mulla works as a pilot at Air Wing Centre, Dubai Police, and is also the head of training department there. He has a 15-year career experience and over 15,000 flight hours. Al Mulla was the youngest pilot in Dubai Police at 19 years.

His motto in life is: "The person who pursues their goal in life will achieve it, no matter how long it takes."



ANALYSIS

UAE rewrites scientific history of the region

ABU DHABI

BY MOHAMMED JALAL AL RAYSSI



With the announcement of the second batch of Emirati astronauts, the UAE is rewriting the scientific history of the Arab region and proving that its entry into the space sector was not a coincidence or some type of propaganda.

The national space sector was born on solid ground and according to a carefully thought out plan and a clear forward-looking vision that aims to make the UAE a major contributor to the space sector, whose membership is currently limited to a few countries.

The national space sector has an investments portfolio that exceeded Dh22 billion in just a few years, which is not a small number compared to the date of the establishment of the UAE Space Agency in 2014, which proves the strength of this programme from the moment of its birth.

Just as the UAE was distinguished by setting an Arab precedent in this sector at the end of the first 50 years of its founding, with the arrival of the first Arab astronaut at the International Space Station, today, the second 50 years begins with a distinctive step by announcing the selection of the first Arab female astronaut.

Success of UAE educational system

What is noteworthy in this announcement is the huge number of applicants from the nation's scientifically qualified men and women, which exceeded 4,300 applicants, and confirms the great success in the output of the scientific and educational system in the country, as well as the faith of the nation's youth in this national programme, which enjoys the support of the wise leadership.

The future missions of Emirati female and male astronauts bolster the UAE's vision for the next fifty years, as it is a real bet on science and youth within an integrated system, through which it continues to write a new scientific history for the Arab region and build a solid national knowledge base led by young people armed with science and knowledge.

—WAM



Watch the videos on UAE's two new astronauts

The UAE Astronaut Programme is central to achieving this ambitious vision, as it aims to build a knowledge-based economy for the youth of UAE that will be critical for advanced future projects. This will help us achieve the vision of our leadership that has taught us that

nothing is impossible, and that the ambition of young Emiratis must go beyond the limits of space."

The best candidates

Salem Al Merri, Assistant Director General for Scientific and Technical Affairs and Head of the UAE Astronaut Programme, MBRSC, said: "We are delighted to have Noura Al Matrooshi and Mohammad Al Mulla join the UAE Astronaut Programme. The team at MBRSC has worked tirelessly after receiving applications to evaluate them ac-

ording to specific criteria and standards, and then conducted successive evaluations to ensure the selection of the best candidates, until we reached this point to announce the new astronauts."

The two astronauts from the second batch of the UAE Astronaut Programme will also join the "2021 Nasa Astronaut Candidate Class", as part of a joint strategic agreement between the UAE and the US, to train them at Nasa's Johnson Space Centre. The two new astronauts will be trained in human

spaceflight, research and space flight control, and will also be trained to carry out missions in low orbit.

Future missions

The astronauts will also be trained to manage various missions on the International Space Station, including simulated spacewalks and long duration stay, along with training in major systems, robotics, extravehicular activity, T-38 jet courses, water and land survival, Russian language skills and theoretical training.



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Al Masood Group's AutoCentral Inaugurates its First Multi-brand Pre-Owned Cars Showroom in Dubai

New showroom marks Auto Central's expansion into new business line in UAE

AutoCentral, Al Masood Group's multi-brand service and repair centre, has officially inaugurated its first state-of-art-showroom for multi-brand pre-owned cars in Dubai, marking a new milestone in its expansion plans across the UAE.

Located in a prime location at Al Quoz Industrial Area 3, the newly built 700-square-meter space will further bolster AutoCentral's brand profile and market presence in the country through its value-added services and incentives. Customers who purchase pre-owned vehicles from AutoCentral will access the centre's services across its branches in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. The new used cars showroom will complement AutoCentrals' service centre offerings, thereby delivering seamless customer journeys and presenting buyers with a holistic experience, from sales to aftersales, to ensure their complete satisfaction.

At the core of the modern facility's services is its eight promises, made to foster customer trust and confidence. AutoCentral commits to buyers of certified pre-owned (CPO) cars displayed in the showroom that they will enjoy an extended warranty of up to seven years (unlimited mileage); up to 190-point inspection and reconditioning process; and service and inspection before delivery.

Also included in the eight promises are up to 25 per cent discount on parts; issuance of a certification of authenticity; exclusive finance and insurance offers; trade-in facilities; and 24-hour roadside assistance whilst under warranty.

Irfan Tansel, Chief Executive Officer, Al Masood Automotive Division, said: "AutoCentral's new pre-owned cars showroom reflects that our customers are always at the heart of everything we do. By offering a diverse range of pre-owned cars, coupled with the facility's advanced technologies and professional staff, Auto Central is seeking to exceed customer expectations, enhance their experience and satisfaction level and provide exceptional services according to the highest standard of quality and excellence."

"Its opening also shows AutoCentral's steady direction to establish a strong market footprint across the country. From Abu Dhabi and Dubai, new modern AutoCentral branches will soon open in other emirates to bring its high-quality services to customers wherever they are in the UAE," Tansel added.

Al Masood Auto Leasing programme is available at the showroom as well. The personalised leasing solution extends to buyers either a one-year lease option that can go up to three years or a 'lease-to-own' offer, whichever is the most convenient and suitable to them.

Open six days a week, AutoCentral, which is known for its expertise in the local automotive sector, aims to fulfil customer needs for quality pre-owned cars that have been comprehensively checked by the centre's highly skilled technical team.

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