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# UAE to send astronaut on 180-day ISS mission

ACHIEVEMENT WILL MAKE UAE 11TH COUNTRY IN ELITE CLUB

## DUBAI

Gulf News Report

**T**he UAE aims to be the 11th country to send an astronaut on a long-term mission to the International Space Station (ISS) following a deal signed between the Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) and Axiom Space at the UAE Embassy in Washington.

Hailing the announcement, His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, said: "We are proud of the Emirati young people. Another milestone for UAE space sector marked by the signing of new agreement to send the first Arab astronaut for a 180-day long mission to the International Space Station."

**Four astronauts in training**

MBRSC currently has four astronauts training at Nasa's Johnson Space Centre in Houston, to prepare them for long-duration human spaceflight.

In September 2019, astronaut Hazzaa Al Mansoori completed an eight-day mission aboard the ISS. He became the first Emirati to fly to space.

The agreement was signed by Salem Al Merri, Director-General of MBRSC, and Michael Suffredini, president and CEO of Axiom Space. Astronauts Nora Al Matrooshi and Mohammad Al Mulla attended the signing



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■ MBRSC director-general Salem Al Merri and Michael Suffredini, president and CEO of Axiom Space, signed the agreement at the UAE Embassy in Washington.

**We are proud of the Emirati young people. Another milestone for the UAE space sector marked by the signing of a new agreement to send the first Arab astronaut for 180-day mission to the International Space Station."**

**Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum**

ceremony along with Yousuf Al Otaiba, UAE Ambassador to the US; Hamad Obaid Al Mansoori, Chairman, MBRSC; and Yousuf Hamad Al Shaibani, Deputy Chairman, MBRSC.

**Complex experiments**

On board the ISS, the Emirati astronaut will conduct a series of complex and advanced experiments along with a team of US

astronauts. The astronaut is expected to be part of the SpaceX Crew-6 mission, scheduled for launch in 2023.

In July 2019, the UAE launched the Hope Probe to Mars, in the Arab world's first interplanetary mission. The UAE has also announced plans to launch an unmanned rover to the moon by 2024. UAE aims to build a Mars settlement in 2117.