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Himalayan task: Sultan of Space calls for protecting planet Earth

In media interaction, Al Neyadi highlights pollution seen from ISS in mountain range

DUBAI

BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Senior Reporter

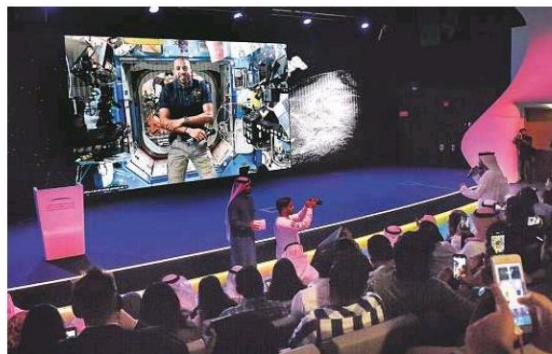
On the 62nd International Day of Human Space Flight, UAE astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi called for protecting planet Earth after witnessing pollution in the Himalayas.

The earnest appeal from the 'Sultan of Space', who is on the longest Arab space mission on the International Space Station (ISS) came during his live interaction with the media organised by MBRSC on Thursday.

Sporting a new close cut haircut, Al Neyadi recalled how the views of the Earth after his arrival to the ISS on March 3 offered an overall picture of the "magnificent planet". He said: "It's a profound experience actually. And personally, I do feel that we do need to keep this planet intact."

He added: "Just today, I was flying over the Himalayas, and I saw that boundary between air pollution and the clouds and the other side of the Himalayas. And I thought, wow, this is really incredible, seeing like a barrier of smoke just trying to jump over the Himalayas. So we need to protect this planet."

"As an astronaut aboard the space station, I do value the oxygen, I do value water and I do value the ability to breathe in the clean atmosphere which we get for free on Earth. So let's keep this planet intact."



Virendra Saklani/Gulf News

■ Sultan Al Neyadi answers questions from media and shares his experiences on ISS at the Museum of the Future event.

As an astronaut, I do value oxygen, I do value water and I do value the ability to breathe in the clean atmosphere which we get for free on Earth. So let's keep this planet intact."

Sultan Al Neyadi
Emirati astronaut

Answering questions about his physical health and mental well-being, he said he was mentally "in a good space" and maintaining a "constant body weight".

He said he has adapted well in space despite the challenges. "Time flies very fast in space. Days pass quickly. We see 16 sunrises and sunsets every day. But we have adapted to this biological clock. Sleeping was a bit difficult first but then I started



Watch Sultan
Al Neyadi's live
interaction with the
media from ISS

enjoying it. The weightlessness is a thrill that I cannot describe," he said.

"There are several challenges. Sometimes it is difficult. We don't walk on our legs. We actually lose some strength. We have to do exercise daily and focus on our legs and back muscles. People who do not train properly can end up getting health issues. We are also exposed to radiation."

Commenting about the UAE-specific experiments, Salem Humaid Al Marri, director-general of MBRSC, said: "Our objectives are really on human health, life sciences. We are looking at bone mass, dentistry and other health topics. What is happening to Sultan in space will be our focus."