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Zayed Ambition 2 paves way for plan to launch human missions: MBRSC

DUBAI
SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Senior Reporter

When Sultan Al Neyadi stepped outside the International Space Station to begin a seven hour spacewalk over a month ago, he etched his name in history books as the first Arab astronaut to venture into the unknown depths of space.

The feat was the highlight of the Arab world's longest space mission, Zayed Ambition 2, one of a series of ambitious projects that have entrenched the UAE's place in the orbit of elite spacefaring nations.

Al Neyadi's journey to the ISS announced the country's aspirations to be a major player in the world of crewed space flights. Despite being a relatively new entrant into the club of spacefaring nations, the UAE seeks to launch human space missions every three to five years.

Strategic investments

"The UAE national space programme has been made possible by the vision of the country's founding fathers and the strategic investments made by its current leadership in developing the infrastructure, technologies and talent needed to make it a frontrunner in the global space industry," said Hamad Obaid Al Mansoori, Chairman of the Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC).

Last year the UAE Space Agency announced a Dh3 billion investment fund for the development of the UAE's capabilities in the sector.

MBRSC, launched in 2006, has been at the centre of efforts to catapult the UAE into the league of space powers.

"Starting with just five engineers, MBRSC put together

FUTURE MISSIONS

- **2023:** Rashid 2 Moon Rover announced to continue the journey into the Moon's surface.
- **2024:** MBZ-Sat, the region's most advanced high accuracy, high resolution imaging satellite will be launched.
- **2028:** MBR Explorer of the UAE Asteroid Belt Exploration Project will be blasting into space with a target of covering five billion kilometres to study the asteroids in the Main Asteroid Belt between Mars and Jupiter.
- **2117:** The UAE's most ambitious space project aims to build the first human settlement on Mars by 2117.

a comprehensive programme to develop the sophisticated capabilities needed to undertake ambitious space missions. MBRSC also forged collaborations with a multitude of entities," said Al Mansoori.

MBRSC's missions have led to the development of new technologies and innovations that have applications in various industries. The Emirates Mars Mission, for example, has spurred the development of technologies in fields such as robotics, autonomous systems, and remote sensing, which can be applied to industries like agriculture, mining, and oil and gas.

Mars 2117 programme

The UAE Analog Mission, an offshoot of the Mars 2117 programme, is also playing a vital role in preparing humans for future exploration of Mars and other planets.

By simulating space-like conditions on Earth, the Mission is contributing to advancing spaceflight research by enabling space scientists to conduct experiments, develop countermeasures for space-hazards, and test new technologies.



■ Following the success of the Hope Probe, the UAE plans to build the first human settlement on Mars by 2117.