

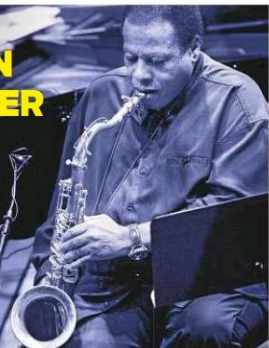


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UAE STAR SHINES IN SPACE

Al Neyadi and rest of Crew-6 successfully join the International Space Station

DUBAI
BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Senior Reporter

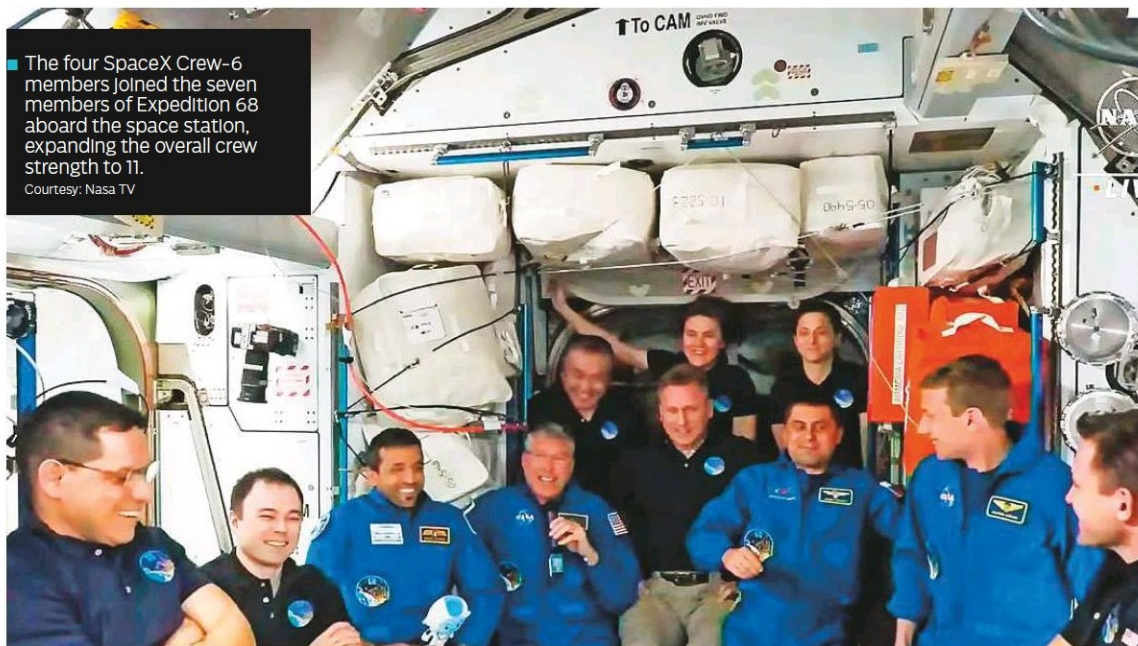
The UAE's efforts in pushing boundaries of science saw the second Emirati astronaut, Sultan Al Neyadi, floating into the International Space Station (ISS) yesterday to begin a new chapter in history for the Arabs.

Following an over 25-hour space flight, the 'Sultan of Space' entered the microgravity laboratory along with his three crew mates after NASA's SpaceX Crew-6 Dragon, 'Endeavour,' successfully docked at the ISS at 10.40am here. The docking was delayed slightly as mission teams completed troubleshooting of a faulty docking hook sensor on the Dragon.

The longest Arab space mission, known in the UAE as "Zayed Ambition 2," received a welcome to ISS in Arabic with the Mission Control Centre in Houston greeting Al Neyadi saying "Ahtan wa sahtan" (welcome in Arabic) to ISS.

Choosing to speak first in Arabic, a jubilant Al Neyadi thanked everyone by saying 'Shukran Jazeelan.'

He highlighted that "the UAE is taking great steps towards pushing the boundaries of exploration and cooperating



The four SpaceX Crew-6 members joined the seven members of Expedition 68 aboard the space station, expanding the overall crew strength to 11.
Courtesy: NASA TV

with the spacefaring nations to explore more, to seek new endeavours into space."

Big family

Apart from his family and the leadership in the UAE, he thanked the Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC)

"that gave me the thrust to conduct this mission." "I can't be happier than this ... I mean, seeing all friends in space, gathering as a big family ... This is the essence of space exploration," added the first Najmounaut (Arab astronaut) on the longest Arab space mission.

Taking to Twitter, Shaikh Hamdan Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Chairman of the Executive Council of Dubai and the President of MBRSC, said: "Congratulations Sultan on your safe arrival at the ISS. The UAE & the Arab world stand

with you as your mission starts. We have been counting the seconds in anticipation of this new achievement, which embodies the Zayed Ambition."

It was all hugs, smiles and happy faces in the big fat ISS family of 11 space flyers as soon as the Crew-6 members joined

the seven-member Crew-5 of Expedition 68 for and took part in the welcome ceremony. After a 'direct handover' for five days, some members of the Crew-5 will depart for Earth and the Crew-6 will officially begin Expedition 69 that involves over 200 experiments aboard the ISS.

SEE MORE



With UAE's Al Neyadi, Arabs' voice resounds aboard ISS. **P4**

How UAE astronaut will bring wonder of space to you. **P5**

ON GULFNEWS.COM



Photos: Tracing the journey of UAE's 'Sultan of Space' from launchpad to ISS

WITH AL NEYADI, ARABS HAVE A VOICE ON ISS

Nasa's SpaceX Crew-6 team forms extended family on the space station alongside members of Crew-5 mission from Expedition 68

DUBAI
BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Senior Reporter

Arabs' voice literally resounded in space as UAE astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi began scripting a new chapter in history aboard the International Space Station (ISS) yesterday.

The 'Sultan of Space' floated into the ISS along with his three crew mates after Nasa's SpaceX Crew-6 Dragon, 'Endeavour,' successfully docked at the ISS at 10.40am (UAE time) despite some delay due to hiccups with a latching hook.

The longest Arab space mission, known in the UAE as 'Zayed Ambition 2,' received a welcome to ISS in Arabic with the Mission Control Centre in Houston greeting Al Neyadi saying "Ahlan wa sahlan" (welcome, in Arabic) to ISS.

Al Neyadi also chose to speak in Arabic first as soon as he floated into the micro-gravity environment aboard the space station, thanking everyone by saying 'Shukran Jazeelan' first.

As part of the first speech of a Najmonaut (Arab astronaut) on the historic long-duration space mission aboard the ISS, Al Neyadi once again spoke about the UAE "pushing boundaries of exploration."

His opening remarks during the welcome ceremony went like this. "Luckily, I survived the first stunt!" Al Neyadi said, as he received the mic to speak, making the crew members laugh.

He then spoke in Arabic and added in English: "Thank you everybody for this opportunity. I would like to thank my family, my parents, the leadership in the UAE, the Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre that gave me the thrust to conduct this mission."

"I can't be happier than this ... I mean, seeing all friends in space, gathering as a big family ... This is the essence of space exploration. The UAE is taking great steps towards pushing the boundaries of exploration and cooperating with the spacefaring nations to explore more, to seek new endeavours into space. So, again, I said it before, but here again, Go Dragon! Go SpaceX!"

He held the "fifth crew member" of Crew-6 mission, Suhail, in his hand as he spoke. A tiny stuffed toy mascot of the Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC), the agency behind the UAE Astronaut Programme, Suhail is accompanying Al Neyadi as the "zero gravity indicator." It is considered as a symbol of celestial bodies' influence in Arab culture.

Welcome ceremony

It was all smiles and happy faces in the big ISS family of 11 spacefarers as soon as the Crew-6 members joined the seven-member Crew-5.

After hugging and greeting each other while floating in the microgravity environment, the multicultural crew posed for group photos to freeze the historic moments in the orbiting laboratory forever. They also heard from top officials of Nasa and the MBRSC during the welcome ceremony.

Kathryn Lueders, associate administrator, Space Operations Mission Directorate,



- Sultan Al Neyadi narrates his space experience in Arabic flanked by astronauts from his Crew-6 mission and those from the Crew-5 mission already on the ISS.
- Excitement grips the Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre's Mission Control Centre during the historic moment when Sultan Al Neyadi entered the International Space Station.



Nasa, welcomed the crew who arrived to the ISS as part of Nasa's Commercial Crew Programme in association with Elon Musk's SpaceX.

"We created a little bit of anticipation for the Crew-6 folks, making it a little bit longer before you got to the station. But as always, it's so great to see all of you come safely to the hatch, enjoying with the crew members on the station."

"The next six months will just be packed with very critical events," she reminded.

"As always, we are super proud of you and looking forward to all the great things that you will be doing."

Hamad Al Mansoori, chairman of MBRSC, congratulated the four Crew-6 members and the "little astronaut Suhail," on their successful arrival to the ISS. "Your mission to space represents

a huge milestone for SpaceX, Nasa and the UAE. Crew-6, you have become part of our community back home in the UAE," said Al Mansoori, who is in the US along with other MBRSC officials.

Representing all Arab nations

Speaking in Arabic, he addressed Al Neyadi as Bu Rashid. "Great to hear that you have safely arrived at the ISS. Our faith in you is great. Today, you not only represent the UAE, but all Arab nations. This marks the beginning of long-term space exploration journeys for Arabs. Please remember the wise words of President His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, that the UAE and its people stand with you."

Additionally, he pointed out that the mission embodies the directives of

His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, who envisioned that after Hazzaa Al Mansoori, there would be many more to complete the ambitious vision of the country's founding father Shaikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

"I wish you all [a] safe and successful mission," he added.

Before they arrived at their new home for the six-month mission, Al Neyadi, along with his crew mates Nasa astronauts Stephen Bowen and Woody Hoburg, and Roscosmos cosmonaut Andrey Fedyaev completed an over 25-hour space flight. Though the Dragon was ahead of schedule to dock at ISS, the docking finally happened at 10.40am UAE local time.

Docking was delayed slightly as mis-

sion teams completed troubleshooting of a faulty docking hook sensor on the Dragon.

Prior to the moments of anxiety during the hold at Waypoint 2, the Dragon's trajectory offered moments of delight to people in the UAE as the spacecraft flew above the country at 9am. "I do hope Sultan Al Neyadi is paying attention to where he is," the Nasa TV commentator said.

Following Dragon's link-up to the Harmony module, the astronauts aboard the Dragon and the space station began conducting standard leak checks and pressurisation between the spacecraft in preparation for hatch opening. The hatches opened at 12:45pm here and the Crew-6 members floated in through the Zenith port of the Harmony module.



TOP COMMENTARY

As part of the first speech of a Najmonaut (Arab astronaut) on the ISS, Sultan Al Neyadi spoke of the UAE "pushing boundaries of exploration".

To begin with, he quipped: "Luckily, I survived the first stunt!" evoking laughter from his fellow crew members.

He then spoke in Arabic, adding a message of thanks in English: "Thank you everybody for this opportunity. I would like to thank my family, my parents, the leadership in the UAE, the Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre [MBRSC] that gave me the thrust to conduct this mission."

'LITTLE ASTRONAUT'

During the live broadcast of the arrival of UAE astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi's Crew-6 to the International Space Station, spectators spotted a "little astronaut" floating along with him on board the ISS.

Al Neyadi had introduced 'Suhail,' the fifth crew member of the SpaceX Crew-6 in his first 'space-to-ground' address on Thursday.



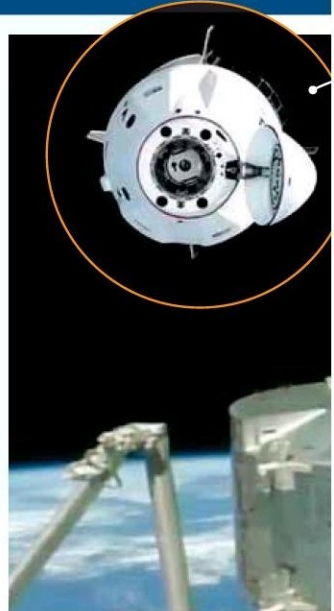
A tiny stuffed toy mascot of the MBRSC, Suhail is accompanying Al Neyadi as the "zero gravity indicator." It is considered as a symbol of celestial bodies' influence in Arab culture.

Turning heads, Suhail secured a spot in history books as he floated above Al Neyadi when all 11 astronauts aboard the station posed for a historic group photo.

While congratulating Crew-6 on their successful arrival to the ISS, Hamad Al Mansoori, chairman of MBRSC, congratulated Suhail also, addressing him as the "little astronaut Suhail." MBRSC released a video showing Suhail's space odyssey and reiterated that it was not his first mission in space as he had accompanied first Emirati astronaut Hazaa Al Mansoori to the ISS in 2019. He is wearing a SpaceX space-suit this time around.



■ Sultan Al Neyadi awaits his chance to make history by entering the ISS through a hatch in the Crew-6 Dragon spacecraft 'Endeavour'.





How Al Neyadi will bring wonder of space to classrooms

Website, 13 live calls, 10 ham radio calls in place for community outreach programme

DUBAI
BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Senior Reporter

The Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) in Dubai has revealed how the UAE's second astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi will bring the wonder of outer space to classrooms and communities in the country during his six-month, historic 'longest space expedition by an Arab.'

A new website, 13 live calls and 10 ham radio calls have been announced as part of the community outreach programme of Al Neyadi's space expedition.

A website titled ELF in Space will be the platform through which he will interact with students.

ELF in Space is a new initiative by the Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre in collaboration with the Emirates Literature Foundation (ELF). It will be an interactive programme offering students an up-close look at what it is like to be an astronaut and the skills and knowledge such a role requires.

On the Crystal Edition of the Emirates Literature Festival this year, ELF partnered with MBRSC to launch "ELF in Space", a family education programme, Isobel Abulhoul, CEO and trustee, Emirates Literature Foundation, had announced on February 1.

Educational content from space will be aired to schools on a weekly basis under the ELF in Space initiative, Salem Humaid Al Marri, director general of MBRSC had then said. "Videos that will be taken from space and then be broadcast, either live or pre-recorded and put on a weekly basis on a website. And that will then go to all schools," he told *Gulf News*.

Range of topics

Over the course of 20 weeks, students will follow Al Neyadi on his groundbreaking space journey aboard the International Space Station (ISS). They will also hear from authors, space experts, and fellow astronauts Hazzaa Al Mansoori and Nora Al Matrooshi as they discuss the various challenges of working in space and the innovations that help overcome them.

MBRSC said episodes will be released weekly, with each episode focusing on a different topic to help students connect the dots between what they learn in class and its impact on their lives and the world around them. Extra activities and resources will

SMALL DELAY IN FINAL BUILD-UP



The SpaceX Crew-6 Dragon 'Endeavour' capsule's docking with ISS was delayed slightly amid troubleshooting on a faulty docking hook.

Prior to the moments of anxiety, the capsule's trajectory offered moments of delight to people in the UAE as the spacecraft flew above the country at 9am. "I do hope Sultan Al Neyadi is paying attention to where he is," the Nasa TV commentator said.

The hatches opened at 12:45pm UAE local time and the Crew-6 members floated in through the Zenith port of the Harmony module with which the capsule had earlier linked up after necessary protocols for hatch opening.

20 weeks through which students will get to hear from Al Neyadi

also be available for download each week to keep students engaged and propel their own explorations of the subject.

"ELF in Space seeks to bring the wonder of space travel into the regular school curriculum. By delving into the science of space and exploring where our imaginations can take us, we aim to inspire the next generation of astronauts. After all, to envision a better future for our planet, we must first learn about our place in the wider universe," it added.

Nasa schedule

Al Neyadi will have a heavy schedule of experiments and dedicated time for live interactions with various entities, universities, and schools.

In addition to the initiative with Emirates Literature Foundation, the mission will further comprise other educational outreach and engagement efforts to inspire the next generation of scientists and explorers.

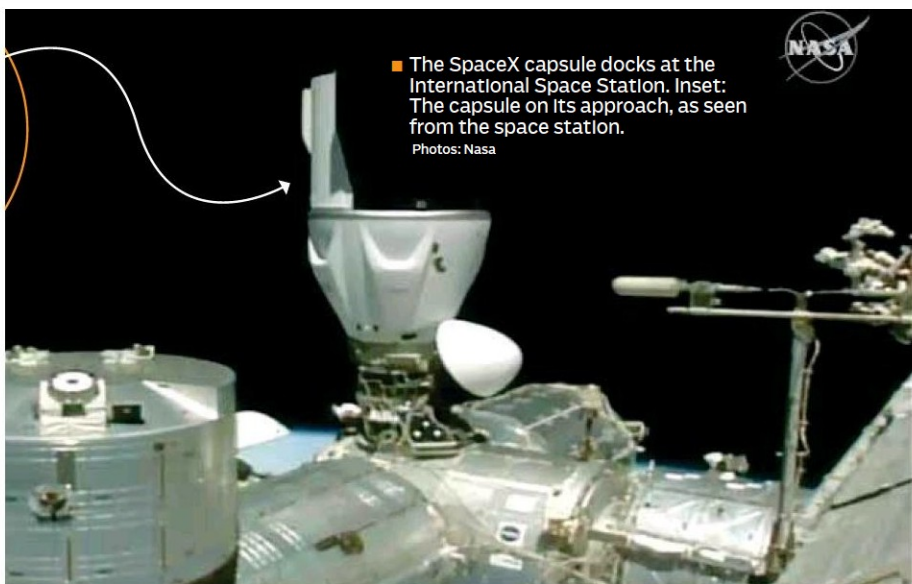
Nasa TV has scheduled a live event at 4pm on Monday. It will broadcast 'ISS Expedition 68 in-flight event' for the UAE flight engineer Al Neyadi, according to Nasa's website.

Congratulations Sultan on your safe arrival at the ISS. The UAE & the Arab world stand with you as your mission starts. We have been counting the seconds in anticipation of this new achievement, which embodies the Zayed Ambition."

Shaikh Hamdan Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum
Dubai Crown Prince (on twitter)

Great to hear that you have safely arrived at the ISS. Our faith in you is great. Today, you not only represent the UAE, but all Arab nations. This marks the beginning of long-term space exploration journeys for Arabs."

Hamad Al Mansoori
Chairman of MBRSC



■ The SpaceX capsule docks at the International Space Station. Inset: The capsule on its approach, as seen from the space station.
Photos: Nasa



Read more stories

Watch: Sultan Al Neyadi lifts off to ISS on the Crew-6 Dragon spacecraft 'Endeavor'



Watch a video of Sultan Al Neyadi and his fellow astronauts on their arrival at ISS

SpaceX Dragon capsule reaches ISS. What happens on docking?

A mechanism called International Docking Adapter plays key role

DUBAI
BY SADIQ SHABAN
Opinion Editor

Docking refers to the process of spacecrafts connecting in space. It is a critical part of getting astronauts and supplies to and from the International Space Station (ISS).

The ISS is a large modular

space station in orbit around Earth. It is about the size of a big football field and orbits at an altitude of about 400 kilometres above the Earth's surface. ISS travels at a speed of about 28,000 kilometres per hour, completing one orbit around the Earth every 90 minutes.

Correct trajectory critical

To dock with the ISS, SpaceX Dragon capsule (named Endeavour) approached it slowly and carefully. The spacecraft was monitored by the ISS crew and ground control to ensure

that it was on course and following the correct trajectory.

The SpaceX Dragon capsule docked with the ISS yesterday following a journey of more than 24 hours to deliver four astronauts to their new home for six months.

This is a complex, delicate process. The Endeavour capsule had to be aligned correctly with the ISS docking port, which is an opening on the side of the ISS where the spacecraft will attach.

Once the spacecraft was in position, it used a docking mechanism to connect with

28,000 km/h is the speed of the ISS as it orbits the Earth

the space station. This mechanism is called the International Docking Adapter (IDA).

Precision and attention

The docking process requires precision and attention to de-

tail. The spacecraft uses thrusters to move closer to the ISS and must align itself with the IDA very precisely.

Once it was in position, SpaceX Dragon used its docking mechanism to latch onto the IDA and create an airtight seal. The spacecraft was then secured to the ISS using a series of hooks and latches.

All the while, the astronauts approached the ISS after slow, careful manoeuvres, using the Endeavour's advanced navigation systems to align with the IDA.

Once in position, the spacecraft's docking mechanism latched onto the IDA and created an airtight seal.

Series of checks

The docking process can take a while, during which time the crew aboard the spacecraft and the ISS run a series of checks to ensure that everything is working correctly.

Once the Endeavour received a green light, Al Neyadi along with the rest of the crew clamored through the hatch on to the International Space Station.