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What Al Neyadi longs to do first on Earth

The 'Sultan of Space' acknowledges desire for culinary comforts upon landing

DUBAI
BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Senior Reporter

In the realm of shared desires, there is at least one thing that unites those separated from home and UAE astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi — home-cooked food.

Speaking to *Gulf News* from the International Space Station (ISS), the 'Sultan of Space', who is set to return to Earth in a month, expressed his eagerness to experience gravity and savour freshly-prepared meals upon landing.

Adjusting to Earth's gravity

Al Neyadi's return prompts questions about adjusting to Earth's gravity and everyday life.

"Honestly, I don't know what the situation will be," he said, pointing out that it would take some time to adapt to Earth's gravity and the life overall on the ground.

"It depends on the situation. Definitely, people [astronauts returning to Earth] like to eat freshly cooked food or maybe (have) a cup of coffee. (Some) other people like to sleep on a bed, but honestly, I don't know yet. We have to go back and experience gravity again and hopefully we will feel good and then we will think about the first thing that we might do. But definitely, I would love to have a fresh meal once I'm back."

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Sultan Al Neyadi
UAE astronaut

Al Neyadi is expected to complete the longest Arab space mission on-board the ISS by the end of August or early September.

Having completed five months into the mission, the 42-year-old father-of-six has also been missing his family and food cooked by his mother. He said he was looking forward to chatting with them in person and sharing his experiences on the ISS.

Will miss microgravity

However, when he ultimately returns to Earth, he revealed that he will be missing the microgravity and the ability to float on the orbital laboratory that travels at 28,000km per hour around 400km above Earth.

Asked about his biggest contribution through the mission, Al Neyadi told *Gulf News*: "Being here for six months for the first time as an Arab astronaut and conducting the EVA [Extravehicular Activity] — I think that is the most important thing I did."

"Additionally, as I said, the science that we contributed [on behalf] of the UAE is going to be a great addition to this mission overall," he added.