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Why Al Neyadi said no to water back on earth

Astronaut shares his first reaction about readapting to gravity

DUBAI

BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Senior Reporter

Ever wondered how astronauts must be grappling with gravity once they are back from space? Ask the Sultan of Space.

"Everything felt heavy." This was UAE astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi's first reaction about readapting to gravity after spending six months aboard the International Space Station.

In his first press conference on Tuesday since the splashdown, Al Neyadi said that the weighty sensation even prompted him to forego drinking the water, as he preferred to minimise any unnecessary movements.

"I remember Steve [fellow

astronaut Stephen Bowen] handing me a bottle of water. It felt really heavy like a ton. I just did not drink it because I didn't want to move a lot."

'It's amazing'

However, he was amazed at how rapidly the human body can adapt to the sudden shift from microgravity to Earth's gravitational pull. "It's amazing how quickly you can get better," he remarked, revealing that the process of recovery unfolds by the hour.

Currently undergoing rehabilitation in Houston, Al Neyadi explained that astronauts gradually regain mobility, starting with the movement of their arms and then gradually incorporating leg movements. The swift adaptation to Earth's conditions, he noted, mirrors the ability of space travellers to acclimate to the weightlessness of space.

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Al Neyadi spices up return tale with joys of life in space

'EVERYTHING FELT SO HEAVY' FOR THE SULTAN OF SPACE BACK ON EARTH

HOMECOMING

DUBAI

BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Senior Reporter

From savouring mango salads and playing chess in space to struggling to hold a bottle of water once back on Earth, UAE astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi on Tuesday night shared the joys of his life aboard the International Space Station and the challenges on his return.

"Everything felt heavy." This was one of UAE astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi's immediate thoughts on being back in gravity's grasp, after the longest Arab space mission lasting six months.

Al Neyadi and his Nasa SpaceX Crew-6 colleagues, Stephen Bowen and Woody Hoburg, were speaking about their mission for the first time following their return to Earth during a press conference, aired by Nasa TV on Tuesday night.

Crew-6 splashed down off the coast of Jacksonville, Florida, aboard SpaceX's Dragon spacecraft, Endeavour, on September 4.

Human adaptability

The 42-year-old Emirati astronaut described the initial experiences and feelings following his re-entry into our planet's atmosphere.

"Well, it felt really, really heavy," he said.

However, he noted the remarkable adaptability of the



Courtesy: Nasa/X

■ Sultan Al Neyadi and his Crew-6 colleagues address a Nasa press briefing on Tuesday.

UAE ASTRONAUT READY FOR SPACE AGAIN

Despite all the challenges, astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi said he wished to go to space again and, given a chance, travel with the same crewmates. He explained that his mission is a continuation of the UAE's Astronaut Programme, starting with his colleague Hazzaa Al Mansoori who flew to the ISS in 2019.

"This is the second mission. We have astronauts under training that will finish next year. So it's a continuation of human space flights. And I'm happy actually to be part of it!" **—S.S.**

human body to shift from microgravity to Earth's gravitational pull. "It's amazing how quickly you can get better," he remarked, revealing that the process of recovery unfolds by the hour.

Currently undergoing rehabilitation in Houston, Al Neyadi explained that astronauts gradually regain mobility, starting with the movement of their arms and then

gradually incorporating leg movements. "It's not easy. You might have some difficulty walking. You might have motion sickness."

A big thank you

Al Neyadi thanked the recovery team, flight surgeons, and rehabilitation facilities, acknowledging the immense effort required to support space missions. He also expressed

gratitude for the thousands of individuals who made the mission possible, including those who facilitated experiments and maintenance on the ISS.

Reflecting on life aboard the ISS, Al Neyadi and his colleagues mentioned enjoying fun activities.

"It was really, really cool, just trying all aspects of physics and trying to just use minimal force to go from one place to another. We had some competitions ... trying to float without touching any cables or without hitting any walls or anything. So it was really fun," Al Neyadi said.

The astronauts also noted that their mission will not be complete until the last samples from their experiments are taken, which is expected to occur in the coming month.