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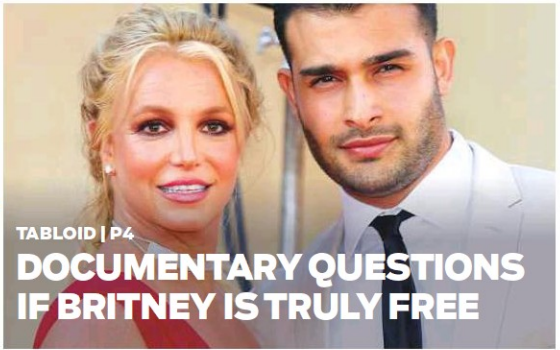


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Al Neyadi to host Saudi astronauts on ISS today

DUBAI

BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Senior Reporter

UAE astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi, who is on the longest Arab space mission on the International Space Station (ISS), is all set to host the largest ever group of Arabs in space when two of his Saudi counterparts join him on-board the ISS today.

Ali Al Qarni and Rayyanah Barnawi — the first-ever Arab woman to voyage into space — are scheduled to dock at the ISS along with their Axiom Mission 2 (Ax-2) crewmates, Peggy Whiston and John Shoffner, at 5.24pm UAE time.

Al Neyadi, the fourth Arab to make it to space, will be helping with their docking operations. Ahead of their 10-day space odyssey, he wished them awell and shared a new image of Saudi Arabia taken from the ISS.

“Following in Prince Sultan Bin Salman Al Saud’s pioneering footsteps, two Saudi astronauts will launch on their 1st mission to the ISS and for 1st time ever, three Arab astronauts will be in space together. As we wish them a great launch, here’s a recent view of Saudi Arabia I took,” he posted, along with the image of Saudi Arabia he took from the ISS over 400km above the Earth.

In March, Al Neyadi had spoken about the prospects of three Najmonauts (Arab astronauts) working together on the ISS during his six-month mission.

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Saudi team embarks on space mission

Nation’s first female astronaut, colleague set for ISS visit

DUBAI

Gulf News Report

In a historic move for Saudi Arabia, the nation’s first female astronaut, Rayyanah Barnawi, along with her colleague Ali Al Qarni, are set to venture into space. The two Saudis are part of the Axiom Space 2 mission to the International Space Station (ISS), which was scheduled to launch at 5:37 PM EDT, yesterday.

Barnawi, a prominent breast cancer researcher, and Al Qarni, an experienced F-16 fighter pilot, will join veteran astronaut Peggy Whiston and business pioneer and pilot John Shoffner on this landmark mission. Nasa confirmed that this will be the first occasion Saudis visit the ISS, and the journey will mark Barnawi as the first Saudi woman to venture into space.

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The significance of this mission is not lost on Barnawi. At a pre-launch news conference, she expressed her excitement and honour to represent the Saudi government and the Saudi Space Commission as the country’s first female astronaut. “Research has been my passion in life,” she stated.

“I’m very happy and honoured to be here today representing the government of Saudi Arabia and the Saudi Space Commission. This is a great opportunity for me to represent the country, to represent their dreams... This is a dream come true for everyone.”