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## Phase 2 of UAE's role in Mars simulation exercise ends today

UAE's Al Rumaithi, other crew to stay at Johnson Space Centre for seven days

**DUBAI**  
BY SHARMILA DHAL  
UAE Editor



■ Dr Shareef Al Rumaithi

The second phase of the second analog study of the UAE Analog Mission will be completed today, the Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre announced yesterday.

Taking to X, MBRSC said over the course of 45 days, the crew undertook a simulated journey to Mars, in Nasa's Human Exploration Research Analog (Hera) facility.

The UAE's Dr Shareef Al Rumaithi, a primary analog crew member, was joined by fellow primary crew members Jason Lee, Stephanie Navarro and Piyumi Wijesekara.

The crew will stay at Nasa's Johnson Space Centre for seven days following the egress, providing crucial data for further studies, the centre said.

### What are analog missions?

Analog missions are space missions conducted on Earth that simulate the living conditions of astronauts on a real space mission. These missions provide researchers with a controlled environment to study the physical and psychological effects of long-duration space travel on humans. Analog missions are crucial to the advancement of space science as they provide a means to test new technologies and methods for space exploration, improve our understanding of human behaviour and physiology, and develop strategies for crew safety and performance.

### What about Hera?

Hera is a unique three-story habitat, designed to serve as an analog for isolation, confinement and remote conditions in exploration scenarios.

The programme follows a general campaign and in each campaign, there are four missions. The objective from this analog is to explore the effects of isolation on the human body, and help understand the implications of such missions in the future.

The first UAE Analog Mission, as part of the Sirius-21 programme, has been completed. It aimed to test the effects of isolation on humans.

Analog astronaut Saleh AlAmeri from MBRSC took part in the mission with in-

**RARE OCCURRENCE**  
*Brightest asteroid to pass close to Earth on Saturday*

**ABU DHABI**  
BY KHITAM AL AMIR  
Chief News Editor

Earth is set to witness a rare astronomical event on Saturday, June 29, as the asteroid designated 2024 MK will pass close to the planet.

At 01:41GMT, the asteroid will pass at a distance of 295,000km from Earth, which is roughly two-thirds of the distance from the Earth to the Moon. Discovered on June 16, the asteroid has a diameter of 187 metres.

As it nears Earth, the asteroid will be visible with a simple telescope. Such brightness from a near-Earth asteroid has not been observed in over 12 years, and a similar event is not expected until 2028. The asteroid will be travelling at a speed of 34,000km/h.

For observers in the Arab region, the asteroid will be visible after 05:30 GMT, when its brightness will diminish. The Seal Observatory of the International Astronomical Centre will participate in monitoring this asteroid as part of a programme overseen by the renowned Catalina Observatory.

ternational collaborators. He conducted 70 experiments, including five experiments from four Emirati universities, covering the fields of physiology, psychology, and biology.