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**THURSDAY**  
MARCH 27, 2025  
RAMADAN 27, 1446

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# UAE EMBRACES THE CHALLENGE OF SPACE TECHNOLOGY

*Each mission pushes the boundaries of technology and shows the potential of human ingenuity*

BY CHRIS REDMOND  
Special To Gulf News

Since the dawn of the space age, human exploration beyond Earth's atmosphere has served as the definitive showcase for technological achievement. From the launch of Sputnik in 1957 to contemporary commercial space endeavours, every milestone in space exploration has fundamentally depended on advancements in technology. Today, this dependency is clearer and more critical than ever before.

Historically, space travel represented humanity's highest technological aspiration and greatest challenge. The early space race between the United States and the Soviet Union was as much about technological prowess as it was political influence.

Innovations in propulsion, navigation systems, life support, and communication technologies rapidly evolved, pushing the limits of human ingenuity. Missions such as Apollo 11's lunar landing in 1969 were not just monumental human achievements, but also a testament to technological advancement, showcasing what could be accomplished when technology is pushed to its extremes.



**300**  
successful missions  
logged by SpaceX's  
Falcon 9 rocket

In the current era, companies like SpaceX epitomise how the role of technology in space exploration has intensified. Founded by entrepreneur Elon Musk, SpaceX has disrupted traditional models through groundbreaking technologies such as reusable rocket systems. The Falcon 9 rocket's recent 300th successful mission illustrates how technological progress has made frequent, reliable, and cost-effective space launches possible.

At the forefront of SpaceX's ambitious goals is the Starship spacecraft, representing a significant technological leap forward. Starship's fully reusable design relies on advanced engi-

neering, cutting-edge materials, and autonomous flight control technologies. Recent testing at SpaceX's Boca Chica facility in Texas marks critical progress toward its next orbital flight, highlighting the ongoing necessity for technological innovation to accomplish more ambitious missions, such as Mars colonisation.

#### Technological hub

Meanwhile, the Middle East, particularly the UAE, has embraced the challenge of space technology with significant milestones such as the Emirates Mars Mission. The successful deployment of the Hope probe into Martian orbit required advanced navigation systems, sophisticated propulsion, and innovative data transmission technologies. This achievement highlights the UAE's growing role as a technological hub for space exploration and a leader in planetary science.

The UAE's astronaut programme, exemplified by Hazza



UAE's astronaut programme, exemplified by Al Mansouri and Al Neyadi's missions aboard the ISS, further demonstrates how technological advancements in training, spacecraft operation, and life-support systems are critical for extended human presence in space.

Al Mansouri and Sultan Al Neyadi's missions aboard the International Space Station, further demonstrates how technological advancements in training, spacecraft operation, and life-support systems are critical for extended human presence in space.

These missions have also significantly increased regional interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, reflecting the broader impact of space exploration on technological growth.

Additionally, the UAE's pursuit of lunar exploration with projects such as the Rashid rover emphasises a regional commitment to developing robotic technology, autonomous navigation systems, and resilient communication capabilities.

Saudi Arabia is similarly prioritising space-related technology through the Saudi Space Commission, focusing on satellites, communications infrastructure, and scientific research.

As the commercial space sec-

tor expands, other companies like Blue Origin and Virgin Galactic continue to drive technological innovation. Each is developing unique solutions to meet the challenges of frequent space travel, safety, and cost reduction, further reinforcing how technological breakthroughs remain essential to the future of space exploration.

#### Sustainable exploration

However, technological advancement in space travel does not come without challenges. Regulatory frameworks, environmental sustainability, and international collaboration must evolve in parallel with technological progress to ensure responsible and sustainable exploration.

Ultimately, space exploration remains technology's greatest test and highest endeavour. Each mission, each launch, and each achievement continue to push the boundaries of technology, underscoring human ingenuity's limitless potential when faced with the ultimate frontier.