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■ Sultan Al Neyadi celebrates his 42nd birthday on the ISS with Saudi astronauts Rayyanah Barnawi and Ali Al Qarni and other members of Expedition 69.

Al Neyadi celebrates 1st birthday in space

Al Ain students sing 'happy birthday' to UAE astronaut after interacting with him

Al Neyadi received a maple muffin top cake from the US crew, a cinnamon bun with yoghurt and dry fruits from the Russians and wishes in Arabic from the Saudi astronauts.

DUBAI
BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Senior Reporter

When an astronaut celebrates his birthday in space, it literally has to be a gravity-defying one! That is exactly what UAE astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi experienced on his first birthday on the International Space Station (ISS).

Al Neyadi turned 42 on Tuesday. Taking to social media yesterday, he shared photos of how he celebrated the special day with his colleagues, including the newly arrived Saudi astronauts, whom he referred to as "family".

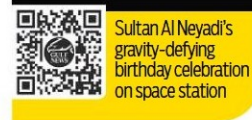
He also listed out the special dishes his Expedition 69 crewmates gifted him on his birthday. The icing on the cake was wishes in Arabic from Saudi astronauts Rayyanah Barnawi and Ali Al Qarni.

"Celebrated my 1st birthday in space with colleagues who have become family! Highlight of the day? A Maple Muffin top cake from the USA crew, a Cinnamon Bun with yoghurt and dry fruits from Russian crew, topped off with wishes in Arabic. Truly a gravity-defying celebration!" Al Neyadi said in his post.

Earthy celebration

Back on Earth, Al Neyadi had received another birthday gift from UAE students in his hometown Al Ain.

Salem Humaid Al Marri, director-general of the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) in Dubai, on Wednesday night shared a video of a large group of students of Al Ain Academy



Sultan Al Neyadi's gravity-defying birthday celebration on space station

singing 'happy birthday' to Al Neyadi. "A moving celebration of @Astro_Alneyadi 's birthday by Al Ain Academy students after he interacted with them from the ISS yesterday. Happy birthday Sultan! Hoping you had a memorable birthday in space," Al Marri said in his post.

Al Neyadi had interacted with more than 2,200 students in the Al Ain edition of 'A Call from Space' event organised by MBRSC at the UAE University on Tuesday. He had also mentioned that he missed his mother's cooking.

Saluting Jordan

Yesterday, Al Neyadi also saluted Jordan on its independence day. He shared a night view of the capital city Amman from the orbital laboratory over 400km above the Earth.

"Saluting #Jordan on their Independence Day. A beacon of Arab culture and boundless generosity set against the enigmatic backdrop of the Dead Sea, Jordan seamlessly blends heritage and natural charm. Here is a snap of #Amman, a city that holds a special place in our hearts," Al Neyadi said in the post accompanying the striking photos.