



Scan for our social media

ENTERTAINMENT | P17

**TOP MOVIES AND SHOWS TO WATCH THIS WEEK**

THE VIEWS | P9

**Decoding Vivek Ramaswamy phenomenon**



NATION | P2

**Risks posed by rise in online challenges**



BUSINESS | P6

**Adnec Group starts charter flights to Europe, Asia**



**Summer Offer**



800 916  
[www.abccargo.ae](http://www.abccargo.ae)

# Sultan of Space is homeward bound

NATION AWAITS A HERO AS DRAGON ENDEAVOUR SPLASHES DOWN AT 8.17AM TODAY OFF FLORIDA

**DUBAI**

BY SAJILA SASENDRAN  
Senior Reporter

**T**he UAE's biggest leap in human space flight exploration concluded yesterday with Emirati astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi beginning his triumphant return to Earth following the longest and most groundbreaking Arab space mission in history that included a spacewalk and over 200 scientific experiments.

It was a big leap for Arab space exploration when Al Neyadi blasted off to the International Space Station (ISS) six months ago along with three other Nasa SpaceX Crew-6 crew members. The 42-year-old father-of-six from Al Ain and his crewmates successfully undocked from the ISS yesterday, after one day's delay due to bad weather conditions at the splashdown site.

## Wishes for safe return

As the nation waits to welcome Al Neyadi, Shaikh Hamdan Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Chairman of the Executive Council of Dubai, and President of MBRSC, led wishes for his safe return, in a video montage of images and clips showing key moments from Al Neyadi's six months onboard the ISS.

Al Neyadi will be welcomed back to Earth by his family and a team from the Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) in Dubai, top officials



Courtesy: Nasa/X

Emirati astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi with fellow Crew-6 members aboard the Dragon Endeavour minutes before it undocked from the International Space Station yesterday.

**17 hours**  
earthbound flight duration of Dragon Endeavour

of MBRSC said yesterday. After spending 186 days in space, the Emirati astronaut is expected to splash down off the coast of Florida in the US along with Nasa SpaceX Crew-6 members by 8.17am UAE time today.

Upon their landing in the sea, a team from Nasa, other agencies, and MBRSC will be present at the spacecraft's landing site to welcome Crew-6 and Al Neyadi, said Adnan Al Rais, mission manager, UAE Astronaut Programme. "After that, the crew will move to the rescue ship. The rescue team will assess the overall health and situation of the astronauts following which they will be sent to the airport and to Houston where they will start the rehabilitation phase," he said.

Salem Humaid Al Marri, director general of MBRSC, said

Al Neyadi's family members also have flown into the US to receive him.

Al Neyadi will follow a three-week schedule to readapt to life on Earth, said his backup astronaut Hazzaa Al Mansoori, UAE's first astronaut in space.

Dr Hanan Al Suwaidi, flight surgeon, UAE Astronaut Programme at MBRSC, said that Al Neyadi's physical and mental health during the mission has been excellent, with his enthusiasm for activities and experiments highly commendable.

**SEE ALSO P4**

## KEY MILESTONES

**March 2:** Sultan Al Neyadi lifts off to ISS on Crew-6 Dragon spacecraft 'Endeavor'

**March 3:** Al Neyadi reaches ISS

**March 7:** His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of UAE and Ruler of Dubai, talks to Al Neyadi

**March 9:** Al Neyadi shares first views of Earth from ISS

**March 14:** Shares photo of UAE taken from ISS

**April 4:** Al Neyadi receives Nasa's gold pin

**April 11:** Conducts research on diabetic foot ulcers

**April 29:** Becomes the first Arab to do spacewalk

**May 6:** Al Neyadi relocates SpaceX Dragon that launched him to ISS

**May 25:** Gravity-defying birthday celebration of Al Neyadi

**June 22:** Advances cardiovascular research with PCG experiment

**July 11:** Al Neyadi fights microbial hitchhikers in space

**Sep 1:** Al Neyadi gives farewell speech ahead of return

**Sep 3:** SpaceX Crew-6 undocks from ISS.





## TRIUMPHANT RETURN

FAMILY MEMBERS FLOWN TO US FOR HIS RECEPTION

**DUBAI**  
BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN  
Senior Reporter

**U**AE astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi will be welcomed back to Earth by his family and a team from the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) in Dubai, top officials of MBRSC said yesterday.

Shaikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, expressed his wishes for Al Neyadi's safe return through a video montage showcasing key moments from his six-month stay aboard the International Space Station (ISS).

### Rehabilitation in Houston

After an 186 days in space, Sultan Al Neyadi and the Nasa SpaceX Crew-6 members are expected to make a splashdown off the coast of Florida at 8:17am UAE time today. Upon their arrival in the sea, a team comprising members from Nasa, other space agencies, and MBRSC will be present to welcome them. Adnan Al Rais, mission manager of the UAE Astronaut Programme, outlined the post-landing process, which involves a health assessment and then transport to Houston for rehabilitation.

Salem Humaid Al Marri, Director General of MBRSC, noted that Al Neyadi's family members have flown to the US to receive him, including his brothers, wife, and father, to spend time with him. However, Al Neyadi's newborn baby, born while he was aboard the ISS, will have to wait a little longer to meet his father.

### 'Time to come home'

Al Marri said Al Neyadi will be accorded a hero's welcome once he reaches the UAE. Elaborate plans for his reception and date of his arrival will be announced later.

Al Marri said Al Neyadi misses his family and wants to see them. Al Marri said he was optimistic that Al Neyadi would give a positive response if he was asked to continue in space for another six months. "I think he enjoyed himself. He really did work hard. It's a very special experience. At the same time, he has his family here. They miss him, and he misses them. So, it's time to come home."

Al Neyadi, a father to three girls and three boys, named

# A hero's welcome awaits Sultan of Space in the UAE



Sultan Al Neyadi before the launch to the International Space Station from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, in February, Reuters

## PRIDE OF THE FAMILY AND NATION, SAYS AL NEYADI'S MOTHER

As UAE astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi prepares for the SpaceX Dragon capsule's scheduled splashdown off Florida's coast, his mother expressed gratitude for his achievements and credited wise leaders for paving the path to success.

"Sultan has brought immense pride to our family and our nation with his achievements," she said.

Sultan's uncle celebrated his feats in a heartfelt poem, symbolising the nation's inspiration.

Sultan's father shared a video message, heralding his son's historic mission. Hours before his return, Sultan thanked the team behind his six-month ISS journey. The nation awaits his safe return, proud of his achievements.

**I think he enjoyed himself. He really did work hard. It's a very special experience. At the same time, he has his family here. They miss him, and he misses them. So, it's time to come home."**

**Salem Humaid Al Marri**  
| Director General, MBRSC

one of his sons Hazzaa, in honour of Hazzaa Al Mansoori, the UAE's first astronaut and his backup for this mission.

Al Mansoori said he felt very special when he heard that Al Neyadi had named his first boychild after him a few months after he returned from his 2019 space exploration flight.

"I told my wife that now

we need to name our next baby boy Sultan, hopefully we will," he said.

### Splashdown risky

Meanwhile, Al Marri acknowledged the inherent risks involved in astronauts splashing down to the ocean, regardless of the industry's past successes.

"It is a risky business. It is difficult, and there are always many things that can go wrong," he said.

Al Marri pointed out that the launch and landing are the stages with the highest potential risks during human space flights.

However, Nasa and SpaceX teams have extensive experience in mitigating these risks, including thorough checks of the spacecraft and the readiness of both the crew and rescue teams and weather conditions, he highlighted.

Al Marri said that re-entry to Earth and ocean landing

carry an elevated level of risk "But I think things will be going great," he said, expressing confidence that all necessary precautions have been taken for a safe return of Crew-6.

### No health concerns

Dr Hanan Al Suwaidi, flight surgeon for the UAE Astronaut Programme, praised Al Neyadi's physical and mental health during the mission, with no current health concerns. She discussed the rehabilitation process that astronauts undergo upon their return to ensure their long-term well-being and fitness.

"We don't have any current concerns about his health," she said. "We actually hear from Nasa, that he's a very special astronaut," she said, speaking highly about Al Neyadi's contributions.

She also acknowledged the contribution of Nasa and the support from the MBRSC, the UAE authorities.

## Smooth undocking caps 6-month stint

'Space, this is not a goodbye. I will see you later,' Al Neyadi says in farewell note

**DUBAI**  
BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN  
Senior Reporter

**E**xactly six months after they floated into the International Space Station (ISS), Nasa SpaceX Crew-6 including UAE astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi on Sunday undocked from the ISS for their 17-hour journey back to Earth.

This mission marked a significant milestone in Arab space exploration, featuring a historic spacewalk and over 200 scientific experiments.

### 'Not a goodbye'

In his farewell message from the ISS, Al Neyadi expressed gratitude and a sense of adventure, stating that it was not a goodbye to space but rather a "see you later" message.

"Space, this is not a goodbye. I will see you later, whether on a new mission to the ISS or a further destination," he wrote.

He also thanked the country and everyone who supported his stint in space.

Al Neyadi acknowledged the dedicated teams that made his historic mission possible, emphasising their unwavering dedication and hard work.

### Last-minute work

Before the undocking from the ISS, Al Neyadi and his fellow crew members conducted last-minute checks on the Dragon spacecraft named Endeavour. The crew members

**The Dragon's hatch was closed at 1:19pm UAE time, and the space station's hatch was closed at 1:28pm. The undocking sequence began at 3:02pm, involving the retraction of 12 hooks.**

suited up for their journey back to Earth, wearing custom-fitted SpaceX spacesuits and helmets.

The undocking procedures began with the closure of hatches between the spacecraft and the space station, followed by depressurisation of the vestibule between them. The Dragon's hatch was closed at 1:19pm UAE time, and the space station's hatch was closed at 1:28pm. The undocking sequence commenced at 3:02pm, involving the retraction of 12 hooks.

### Successful undocking

After a successful depart burn, the Dragon undocked from the ISS's Harmony module at 3:05pm UAE time. The spacecraft executed departure burns, moving away from the space station.

Inside the Dragon, Commander Stephen Bowen expressed gratitude to those aboard the ISS, while Nasa astronaut Frank Rubio bid farewell, anticipating a safe splashdown in about 17 hours.

At 3:17pm, the spacecraft exited the keep-out sphere around the ISS, and the crew began to remove their spacesuits as they settled in for the journey home. The Dragon Endeavour is expected to splash down off the coast of Florida, near Tampa, at 8:17am UAE time.



In his farewell message from the ISS, astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi expressed gratitude and a sense of adventure.

## Readapting to life on earth will take 3 weeks, post-space return

Exercise central to rehabilitation plan for Al Neyadi, says flight surgeon Dr Suwaidi

**DUBAI**  
BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN  
Senior Reporter

**U**AE astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi is expected to follow a three-week schedule to readapt to life on Earth once he returns from space, his colleague and the first Emirati astronaut Hazzaa Al Mansoori has revealed.

Al Neyadi, along with Nasa SpaceX Crew-6, is scheduled to splash down off the coast

of Florida this morning after completing the longest Arab space mission that lasted for six months aboard the International Space Station (ISS).

### Planned schedule

As per standard Nasa protocol, the post-mission phase for astronauts involves a carefully planned schedule to ensure their physical and psychological well-being during the reintegration process.

In a video shared by the Dubai Media Office on social media, pioneering UAE astronaut Al Mansoori, who became the first Arab Increment Lead for an ISS expedition during Al Neyadi's Expedition 69, explained that Al Neyadi will have

**Al Neyadi will continue to take part in scientific experiments after his arrival to shed light into how humans readapt after returning from space.**

an assigned schedule for approximately three weeks during the post-mission phase.

He said Dr Hanan Al Suwaidi, flight surgeon, UAE Astronaut Programme at the Mohammed Bin Rashid Centre (MBRSC) in Dubai, along with the doctors at Nasa and specialised doctors will prepare a schedule for Sultan that suits his health status.

"Machines aboard the ISS are used to help astronauts stay fit. After returning to Earth,

it takes some time to readjust to the gravity environment which can be a gradual process. Sometimes, it takes days or weeks," explained Al Mansoori.

Al Neyadi will continue to take part in scientific experiments after his arrival. "There is also a second part that involves scientific experiments. We aren't done yet. Many researchers are interested in studying how humans readapt



**WATCH:** A glimpse into the health-suiting schedule for Al Neyadi in the post-space phase

after returning from space. They have a database which they use to compare data from former current, or future astronauts, and they collect all the information [and study]," Al Mansoori added.

### Medical monitoring

Meanwhile, Dr Al Suwaidi gave a glimpse into the medical monitoring of Al Neyadi. "Before returning [to Earth], there is a different programme

[for astronauts]," she pointed out in another video.

"Exercising is one of the most important things during this period.

Sport exercises are important for preserving the key organs in the human body, namely bones and muscles. This makes it easier for astronauts to start rehabilitation programmes and return to normal situations after their return," she explained.

"The exercise programme will continue with a duration of around two hours per day and there will be some changes in the weights lifted prior to returning."

Dr Al Suwaidi said astronauts are monitored on a weekly basis to ensure their readiness.