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Sultan set for first Arab spacewalk

Hamdan takes to Twitter to announce April 28 as date for historic event

DUBAI
BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Senior Reporter



■ Sultan Al Neyadi

It is confirmed! UAE astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi is set to become the first Arab to do a spacewalk. This was revealed by Shaikh Hamdan Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and President of the Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) yesterday.

Taking to Twitter, Shaikh Hamdan announced Al Neyadi's preparation for the historic milestone on April 28. He also revealed that this will make the UAE the 10th country in the world to undertake Extravehicular Activity (EVA) on the International Space Station (ISS).

"Inspired by Zayed's ambi-

tions, today our ambassador to space @Astro_Alneyadi is preparing for the first spacewalk by an Arab astronaut on 28 April. This will make the UAE the 10th country to undertake Extravehicular Activity (EVA) on the @Space_Station," Shaikh Hamdan tweeted.

EVA spacesuit

He also shared images of Al Neyadi checking out what looks like an EVA spacesuit used for spacewalk as well as images of astronauts in EVA suits right outside the ISS.

SEE ALSO P2

AL NEYADI'S SPACEWALK TO TAKE OVER 6 HOURS

April 28 milestone will make UAE the 10th country to perform a spacewalk on the ISS

DUBAI
BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Senior Reporter

The Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) yesterday said UAE astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi will be part of the 262nd spacewalk on April 28 as part of maintenance work on the International Space Station (ISS).

This means that the UAE will become the 10th country to perform a spacewalk on the ISS.

The fifth spacewalk out of the ISS this year and the third for Expedition 69 is a momentous occasion as Nasa Flight Engineer Stephen Bowen and Al Neyadi work together to carry out essential tasks, MBRSC said.

Objectives of the spacewalk

The highly anticipated Extravehicular Activity (EVA) is projected to last approximately six-and-a-half hours. One of the primary objectives of the EVA will be to retrieve a crucial Radio Frequency Group unit, which is an integral component of the ISS's S-Band communications string. This essential piece of communications equipment will be returned to Earth on a SpaceX flight.

In addition to the primary task, Al Neyadi and his team will be working on a series of preparatory tasks related to the solar array installation EVAs planned for later in the mission.

The solar arrays play a pivotal role in providing clean and renewable energy to support the various experiments, systems, and daily operations on board.



Courtesy: MBRSC

■ One of the primary objectives of Sultan Al Neyadi's (inset) spacewalk will be to retrieve a Radio Frequency Group unit, which is an integral component of the ISS's S-Band communications.

Hamad Obaid Al Mansoori, Chairman of MBRSC, said, "Sultan Al Neyadi's historic spacewalk is a testament to the UAE's unwavering dedication to advancing the frontiers of space exploration and fostering international cooperation."

Proud moment for Arabs

Salem Humaid Al Marri, Director-General, MBRSC, said, "As the first Arab astronaut set to perform a spacewalk, Sultan Al Neyadi's milestone exemplifies our commitment to pioneering space exploration and contributing to the global space community."

Al Neyadi had trained for more than 55 hours at Nasa's Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory (NBL) at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas in preparation for spacewalks. During his time at the NBL, Al Neyadi underwent nine runs of six hours each, training underwater simulating spacewalks utilising the full mock-up of the ISS.

What is an EVA suit?

The spacesuit that is worn while doing the EVA is called an EVA suit. It is different from the EVA (In-Vehicle Activity) spacesuit worn in the spaceflight to the ISS on the capsule.

According to Nasa, a fully equipped EVA used during spacewalks is a miniature spaceship shaped like a human body. Spacewalking astronauts face radiation, dust, debris, and extreme temperatures.

Earlier, the UAE's first astronaut to go to the ISS, Hazzaa Al Mansoori had explained how dangerous and yet amazing an experience a spacewalk is.

"You have to be methodical and precise as the environment of weightlessness is really very tricky. A very light move can give you unpredictable movements, maybe like pushing you away from the station," he said.

AL NEYADI GIVES TOUR OF ARABIAN PENINSULA

UAE astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi gave a stunning 'space tour' of the Arabian Peninsula from the International Space Station (ISS) to his followers back on Earth. Taking to social media, Al Neyadi shared a video that lasted for over four and a half minutes to show the beautiful daylight views of the region as seen from the orbital laboratory as it flew over at 27,000km/h. "From Iraq to Muscat, let me take you on a tour of the Arabian Peninsula in the morning from space," Al Neyadi posted.

Al Neyadi began the video showing a map displaying the location of the microgravity space station over the region while passing over the Arabian Peninsula. "Today, we will try to cover most of the Gulf region's cities," he said as the camera points to a vast swathe of desert surrounded by the sea. "Zooming in, I think we can see Riyadh," he says and pans the camera to add "we can now see Iraq and Kuwait." Moving on, he spots Bahrain with its capital Manama and Qatar with its capital Doha.

"And this is my nation, the UAE," Al Neyadi says proudly and moves to another window to show a clearer view.

Panning across the country, Al Neyadi says: "We can see the UAE and the capital Abu Dhabi, followed by Dubai and its iconic Palm Jumeirah, Palm Jebel Ali and the other emirates."

His visual space tour ends with a view of Muscat.



Courtesy: MBRSC

■ Al Neyadi shared daylight views of the Arabian Peninsula as seen from the ISS as it travelled at over at 27,000km/h.



Watch the video of the Arabian Peninsula