

# UAE President and Mohammed bin Rashid leads the nation in celebrating Sultan Al Neyadi's homecoming

◆ 18 September 2023 | 📍 Abu Dhabi

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President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan has hailed the return of Sultan Al Neyadi as a moment of national pride for the UAE. His Highness the President was joined by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, to witness the triumphant homecoming of the UAE astronaut.

Their Highnesses greeted Sultan Al Neyadi upon his arrival at the new Abu Dhabi International Airport following a flight from the US, where he has been since returning from his historic six-month mission aboard the International Space Station. In honour of his return, the UAE's Al Fursan aerobatic team performed a flypast over the airport after his flight landed.

Their Highnesses Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed and Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid spent time in conversation with Sultan Al Neyadi – accompanied by his father and three of his children – and discussed aspects of the mission and his experience during his time in space. They congratulated him for completing the longest ever space flight by an Arab astronaut and becoming the first Arab to perform a spacewalk. Their Highnesses hailed Sultan as an inspiration to young people across the UAE and the world, and remarked that his pioneering achievement reflected the boundless ambitions of the nation.

His Highness the President noted that the people of the UAE are united in pride for the remarkable achievement, while His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid described Sultan's mission as not only a notable milestone in the UAE's scientific advancements, but also a reflection of the nation's priority of investing in its people, which began under the Founding Fathers and continues today.

The UAE astronaut thanked Their Highnesses for their ongoing support for the UAE's space programme, and then presented His Highness the President with a UAE flag that had accompanied him throughout his 186-day mission to the ISS.

Their Highnesses Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed and Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid then addressed team members from the Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre, accompanied by Sultan Al Neyadi and other members of the UAE Astronaut Programme. Their Highnesses thanked all those responsible for the success of this most recent mission and commended the teams involved in previous missions – including Hazza Al Mansouri's trip to the ISS, the Emirates Lunar Mission, and the Mars Mission 'Hope Probe' – and those working on the forthcoming Mission to the Asteroid Belt and the Mars 2117 programme.

His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed referenced the late Sheikh Zayed, who instilled in his people the determination to not let obstacles stand in the way of progress. His Highness the President highlighted that the UAE has made great strides in

the field of space exploration, and gave thanks for the vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid for advancing the UAE's capabilities in this area. He also stressed the importance of investing today in the future progress of the UAE and the world, and developing the nation's knowledge economy and the skills of its young people in the fields of science and technology. The President praised the unwavering commitment, expertise, and dedication of the talented teams driving the UAE's progress in the space sector, and reiterated the leadership's trust in the abilities of the nation's youth and its steadfast commitment to continue supporting scientific progress for the benefit of humanity.

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid noted that the UAE Astronaut Programme reinforces the country's vision based on investing in its people, empowering them, supporting their potential, and enhancing their expertise and capabilities, all of which form the basis of previous and future progress.

His Highness the Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai stated that, with God's grace, the UAE aims to develop more young men and women as astronauts to enable further scientific research and exploration, both in space and on Earth. He remarked that the leadership remains committed to investing in the people of the UAE and empowering its sons and daughters with faith and trust.

To mark the homecoming, a large reception ceremony was held at the new Abu Dhabi Airport terminal, celebrating Sultan Al Neyadi's accomplishments and his return to the UAE. The ceremony was attended by school children dressed in astronaut flight suits, government employees, and members of the public. Sultan was greeted by a performance of the traditional Al Ayyala dance and the audience waving UAE flags and applauding, demonstrating the depth of pride and celebration felt by the people of the nation.

The welcome reception was also attended by His Highness Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Presidential Court, H.H. Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, H.H. Sheikh Tahnoun bin Mohammed Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi Ruler's Representative in Al Ain Region, H.H. Sheikh Hazza bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Ruler of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, H.H. Lt. General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, H.H. Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, H.H. Sheikh Zayed bin Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Chairman of the National Media Office, Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Tahnoun Al Nahyan, Advisor for Special Affairs at the Ministry of Presidential Court, Mohammad bin Abdullah Al Gergawi, Minister of Cabinet Affairs, and Sarah Al Amiri, Minister of State for Public Education and Advanced Technology and the Chairwoman of the UAE Space Agency along with a number of senior officials.