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A Motivate Connect Publication

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## FOREWORD

Dear readers,

I begin this issue by congratulating Hazza Al Mansouri, who will make history by becoming the first Emirati in space, on 25 September, when he joins a mission to the International Space Station.

Hazza and his colleague Sultan Al Neyadi were selected from over 4,000 applicants to join the UAE Astronaut Programme. Since their selection last year, the pair have undergone intense and grueling training to prepare for the mission.

Previously a pilot with the UAE Air Force, Hazza has commented that as a child he dreamed of becoming an astronaut. That dream is now within a few months' touching distance.

Both outstanding young men – Sultan will continue training with the mission's back-up team – are role models for the UAE's youth. Their determination, hard work and bravery proves that, just like space, ambition should have no limit.

Space exploration will improve life on Earth by advancing scientific knowledge and discovery, driving technological development and providing economic opportunities. Therefore, the recent formation of the Arab Group for Space Collaboration is another welcome step to advance the region's space sector, and once again the UAE is leading from the front. The group's inaugural project will be a

satellite to monitor climate change, which will be developed by Arab scientists here in the UAE.

The world around us is changing rapidly too, with the advance of artificial intelligence into our everyday lives. Aimed at positioning the UAE as a global leader in AI by 2031, the new National Artificial Intelligence Strategy once again sees the UAE embracing the future.

It is the thirst for knowledge that is driving our march to a future full of new technologies, and I'm delighted to report that entries for this year's Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Award (MBRKA) are coming in thick and fast from all over the world. The closing date for submissions is 30 June, after which the Advisory Committee of the Award and the Board of Trustees will begin the difficult task of shortlisting the finalists.

But while we shape a new world through creativity, invention and knowledge development, let us also reflect on our traditional values as we spend time with family and loved ones during this holy month.

Wishing you a blessed Ramadan.

#### Jamal bin Huwairib

CEO of Mohammed bin Rashid  
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