

NATION



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“I remember it was my first day in space and I see the comet after the sunset. I watch it for about 10 to 15 seconds, it got lower and lower at the lim of the earth.” **Don Thomas, retired Nasa astronaut**

UAE’s Mars city plan is ‘very achievable’



Former Nasa astronaut Don Thomas says it will be a proud moment for the UAE when the Hope satellite orbits Mars with a national flag on its side by 2020. Thomas was in Dubai to attend the Think Science Fair on Wednesday. — Photo by Mohammad Mustafa Khan

Sarwat Nasir

DUBAI — A US veteran astronaut, who has done 692 orbits of Earth, said it’s not long until an Emirati ventures into space after seeing the progress the UAE has made so far in space exploration.

Don Thomas, a retired Nasa astronaut, said the UAE “achieves whatever it sets its eyes” on and it will be a proud moment for the country when the Hope satellite orbits Mars with a UAE flag on its side by 2020. Thomas has carried out four space missions from 1994 to 1997. He has accomplished a total of 1,040 space hours and has done 692 orbits of Earth.

He said the UAE’s plan of a mini city on Mars is also “very achievable” and it’s possible the country will have their goal accomplished

692
orbits of earth was done
by Don Thomas

much before their initial target year, 2117.

“I’m pretty excited about the UAE space agency and it wasn’t even launched a long time ago. They’ve got great plans and I’m most excited about the Mars mission. It will arrive there in their 50th anniversary and that’s such a powerful way to get the attention of the young students,” Thomas said.

“I think it’s going to capture their imagination when you have a spacecraft orbiting Mars and it

has the flag of the UAE on the side, it’ll be great for everyone in this great nation, especially for the students.

“Everything I’ve seen here, whatever you go for, you accomplish. So, if you want to get Emirati students up in space, you’re on good track to do that.”

Thomas said that the UAE’s plan to build a mini city on Mars by the year 2117 is achievable and considering all of the progress the country has made in such a short period of time, it can reach that goal sooner than expected.

He said the world has the necessary technology to build a permanent base on Mars in the years to come.

“It’s achievable. I think we have the technology right now and were developing them further and whatever you need to do for permanent base I think it can be

1,040
space hours
accomplished by him

accomplished. In 100 years, we will surpass that probably. It seems that it is so incredible you can do that and in hundred years, but with the progress made so far, you will see it happening even quicker,” Thomas said.

Thomas was in the UAE for the Think Science Fair. He has been in the country in the previous years, where he did a tour in a number of UAE schools, sharing tales of his time in Space and answering questions.

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Dubai is most loved place from space

Dubai is possibly the most photographed place from space than any other place on planet Earth, former Nasa astronaut Don Thomas said.

He told *Khaleej Times* that astronauts “love taking photos of Dubai” as the Palm and World Islands are very eye-catching. Shane Kimbrough and Tim Peake are some among many astronauts who have tweeted pictures of the Palm and World Islands from space. Millions of people shared these photos after they were tweeted by the astronauts. “There are more pictures taken of Dubai from the International Space Station, maybe, more than any other place on planet Earth. You can see the Palm Islands and the World Islands from up there. It is so spectacular to see,” he said.

“When I flew in my missions 20 years ago, they didn’t exist. But I still fly over the Arabian Gulf and I remember looking down and seeing black dots — the oil tankers. They aren’t there anymore. The Palm Islands and World Islands are very eye-catching, so I know they are heavily photographed from up there.”

Astronaut Shane Kimbrough tweeted a picture of Dubai’s Palm

and World Islands during the orbital night time in March. He wrote: “Good evening Dubai! Nice view of the city and Palm Island from @Space_Station.”

In February, he had also posted a day time picture of Dubai. He tweeted: “Hello Dubai! The Palm Islands look amazing from @Space_Station.”

Astronaut Chris Hadfield tweeted a pic of Dubai in March, 2016. He said: “Self-awareness: Dubai & the UAE from space, and onwards to infinity.”

Astronaut Scott Kelly is also known to post several photos of Dubai from the International Space Station on social media.

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Scares and special memories

Don Thomas was an astronaut for almost two decades, however, there were moments when he thought he wouldn’t make it back to planet Earth.

“All four of my missions, when we were launching, there is a piece of you that’s scared. I think you should be scared, sitting on a rocket with explosive fuel,” Thomas said.

“During launch, a little piece of me is scared. One moment, I experienced on one of my flights, we had just done an engine burn and we were returning to earth, and one of my crew members said the word ‘I smell smoke’.

Smelling smoke in space is really bad. You can’t open the windows in the space or let it out. We were falling back to Earth, so the timing couldn’t have been worst. “Nothing bad happened, but in

those 15 to 20 seconds, when I heard those words, it’s the most scared I have ever been in my life. I didn’t know whether I would make it back to earth again.”

Although there has been a few scares, Thomas also remembers his first day in space where he saw a comet set. He said that day went on to become his most memorable day in space.

He said: “I remember it was my first day in space and I see the comet after the sunset. I watch it for about 10 to 15 seconds, it got lower and lower at the lim of the earth and I was just staring at the blackness of space and I said ‘wow, I’ve just seen a comet set’.

“I’ve seen sunsets and moonsets, but to watch a comet set was really special.”

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4 UAE teachers to get US space training

DUBAI — Teaching often has the best impact when it goes beyond the four walls of a classroom and software and aerospace solutions firm Honeywell is keen on ensuring that happens.

The American company is sending four UAE-based teachers to take part in the Honeywell Educators at Space Academy (HESA) held at the US Space and Rocket Centre in June.

The four teachers were honoured at a special Flight Suit Ceremony at this year’s Think Science Connect fair at the Dubai

World Trade Centre. Buthaina Abandah from Applied Technology High School, Abu Dhabi, Lara Chouman from Al Itihad Private School in Dubai, Ghaleb Wahbi from Al Khaleej National School in Dubai and Siji Sudhakaran from the Abu Dhabi Indian School Branch 1 in Al Wathba are the lucky teachers.

Created by Honeywell and the USSRC in 2004, HESA is a scholarship programme that inspires middle school math and science teachers to become more effective educators in Science, Technology,

3M
students have been
reached and inspired by
HESA alumni since 2004

Engineering and Math (STEM).

During the five-day, all expenses paid training, educators learn how to reinvigorate their classrooms with ideas, lessons, and other materials to create an unforgettable learning experi-

ence for the next generation of scientists in the UAE.

The four UAE-based teachers were recognised at the ceremony by Don Thomas, Nasa astronaut (retired); Dr Deborah Barnhart, CEO of the US Space & Rocket Center; Kerry Kennedy, director of Honeywell Global Corporate Citizenship, as well as representatives from Emirates Foundation.

Since 2004, more than 3 million students have been reached and inspired by 2,776 math and science HESA alumni from 56 countries.

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Kerry Kennedy honoured the teachers at a ceremony in Dubai.

حكومة دبي
GOVERNMENT OF DUBAI

هيئة كهرباء ومياه دبي
Dubai Electricity & Water Authority

Invites Tender for TENDER RFX 2131700033 ENTERPRISE INFRASTRUCTURE END-TO-END MONITORING SOLUTION FOR DEWA NETWORK OPERATION CENTER(NOC)

The Tender Documents are available online through DEWA website <http://www.dewa.gov.ae> in the Public Area Folder of corresponding Tender (RFX) in DEWA Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) through the link <https://srm.dewa.gov.ae/irj/portal/anonymous> or under the link e-services / Tenders / List of Tender Documents, payable by locally issued credit cards and alternatively with the Main Cashier at the Head Office, Dubai Electricity & Water Authority, Dubai, U. A. E. on all days (Sunday through Thursday) during 8:00 am to 2:00 pm on payment of Dhs.500/- (Dirhams Five Hundred) in cash, which is non-refundable in both the cases.

Tenders must be valid for acceptance for 120 days from the closing date of the Tender.

Tenderers are required to submit their offer online through our SRM System.

A covering letter must be accompanied by a Tender Bond (both in a sealed envelope) for an amount of not less than 5% of the total Tendered Price. The Tender Bond shall be strictly in accordance with the Authority’s prescribed specimen and shall be valid for 150 calendar days following the last date fixed for receipt of Tender.

In case of manual submission, for any technical reason, and also for Online Submission, one Master completed Tender with Original Tender Bond and copy of the completed tender document in Five numbers in CD-ROM, should be enclosed in a plain cover and red wax-sealed, clearly marked “TENDER RFX 2131700033 – ENTERPRISE INFRASTRUCTURE END-TO-END MONITORING SOLUTION FOR DEWA NETWORK OPERATION CENTER(NOC)”, should be addressed to The Chairman, Board of Directors, Dubai Electricity & Water Authority and delivered into the Tender Room at the Authority’s Head Office near Wafi Shopping Mall in Zabeel East, Dubai.

The scanned copy of the Original Tender Bond must be uploaded in the Vendors’ earmarked collaboration Folder (C Folder) in SRM system.

The closing date for receipt of completed Tender is 11:00 am of Thursday, the 18th May, 2017.

For any further queries, the office of the Senior Manager-Contracts may be contacted.

Participants in the Tender should submit the names of their Local Partners/Sponsors, having a valid Dubai Trade Licence along with a photocopy of their current licence.

This advertisement is a complementary part of the Tender Documents.

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Abu Dhabi to host education technology summit next week

Staff Reporter

ABU DHABI — About 1,600 education policy makers, leaders and experts from over 35 countries will gather in the Capital next week for the Bett Middle East Leadership Summit, a leading global education technology exhibition and congress.

The summit will be organised under the patronage of Sheikh Hazza bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice-Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council, in partnership with the Abu Dhabi Education Council (Adec) and Microsoft from April 25 to 26 at the Dusit Thani hotel in Abu Dhabi.

The summit will witness regional senior education leaders and esteemed global speakers come together under a theme of “Igniting Excitement through Innovation in Learning”.

Featuring keynote addresses,

The summit

> **What** — Bett Middle East Leadership Summit
> **Where** — Dusit Thani hotel in Abu Dhabi
> **When** — April 25-26

discussions and debates on a wide range of topics affecting educational transformation, the summit will include the latest trends in STEM education, educational equality and access, employability and 21st century skills, and big data.

“As part of Adec’s ambition to offer quality education for students across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, and in efforts to graduate a competent and well-equipped workforce of pioneers with experience in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics, the education council continues

to seek some of the best trends in education as per 21st century teaching and learning skills,” said Dr Ali Rashid Al Nuaimi, Adec Director-General.

“Digital transformation is often shortsighted and seen specific to technology with focus on acquiring computers, whiteboards or even electronic books. But its far more than that — it’s about the way in which people teach and learn,” said Ahmed Ameen Ashour, education director, Microsoft Gulf.

“Microsoft believes schools must envision how to improve learning outcomes and curricula that can empower students with the skills they need for future. And Bett Middle East is incredible platform for us to drive this conversation and share how we can truly transform experiences for teachers and students to achieve more.”

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