

United Arab Emirates movement into the private spaceflight industry

Drew Edwards

The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying the website 'SPACE TRAVEL EXPLORATION AND TOURISM'. The main article is titled 'United Arab Emirates Movement Into The Private Spaceflight Industry' by Drew Edwards, dated July 14, 2010. The article text reads: 'In February 2006 a huge move took place that would launch the United Arab Emirates into the private spaceflight industry. On that day in the beginning of a new year, a company known as Space Adventures announced its plans to build a \$265 Million spaceport in the warm desert of Ras Al-Khaimah in a joint ventures with an Emirati known as Prodea Systems. This story is just one of many coming from the United Arab Emirates in this new field of space tourism. Investors from all over the United Arab Emirates are stepping up to support this new industry and secure their nations right to this new commercialization. Another prime example is the most well known company in private spaceflight, Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic. Virgin Galactic recently signed a deal with Aabar Investments, giving the largest Emirate of this nation, Abu Dhabi, the exclusive rights to use Virgin Galactic's SpaceShip program. Even with Abu Dhabi being the official middle east home to Virgin Galactic's flights, the people of Dubai are stepping up to take part in Virgin Galactic as well. One of the first passengers signed up for the ride is Dubai resident, Namira Salim, who no doubt bought her ticket Sharaf Travel in Dubai, one of two official space booking agents in the Africa-Middle East sector.'

Other visible elements include a sidebar with 'Ras Al Khaimah Official Website', 'Dubai Job Offers', and 'A New Job in the UAE?'. A right sidebar features a 'la Caixa' advertisement for a 'DEPÓSITO A 12 MESES' with a 3% TAE rate, and a 'LAUNCH PAD' section with various space news headlines like 'Sea Launch Signs Launch Agreement With AsiaSat' and 'MARS DAILY'.

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Aside from Virgin Galactic and Space Adventures, there have been other Emirati investments and involvements in private spaceflight. **One unknown investor from the United Arab Emirates has recently investested money into the space [hotel](#) known as Galactic Suite.** Additionally Islamic Astronomer David McNaughton has been helping the field of private spaceflight as well.

Not only has he used [scientific](#) reasoning to open up astronomy and space to Islamic minds, but he was the very person to teach Namira Salim to fly in Dubai.

Space tourism isnt the only push into space happening in the United Arab Emirates, government and university space programs are also increasing in the nation. The UAE has recently launched its first satellite, DubaiSat-1 and is preparing to launch DubaiSat-2 as well as a satellite from Abu Dhabi known as YahSat-1. Before you think the spacerace is just a competition bewteen Dubai and Abu Dhabi, you must know that NASA has also selected 12 students from all over the UAE to [train](#) at several of it's facilities.

Through this all, one thing is certain - the United Arab Emirates will be playing a huge role in private spaceflight in the coming years.

If you own or plan on starting your own spaceflight company, I suggest moving to the UAE, where the fuel is cheaper and the industry is booming. Only time will tell the UAE's true role in this historic industry, but I see it as being a big one. A big role for a small country.