



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

First Saudi Woman among Visitors to the International Space Station

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Two private astronauts from Saudi Arabia, including the nation's first woman, arrived at the International Space Station (ISS) on Monday after taking off from Florida on Sunday.

Rayyanah Barnawi is a stem cell researcher. She is the first Saudi woman to go to space. She and Ali al-Qarni, a military airplane pilot, became the first people from their country to go to space since 1985.

Two Americans were also on the SpaceX Dragon spacecraft. SpaceX is the company started by businessman Elon Musk.

The private group will stay on the ISS for one week before returning to Earth.

After reaching orbit, Barnawi said: "Hello from outer space. It feels amazing to be viewing Earth from this **capsule**."

John Shoffner also was on board. He is an American who owns a car racing team. The group's leader is Peggy Whitson, a former NASA astronaut who spent over 600 days on the ISS.

"It was a **phenomenal** ride," Whitson said.

Axiom Space purchased the ride from SpaceX and organized the trip. The company would not say the cost of the trip, but earlier price lists noted a cost of \$55 million per person.

Once arriving at the ISS, NASA has a price list, too. It costs \$2,000 per person, per day for food. Sleeping materials, such as a sleeping bag, are \$1,500. The cost to transport other items such as research tools are about \$20,000 per kilogram each way.

The astronauts will conduct experiments, talk with students, and photograph Earth while on the ISS.

NASA once said it would not **participate** in space tourism. However, it is now running two trips per year. Russia's space agency also permits space tourists.

After the launch, SpaceX's first stage **booster** of the Falcon 9 rocket landed back at Cape Canaveral eight minutes later.

"It was a very, very **exciting** day," said Matt Onder of Axiom.

I'm Dan Friedell.

Dan Friedell adapted this story for Learning English based on a report by the Associated Press.

Words in This Story

capsule *-n.* the part of a spacecraft in which people live and work

phenomenal *-adj.* (informal) very good

participate *-v.* to take part

booster *-n.* part of a rocket that provides power for launch and then is no longer needed

exciting *-adj.* very interesting

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