

# [UAE, Bahrain to launch joint nanosatellite to ISS on Tuesday](#)

Author:

Sun, 2021-12-19 22:32

LONDON: The UAE and Bahrain are set to launch a joint nanosatellite to the International Space Station on Tuesday, representing a major milestone of cooperation in space science, technology and engineering between the two countries.

"Light-1 will take off onboard a SpaceX CRS-24 flight on board of a Falcon 9 rocket after undergoing rigorous safety and environmental tests for thermal and vibration, communication systems and more," said a statement on Emirati state news agency WAM.

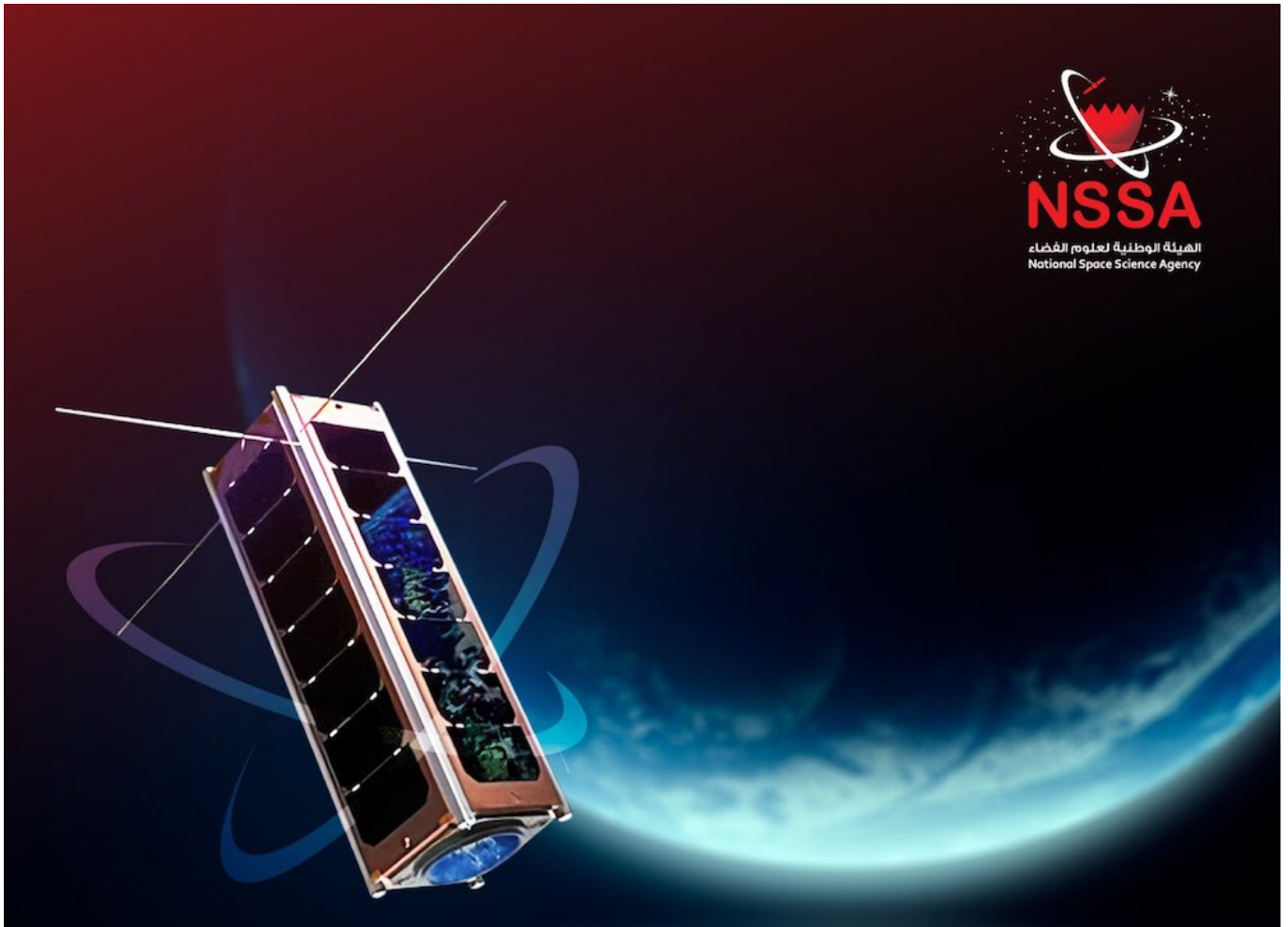
The nanosatellite will be deployed from the Japanese Experiment Module in the ISS into orbit, supervised by the Japanese Aerospace Space Agency.

It was built and designed in collaboration between the UAE Space Agency and Bahrain's National Space Science Agency.

The nanosatellite's name was inspired by a book written by Bahrain's King Hamad called "The First Light," which recounts key points in the kingdom's history and symbolizes the country's growth and scientific progress.

The research spacecraft was developed by a team of leading Bahraini and Emirati engineers and scientists in the UAE, made up of 23 students, including nine Bahrainis and 14 Emiratis from Khalifa University and New York University Abu Dhabi.

"After reaching its orbit around Earth, Light-1 will monitor and study terrestrial gamma ray flashes from thunderstorms and cumulus clouds," the statement said, adding that it will be the first study of its kind in the region and New York University will lead the science data analysis aspect of the mission.



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Saudi, Bahraini naval forces hone combat skills

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[\*\*Yemen: 100 Houthis killed, vehicles\*\*](#)

# destroyed in coalition air raids in Marib

Sun, 2021-12-19 20:42

AL-MUKALLA: The Arab coalition announced on Sunday that it had carried out 19 air raids over the past day, killing 100 Houthi fighters and destroying 14 military vehicles in Marib province.

On the ground, heavy fighting between government troops and Houthis broke out on Saturday and Sunday outside the city of Marib, local official and media reports said.

The heaviest fighting was recorded in Juba district, south of Marib, where the Houthis intensified attacks in a bid to overwhelm the government's defenses on a strategic mountain range that overlooks parts of the city.

The Houthis failed to register any territorial gains on Sunday and were forced to retreat after suffering heavy losses, officials said.

Thousands of combatants and civilians have been killed since February when the Houthis renewed an offensive to seize control of the energy-rich city, the government's last bastion in the north.

Separately, Iran's ambassador in the Houthi-held Yemeni capital, Sanaa, departed the city on Saturday onboard an Iraqi medical aircraft, the movement's spokesperson and local media said.

Mohammed Abdul Salam said that a successful Iraqi mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia led to the medical evacuation of Hassan Erlo through Sanaa airport, denying media reports about tensions between the movement and Iran and rumors that he was wounded in airstrikes by the Arab coalition.

"An Iranian-Saudi understanding through Baghdad led to the evacuation of the the Iranian ambassador to Sanaa on an Iraqi plane due to his health condition," Salam said on Twitter.

## **FASTFACT**

**The Houthis failed to register any territorial gains on Sunday and were forced to retreat after suffering heavy losses.**

In Tehran, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said that its ambassador was flown back home after contracting COVID-19 during his stay in the capital.

The Wall Street Journal reported on Friday that the Houthis sent a request to the Arab coalition to permit the evacuation of the Iranian ambassador, a move that was interpreted as suggesting a possible rift between the Yemeni rebels

and Iran.

Hassan Erlo, an officer in Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, traveled to Yemen in October last year and was later named as Iran's ambassador to the Houthis.

Yemeni officials and experts believe that Erlo orchestrated the militia's deadly offensive to capture the central city of Marib and also commanded other Iranian, Iraqi and Lebanese officers who provided the rebels with military guidance.





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## [UAE restricts entry of government buildings to COVID-19 vaccinated from Jan. 3](#)

Sun, 2021-12-19 18:10

LONDON: The UAE said it will restrict entry into all government institutions to people vaccinated against coronavirus and those who are exempted from getting the vaccine, state news agency WAM reported on Sunday.



The Ministry of Health and Prevention, in coordination with the National Emergency Crisis and Disaster Management Authority, made the announcement in line with the UAE's COVID-19 recovery drive and efforts to ensure public safety.

"All federal government employees and the public seeking federal government services nationwide are required to follow the Green Pass Protocol on Al Hosn app effective Jan. 3, to have access to federal entities," the statement on WAM said.

Employees and individuals requiring entry into government buildings must take a PCR test every 14 days, to maintain the "green status" in the app. Those who have been exempt from receiving the vaccine must take a PCR test every seven days, while children aged under 16 will not be required to undergo any COVID tests.

The ministry said "unvaccinated individuals and those with 'grey status' on the Al Hosn app will not be allowed access to federal government entities." It also called on the public to obtain the booster shot to ensure raising societal immunity in light of the spread of new COVID-19 variants.



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International banks in UAE to switch to Mon-Fri work week

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## [WHO issues new health alert as omicron virus strain spreads](#)

Sun, 2021-12-19 00:21

CAIRO/BEIRUT: World health chiefs issued a new warning on Saturday over the threat posed by the omicron coronavirus variant, as Egypt recorded its first cases of the strain and Lebanon imposed a curfew on non-vaccinated people.

Omicron has been reported in 89 countries and the number of cases is doubling in one-and-a-half to three days, the World Health Organization said.

The variant is spreading rapidly in countries with high levels of immunity, but it is not known if this is because of its ability to evade immunity, its inherent increased transmissibility or a combination of both, the agency said. "There is still limited data on the clinical severity of omicron," the WHO said.

"More data is needed to understand the severity profile and how severity is impacted by vaccination and existing immunity. There is still no peer-reviewed evidence of vaccine efficacy for omicron."

The WHO warned that hospitals in some countries could not cope.

"Hospital admissions in the UK and South Africa continue to rise, and given rapidly increasing case counts, it is possible that many healthcare systems may become quickly overwhelmed."

In the US, fears are growing in New York of a return to the nightmare of 2020, when the city was the global center of the pandemic. "Omicron happened," New York Mayor Bill de Blasio said.

"And we got to be honest about the fact that it's moving very fast and we have to move faster," he added. In Europe, edgy governments are bringing back restrictions to fight the pandemic, which has killed more than 5 million people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019.

Paris canceled its annual New Year fireworks, EU chief Ursula von der Leyen warned that omicron could be the dominant variant in Europe by mid-January, Ireland is ordering bars and restaurants to close at 8 p.m., Denmark is shutting cinemas and other venues and London Mayor Sadiq Khan declared a "major incident" to allow institutions more leeway in tackling the upsurge.

Egypt recorded its first three cases of omicron on Saturday, at the height of

the economically vital tourist season. Three Egyptians tested positive on their return from overseas, the Health Ministry said. The tourism sector, which suffered under global lockdowns for the past two years, had just started to recover and was counting on end-of-year visitors.

Lebanon has recorded 60 cases of omicron, but Health Minister Firass Abiad said it was “rapidly spreading ... two-and-a-half times faster than the delta variant.”

Security services have imposed a three-week 5 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew for unvaccinated residents, with fines for those who break it.











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Emergence of omicron underscores case for global COVID-19 action plan:  
Experts Europeans reimpose restrictions as omicron sweeps continent

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## [Tear gas fired at opposition supporters in Sudan's capital](#)

Sun, 2021-12-19 00:57

KHARTOUM: Tear gas was fired at thousands of supporters of Sudan's opposition Forces for Freedom and Change movement who had gathered in the capital Khartoum on Friday, witnesses said. The source of the tear gas was unclear. The witnesses told Reuters there was no sign of police officers at the scene. Mass protests erupted following a military coup in October. They have continued following a deal announced on Nov. 21 in which the military reinstated Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, who had been under house arrest. The agreement between Hamdok and the military faces opposition from

protesters who previously saw Hamdok as a symbol of resistance to military rule and denounced it as a betrayal.

## HIGHLIGHT

**Khalid Omar Youssef, minister of Cabinet affairs prior to the coup and prominent opposition figure who was arrested and released after the military took over, was on stage speaking to the crowds when the tear gas was fired.**

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Twitter: “Many Sudanese people continue to demand respect for their basic human rights and to voice their enduring aspiration for a democratic Sudan. The US continues to stand with them.”

Khalid Omar Youssef, minister of Cabinet affairs prior to the coup and prominent opposition figure who was arrested and released after the military took over, was on stage speaking to the crowds when the tear gas was fired. Youssef then tweeted saying that “whether they fire tear gas or bullets on us, they will not silence us ... we will defeat the coup and our people will regain their freedom.”

Other leading opposition figures were scheduled to speak. Live footage aired by Sudan’s Congress party following the tear gas firing showed seats haphazardly scattered.



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Sudan security forces fire tear gas at anti-coup protestersUN 'cautiously

welcomes' Sudan accord amid post-coup erosion of trust