

Missing man in Kowloon City located

A man who went missing in Kowloon City has been located.

Lam Shui-hin, aged 53, went missing after he was last seen at a caring centre on Prince Edward Road West on April 4 morning. Staff of the caring centre made a report to Police on the next day.

The man was located on South Wall Road in Kowloon City in the early morning of April 17. He sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

Chair appointed to the National Mental Capacity Forum

The Ministry of Justice and the Department of Health and Social Care are pleased to announce that Dr Margaret Flynn has been appointed Chair of the National Mental Capacity Forum.

Mideast striving to become a space power

Thu, 2022-04-07 17:29

LONDON: The recent memorandum of understanding between the Saudi Space Commission and the UK's Space Agency, which will see them develop a framework aimed at cooperation in the peaceful use of outer space, is the latest move in an ambitious regional space push.

Among those to get out in front on this is technology supplier SpaceChain, which added to operations in the UK and Asia with the March opening of an office in Abu Dhabi.

Its co-founder and Chief Commercial Officer Nick Trudgen told Arab News that the level of ambition in Saudi Arabia and the UAE was what drew the company to Abu Dhabi.

"We've always seen huge ambition in the UAE, and last year's Mars mission spoke to that, getting everyone's attention," he said.

"I was in Saudi two weeks ago when the MoU with the UK was signed, and they share this level of ambition, and it's coming from both the governments and the private sector as they look not to invest in their agencies but space itself," he added.

"We have projects in the UK and with the European Space Agency. They have more talent, more technical ability, but here (the Middle East) you feel they have more ambitious plans than what we're seeing in Europe."

The UAE became only the third country after the US and Luxembourg to lay legal foundations promoting the exploration and exploitation of what Goldman Sachs termed trillion-dollar asteroids.

The UAE's national point of contact for the Space Generation Council, Sahith Reddy Madara, told Arab News that deep-space asteroid-mining missions are in the works.

"When we talk about the UAE, it has developed an incredibly detailed near-term, medium-term and long-term strategy," Madara said.

"Mining is envisaged as a 20-year project, but before that we'll see satellite launches and further research missions."

This more immediate focus speaks to the belief of Ray Harris, emeritus professor of geography at University College London, who said those looking out to space ignore some central benefits that could be had by the region in its push for the cosmos.

"The Middle East making itself a player on the cultural side, the World Cup for instance, is part of a wider issue of education, research and training," he told Arab News.

"Space is a logical extension of this. Many countries around the world have had their own satellite missions, and Middle Eastern countries had been missing from this until rather recently, but now we're seeing them make this push."

While Harris questions the capacity to commercialize Earth observation, he does not rule out the possibility, noting one Saudi company having sought his help in monitoring whether an oil refinery was being developed in the most efficient manner.

"This is much quicker to achieve via satellite than checking on the ground," he said. "And why isn't remote sensing for environmental issues a mature sector? Few focus on monetizing satellites this way, but given the advances in the tech, with 31-cm pixel resolution, it can provide vital information on deforestation, river pollution, geological structures through which one can infer the location of oil, even monitoring major construction projects."

Given the region's financial clout, the wide range of environmental projects, and the dramatic price drops seen in satellite observation equipment and launch costs, Harris said the Middle East could be the one to make it work.

“And with their focus on the environment, this would further speak to government objectives to see their countries recognized for good global citizenship,” he added.

Trudgen concurs, saying SpaceChain already has a UAE-based partner conducting geo-data analysis on water security, and monitoring of ports and mangroves pointing to the potential benefits the region could find in targeting the remote sensing market.

But to really make a play of this, and the wider potentials offered by space, he said the region must not be complacent when it comes to the Janus-like reality of being an undeveloped market for the space industry.

This means countries can be nimbler in their approach to development, but it also means that in its burgeoning moment it is having to contend with an absence of domestic talent and the requisite levels of education.

“There aren’t the same number of high-quality universities (as in the West), so when it comes to a niche like space, it’s harder to find talent,” said Trudgen.

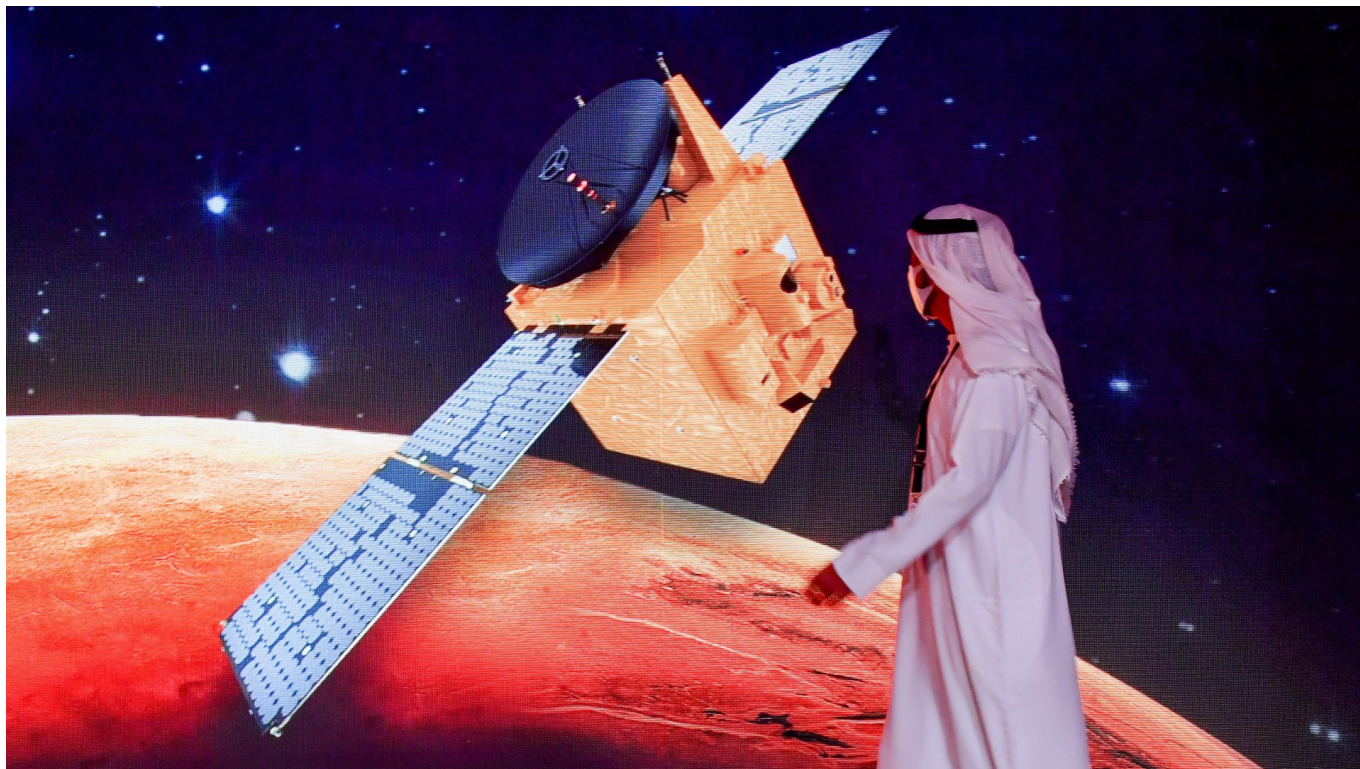
“I know they’re trying to upscale and build a potential workforce of engineers, and this is something they need to focus on to meet their ambitions.”

The SSC is all too aware of this, having founded scholarship programs to fund Saudi students’ attendance at the world’s best universities for space sciences and aerospace engineering.

Partnerships with the stalwarts of space are also assisting, with a NASA spokesperson telling Arab News that it has partnered bilaterally and multilaterally with countries in the region.

Madara said: “The Middle East knows it can’t outsource everything, including education, and while the region may be sending its best and brightest to international universities, the aim is to learn from them and foster faith in domestic institutions through the production of high-quality research. They have centuries on us, but we have the ambition.”

This ambition is regionally endemic, and how far it can go will become clearer with the release of the Saudi space strategy, expected within the year, and Oman’s soon after.



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Saudi Space Commission signs agreement with French counterpart Lockheed Martin sees space as next cooperation area with Saudi Arabia after defense

[Update on monitoring COVID-19 vaccination](#)

In the preceding week till 11.59pm on April 3, the Department of Health (DH) received 40 reports (Note 1) of adverse events following COVID-19 immunisation. No death case was reported by the Hospital Authority (HA) involving individuals who had received vaccines within 14 days before they passed away and had potential association with vaccination.

As at 8pm on April 3, around 15.25 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines had been administered for members of the public. Around 6.53 million people had received at least one dose of vaccine, including 92.2 per cent of the population aged 12 or above. The DH received 7 291 reports (Note 1) of adverse events (0.05 per cent of the total vaccine doses administered). Among

the death cases concerning persons who had been vaccinated, including 94 cases (Note 2) with vaccination within 14 days before they passed away (0.0006 per cent of the total vaccine doses administered), none of the death cases was associated with vaccination.

As at April 3, the Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19 Immunisation had concluded that 53 death cases had no causal relationship with vaccination, and preliminarily considered that 13 cases were not associated with vaccination. Twenty-eight cases are still pending further information for assessment. The Expert Committee considered that there is no unusual pattern identified so far, and will continue to closely monitor the relevant situation and collect data for assessment.

According to information from the HA, during the period from March 7 to April 3, the ratio of death cases out of those without a vaccination record was 686.2 cases for every 100 000 people, whereas the ratio of death cases for those with a vaccination record was 49.8 cases for every 100 000 people. Out of those without a vaccination record, the ratio of death cases with acute stroke or acute myocardial infarction was 16.2 cases for every 100 000 people, whereas the ratio of death cases under the same category for those with a vaccination record was 1.8 cases for every 100 000 people. Furthermore, the ratio of miscarriage cases out of those without a vaccination record was 71.8 cases for every 100 000 people, whereas the ratio of miscarriage cases for those who had a vaccination record was 9.7 cases for every 100 000 people. Based on the statistical analysis of the above figures, there is no evidence that vaccination increases the risk of death or miscarriage for recipients. The relevant reference statistics will be uploaded to the thematic website for the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme.

The majority of non-death cases of adverse events received so far are relatively minor cases. The relevant details can be found in the "Report on the Safety Monitoring of COVID-19 Vaccines in Hong Kong" (www.drugoffice.gov.hk/eps/do/en/doc/Safety_Monitoring_of_COVID-19_Vaccines_in_Hong_Kong.pdf).

"The current epidemic situation is still of grave concern, and death and severe cases involving children and elderly persons have been recorded. Children and elderly persons are our focus of protection in vaccination. For elderly persons, the COVID-19 vaccination rate for the elderly aged 80 or above in Hong Kong is only around 58 per cent at present, meaning that 42 per cent of the elderly in that age group are in a dangerous situation, which is alarming. Among the over 8 000 death cases from COVID-19 infection cumulatively recorded in the fifth wave, nearly 90 per cent are elderly persons aged 70 or above, out of which nearly 90 per cent did not receive or only received one dose of vaccine. The Comirnaty and CoronaVac vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from COVID-19. They can provide effective protection to those vaccinated in preventing serious complications and even death after infection. We call on members of the public who are not yet vaccinated, especially senior citizens, chronic patients and other immunocompromised persons who face a much higher chance of death after COVID-19 infection, to get vaccinated as early as possible for better self-protection. The latest research data from the University of Hong

Kong also shows that receiving three doses of either the Comirnaty or CoronaVac vaccine is highly effective for preventing severe cases and deaths with over 90 per cent effectiveness. Members of the public who are currently eligible for a third dose should get the third dose as soon as possible. The minimum age for receiving the CoronaVac vaccine has been lowered to 3 years old, while the minimum age for receiving the Comirnaty vaccine is 5 years old. We call on parents to arrange vaccination for their children as early as possible for better protection," a Government spokesman said.

Note 1: Provisional figures. In the preceding week till 11.59pm on April 3, the DH did not receive any reports of suspected myocarditis or pericarditis involving adolescents in the age group of 3 to 15.

Note 2: In the preceding week till 11.59pm on April 3, the DH received seven death reports involving individuals who had received COVID-19 vaccination within 14 days before passing away. The cases involved five males and two females aged from 58 to 93. There is no clinical evidence that the incidents arose from vaccination.

Update on monitoring COVID-19 vaccination

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As at April 3, the Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19 Immunisation had concluded that 53 death cases had no causal relationship with vaccination, and preliminarily considered that 13 cases were not associated with vaccination. Twenty-eight cases are still pending further information for assessment. The Expert Committee considered that there is no unusual pattern identified so far, and will continue to closely monitor the relevant situation and collect data for assessment.

According to information from the HA, during the period from March 7 to April 3, the ratio of death cases out of those without a vaccination record was 686.2 cases for every 100 000 people, whereas the ratio of death cases for those with a vaccination record was 49.8 cases for every 100 000 people. Out of those without a vaccination record, the ratio of death cases with acute stroke or acute myocardial infarction was 16.2 cases for every 100 000 people, whereas the ratio of death cases under the same category for those with a vaccination record was 1.8 cases for every 100 000 people. Furthermore, the ratio of miscarriage cases out of those without a vaccination record was 71.8 cases for every 100 000 people, whereas the ratio of miscarriage cases for those who had a vaccination record was 9.7 cases for every 100 000 people. Based on the statistical analysis of the above figures, there is no evidence that vaccination increases the risk of death or miscarriage for recipients. The relevant reference statistics will be uploaded to the thematic website for the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme.

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