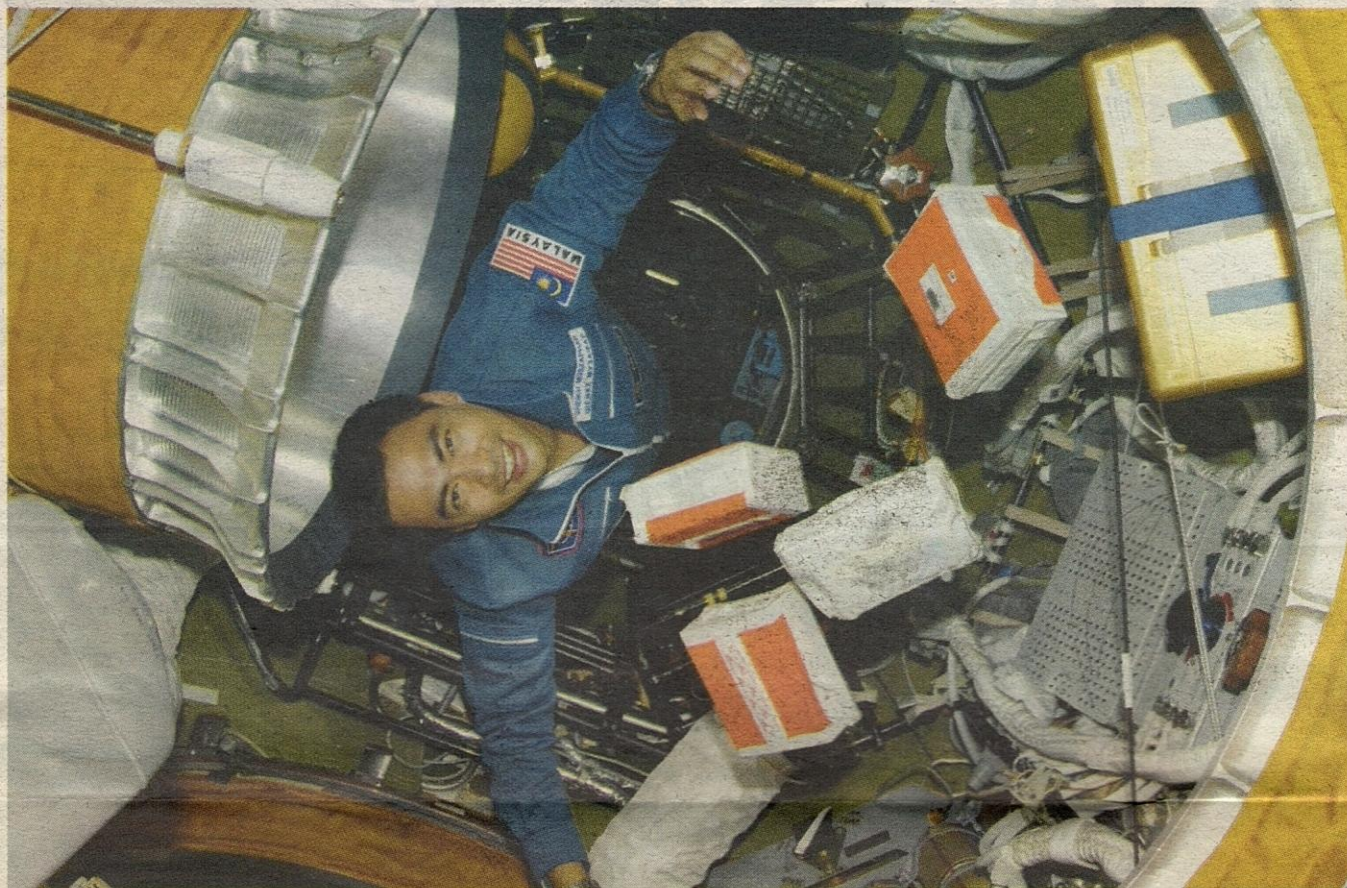


# Muszaphar doing great in space station

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Dr Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor bringing out experiment kits in an incubator in the Russian segment of the ISS.



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MALAYSIA's first man in space is feeling great.

Dr Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor said: "Everything is fine. I'm in good shape."

He also requested his family not to worry about him.

"Selamat Hari Raya to everyone. Please tell my mum that everything's fine and that she needn't worry. I'm all right."

Dr Muszaphar was speaking last night from the International Space Station to Angkasawan programme director Col Dr Zulkeffeli Mat Jusoh.

He said this in reply to Dr Zulkeffeli's query about his health and if everything was fine aboard the ISS.

However, the scheduled 10-minute window for communication between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Dr Muszaphar did not materialise due to a technical glitch.

It was later established that the problem was due to a fault at the Mission Control Centre, 31km from Moscow.

Another replacement slot has been given for another link-up with Malaysia tomorrow from 9.04pm to 9.16pm Malaysian time.

In Putrajaya, Debra Chong re-

ports that Abdullah and wife Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah were seated and prepared for the video conference from their home in Seri Perdana but had to make do with an impromptu interview with the television anchor instead.

A video conference is only possible when the ISS is in orbit directly above Russia. This happens once every 90 minutes. Due to transmission problems between Mission Control and Malaysia, the time slot was missed.

Abdullah said he had wanted to wish Dr Muszaphar "Selamat Hari Raya" and to ask him how the scientific experiments were going.

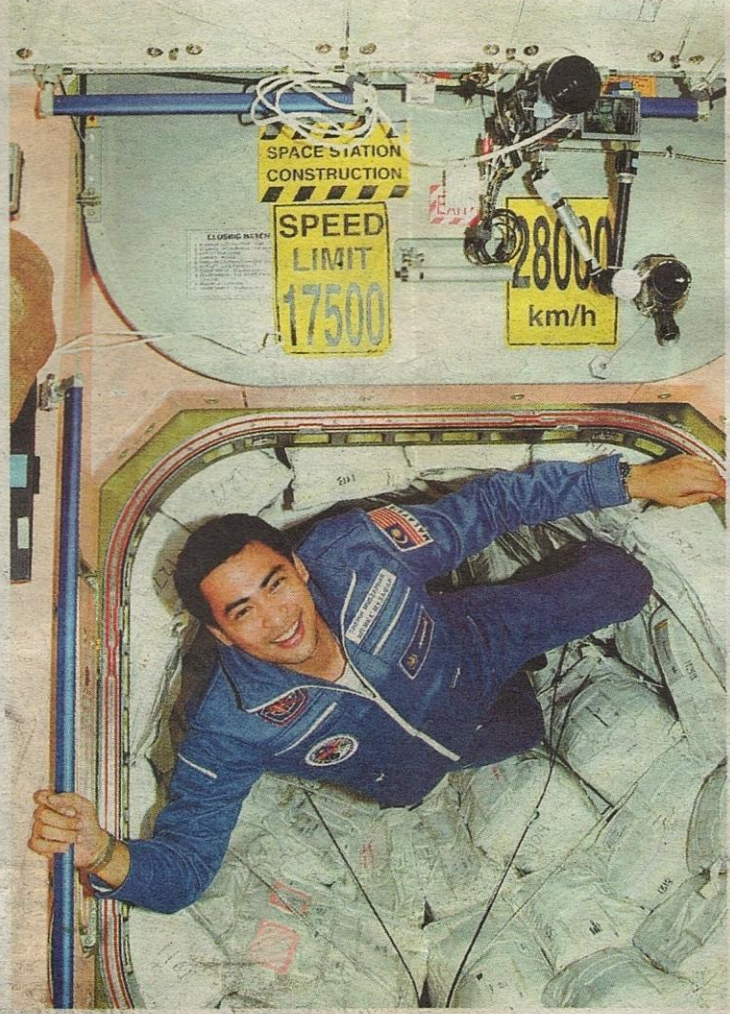
"I wanted to ask him if he had started the experiments. He is not in space to enjoy the view of Earth below but has duties to fulfil while at the International Space Station," Abdullah said.

He said Malaysia might not have the capacity to build its own spacecraft but would continue to join the space programmes of other countries to gain experience and do research.

"It is a big step towards becoming a developed country, which we will be in 2020, and we have to take this step now and not wait for 10 years or it will be too late," he said.

Also present was Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Dr Jamaludin Jarjis.

The video conference was to have started at 8.20pm. It was scheduled to be aired over RTM TV1, TV3 and Astro.



Dr Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor in the International Space Station.