

KARMAN LINE



Issue

Experts have doubted whether Richard Branson's space mission reached a height that can be called as space.

Background

Virgin Galactic recently made history when it reached space. This was the first manned mission by a private enterprise.

Details

- The space line is officially known as Karman line. It is located 100 km above the Mean Sea Level. US agencies consider it at about 80 km.
- Virgin Galactic was successful in reaching a height of 86 km and qualified as space mission under US standards but international acknowledgement is yet to follow.
- Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin mission will go at a height of about 106 km. The Karman line has been named after famous aerospace scientist Theodore von Kármán.
- It is similar to international waters as there are no laws governing beyond this point. No rules of Earth apply after crossing this limit.

Need for Karman line

- By defining the point beyond which space starts, disputes can be avoided and space activities can be conducted smoothly.
- It is after this point that rules of aerodynamics stop applying and free space takes over. This line also keeps space neutral.

Presence of space

- There has been no clear demarcation of space. Based on presence of charged particles and winds of Earth, space is said to start 118 km above Sea level.
- Some scientists believe that troposphere and stratosphere should be considered atmosphere and parts of mesosphere and complete thermosphere should be outer space.

NOTES

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