

Virgin Galactic begins commercial spaceflight service

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New York : Virgin Galactic, billionaire Richard Branson's private spaceflight company, began commercial space operations in June, 2023.

The first mission, dubbed Galactic 01, carried a crew of three members from the Italian Air Force and the National Research Council of Italy, along with a payload of scientific equipment. The crew conducted research related to microgravity over the course of the mission, that spanned from June 27 until June 30.

Following this first mission will be Galactic 02, Virgin Galactic's first mission for private astronauts. Planned to take place in early August, this will be the first revenue space tourism flight the company conducts.

These flights cost a total of USD 450,000, and include training and pre-flight accommodations, as well as the flight itself to more than 300,000 feet and several minutes of

weightlessness.

About the launch, Michael Colglazier, CEO of Virgin Galactic, said, "We are launching the first commercial spaceline for Earth with two dynamic products - our scientific research and private astronaut space missions."

"This next exciting chapter for Virgin Galactic has been driven by innovation, determination and a commitment to delivering an unparalleled and truly transformative customer experience," he added.

The company said that, after completion of the second flight Galactic 02, it will begin conducting monthly spaceflights on an ongoing basis moving forward.