

## 'BAHUBALI' LAUNCHED SUCCESSFULLY

Sriharikota, Nov. 14: India on Wednesday successfully put into orbit its latest communication satellite with its heaviest rocket and the new space mission is expected to serve the communication needs of people in the remote areas of the country. The textbook launch of the rocket GSLV-MkIII-D, which is dubbed by the ISRO as the "Bahubali" or "fat boy" of Indian rockets, is also seen as crucial for the space agency as it would be used for the ambitious Chandrayaan-2 (lunar mission) and the country's planned manned space mission. The 3,423 kg satellite GSAT-29 is also the heaviest Indian satellite to be put into orbit. Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) chief K Sivan said while the rocket's first operational mission was going to be "none other than Chandrayaan" in January 2019, "this fantastic vehicle is going to carry humans to space in three years from now." Isro has set a 'target' of achieving the country's ambitious manned mission to space by 2021. Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced in his Independence Day address this year that India will attempt to send an astronaut to space by 2022 on board 'Gaganyaan'. The 27-hour-countdown for the Wednesday launch began at 2.50pm Tuesday and the rocket blasted off at 5.08 pm from the spaceport at Sriharikota over 100 km from Chennai. The satellite carries Ka and Ku band high throughput transponders which will provide communication services to remote places in the North East and Jammu and Kashmir, besides aid the Centre's Digital India programme, Mr Sivan said. — PTI