INDIA'S SPACE PROGRAMME

OR

CAR TO SAT LAUNCHED BY INDIAN SPACE SCIENTISTS

The Indian space scientists had sufficient reasons to pat their backs as they successfully placed into their orbits two satellites, CARTOSAT – 1 and HAMSAT, on May 5, 2005. CARTOSAT 1 weighing 1560 kg is India's thirteenth remote sensing satellite while HAMSAT, weighing 43 kg, is a micro- satellite. The successful launch of the 44 meters tall four stage polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV – C6 from the Indian spaceport at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh is really a great achievement.

This success was special in many ways. It is the first ever launch from this indigenous newly built Second Launch Pad (SLP) from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre. The lift-off that filled a deep rumble in the island was a spectacular sight as the vehicle burst out of a terrific cloud of smoke and fire. The first of its four stages peeled away 112 seconds after ignition. The entire launching was witnessed by no less a person than President A.P.J. Kalam.

The vehicle that kept standing on the launch pad for five days exposed to rain, thunder and lightning, proved its mettle as the all-weather-proof vehicle demonstrated the skill and ingenuity of its makers. It was the eighth successful PSLV flight in a row.

CARTOSAT – 1 weighing 1560 kg is the heaviest remote sensing satellite to be orbited by a PSLV. As the CARTOSAT and the HAMSAT went into the orbit, applause filled the air and the hundreds of scientists connected with the flight hugged one another in joy and jubilation. The SLV has been constructed at a cost of Rs 400 crore. It is a satellite pad from where several types of vehicles can be launched. Time has come for India to start a powerful campaign to secure launch orders from other countries. India has proved to the world that the country is now in a position to launch various kinds of space satellites and vehicles from its own launching pad.

CARTOSAT – 1 is sending varied types of images and pictures, including the 3 – dimensional ones. These will be used for better cartography and in planning towns, roads, canals and the management of water resources. The camera fitted in the satellite will send pictures of the same objects taken from different

angles. HAMSAT would continue to provide communication even when there is a black out or a communication failure during a tsunami or a cyclone. It will provide radio communication to the national and international community of amateur radio operators.

Launching of two satellites at the same time from its own launching pad has proved beyond doubt that India has certainly earned for itself a respectable niche amongst the advanced countries of the world. It is sure to make further marks in years to come.