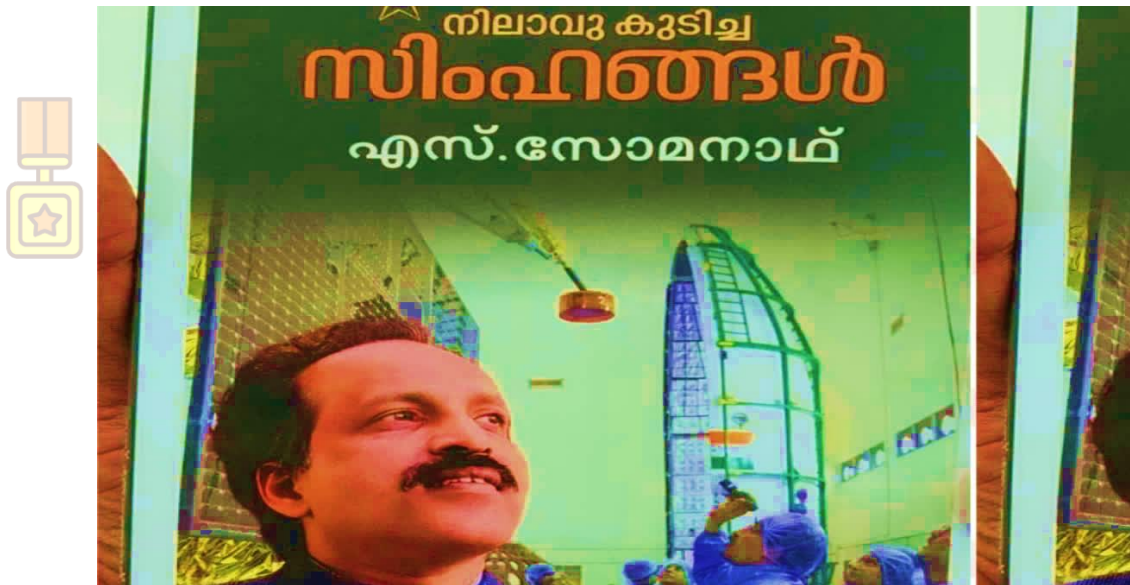


ISRO Chairman Somanath Withdraws Memoir After Controversy

Why In News

- Indian Space Research Organisation chief **S Somanath** on Saturday said he had decided against publishing his autobiography following the row over some of his alleged **critical remarks about his predecessor K Sivan in the book**.
- Somanath confirmed that he has decided to withdraw the publication of the book '**Nilavu Kudicha Simhangal**' (loosely translated as - Lions that drank the moonlight).



What's The Controversy

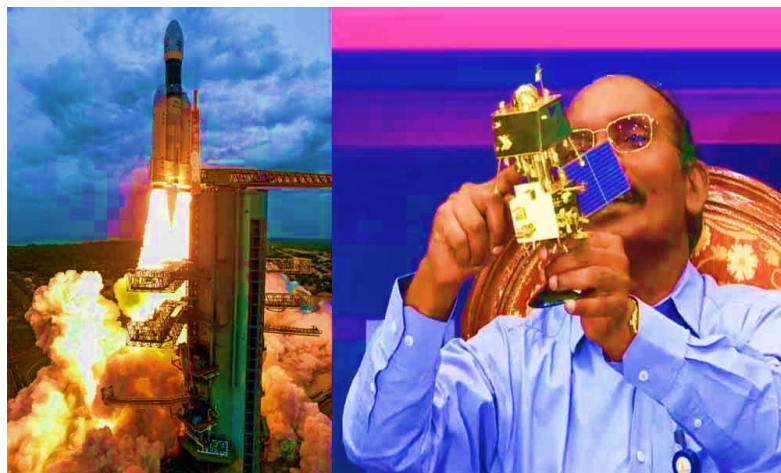
- The controversy came to light when reports surfaced, suggesting that Somanath's autobiography contained **disparaging comments about K Sivan**.



- The decision from Somnath came after a report published in the Malayala Manorama on Saturday stated that the book suggests that K. Sivan, former ISRO Chairman and Mr. Somanath's immediate predecessor, may **have hindered critical promotions** that Somanath thought were due.
- Somanath acknowledged discussing the lack of clarity regarding the Chandrayaan-2 mission failure in his book.

Mention Of Chandrayaan - 2

- This mission, **India's second lunar attempt in 2019**, did not achieve its soft-landing objective.
- According to the excerpts of the book, which The Hindu report says was viewed by the publication, what is palpable was "Somanath's discomfort with the "Chairman [Dr. Sivan's]" decision not to be explicit about the reasons for the failure of the Chandrayaan-2 mission.



- That a **software glitch** was at fault was known only subsequently. However, the crashing of the lander was known on that day itself.

- There was no point in calling it a communication failure... [as Chairman Sivan had described it].
- However, every Chairman can choose what they communicate. I believe that whatever success or failure happens should be transparently communicated. I'm not criticising Dr. Sivan though,"
- The issue was a software glitch but was publicly communicated as an "inability to communicate with the lander"

Clarification Issued

- The Isro chairman reiterated that his autobiography primarily serves as an **inspirational narrative** for those who aspire to overcome life's challenges and obstacles, rather than a platform for criticism.
- "There has been **some misinterpretation**. At no point have I said that Dr. Sivan tried to prevent me from becoming the Chairman. All I said was that being made a member of the Space Commission is generally seen as a stepping stone to [ISRO's chairmanship]. However, a director from another [ISRO centre] was placed, so naturally that trimmed my chances [at chairmanship].
- He stated, "Individuals in key roles often face various challenges, including those related to securing positions within an organization," clarifying that such challenges are part of everyone's journey.
- He added, "**My intention was not to single out any specific individual**; I simply aimed to highlight a particular aspect."

