Failure with Vikram Lander

What is the issue?

- ISRO failed in its attempt to soft-land the Vikram lander on the moon as part of the Chandrayaan-2 mission.
- However, given its achievements, ISRO need not hide the setbacks in its maneuvers.

What makes Chandrayaan-2 mission so special?

- ISRO provides four reasons for what made the Chandrayaan-2 mission "special".
- Chnadryaan-2 would be -
    1. the first space mission to conduct a soft landing on the moon's south pole
    2. the first Indian expedition to attempt a landing on lunar surface using home-grown technology
    3. the first Indian mission to explore lunar terrain with home-grown technology
    4. the mission that would make India only the 4th country to soft land on the moon

What happened with the recent failure?

- ISRO could not soft-land the Vikram lander on the moon as planned.
- ISRO Chairman K. Sivan made it apparent that the Vikram lander had ceased to touch down on predicted lines.
- Less than 24 hours of the announcement, Vikram went from being the heart of the Chandrayaan-2 mission to being only 5% of the mission's objectives.
- It was said that 90%-95% of the technology demonstration had already been done.
- ISRO also announced that the mission life of the orbiter had now dramatically increased to 7 years from the projected 1 or 2 years.

What is the contention here?

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has witnessed many trials and tribulations.
- Despite these, there has not been any major budgetary cuts or public

censure over the descending trajectories of ISRO's satellites.

- This raises the troubling question of why ISRO feels the need to retrospectively change the narrative of the Chandrayaan-2 mission and hide the setback.
- Moreover, with Russia withdrawing from the earlier plan to provide the lander, India decided to design a lander and rover on its own.
- It is now hard to understand how such an iconic module that shows India's ability to design a space vehicle suddenly became only 5% of the overall mission objective.

Where does Chandrayaan-2 stand now?

- With the special aspect missing, the Chandrayaan-2 is now in the league of its predecessor Chandrayaan-1, launched in 2008.
- Chandrayaan-1 included a lunar orbiter and a moon impact probe that crash-landed on the lunar equatorial surface.
- The key difference is that Chandrayaan-2, propelled by the GSLV Mk-III rocket, went all the way into a lunar orbit.
- This proved that ISRO had mastered the nuances of the cryogenic engine, which allows rockets capable of carrying heavier payloads to be designed.
- This is going to be what truly propels India into the league of space powers.
- And with the Chandrayaan-2 mission, ISRO only needs to explain its setbacks, not hide them for the cause of national pride.

Source: The Hindu

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering