Space X Capsule Returns

GS-Paper-3 Space (PT-MAINS)

Recently, two National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) astronauts Doug Hurley and Bob Behnken have returned to earth in their SpaceX Dragon capsule named Endeavour, in less than a day after departing the International Space Station (ISS). Their capsule parachuted into the Gulf of Mexico about 40 miles off the coast of Pensacola, Florida Panhandle (USA), which was one of the approximate locations.

- It was the first splashdown by the USA astronauts in 45 years, with the first commercially built and operated spacecraft to carry people to and from orbit. The last time NASA astronauts returned from space to water was on 24th July 1975, in the Pacific to end a joint USA-Soviet mission known as the Apollo-Soyuz. The Apollo-Soyuz Test Project was the first spaceflight to include two participating nations working together with their own national spacecraft.
- The Americans sent up an Apollo command module, while the Soviet launched a Soyuz spacecraft.

Space X Crew Dragon:

- It is a reusable spacecraft developed and manufactured by American aerospace manufacturer SpaceX.
- SpaceX is a private company founded in 2002 by Elon Musk. Its headquarters is located in Hawthorne, California (USA).
- It is the fifth class of the USA spacecraft to take human beings into orbit, after the Mercury, Gemini, Apollo and Space Shuttle programs.
- The rocket Falcon 9 was launched from NASA’s Kennedy Space Center on 31st May 2020 and carried the spaceship into the orbit.
- The whole mission was carried out under the Demo-2 Mission of NASA and SpaceX.

Significance:

- It clears the way for another SpaceX crew launch and possible tourist flights from 2021.
- SpaceX has now become the first private company to send humans to orbit who have spent more than two months on the space station.
- The landmark mission marked the first time the USA space agency launched humans from American soil since its shuttle program retired in 2011.
- Since then, the USA has relied on Russia’s space program to launch its
astronauts to the space station.