



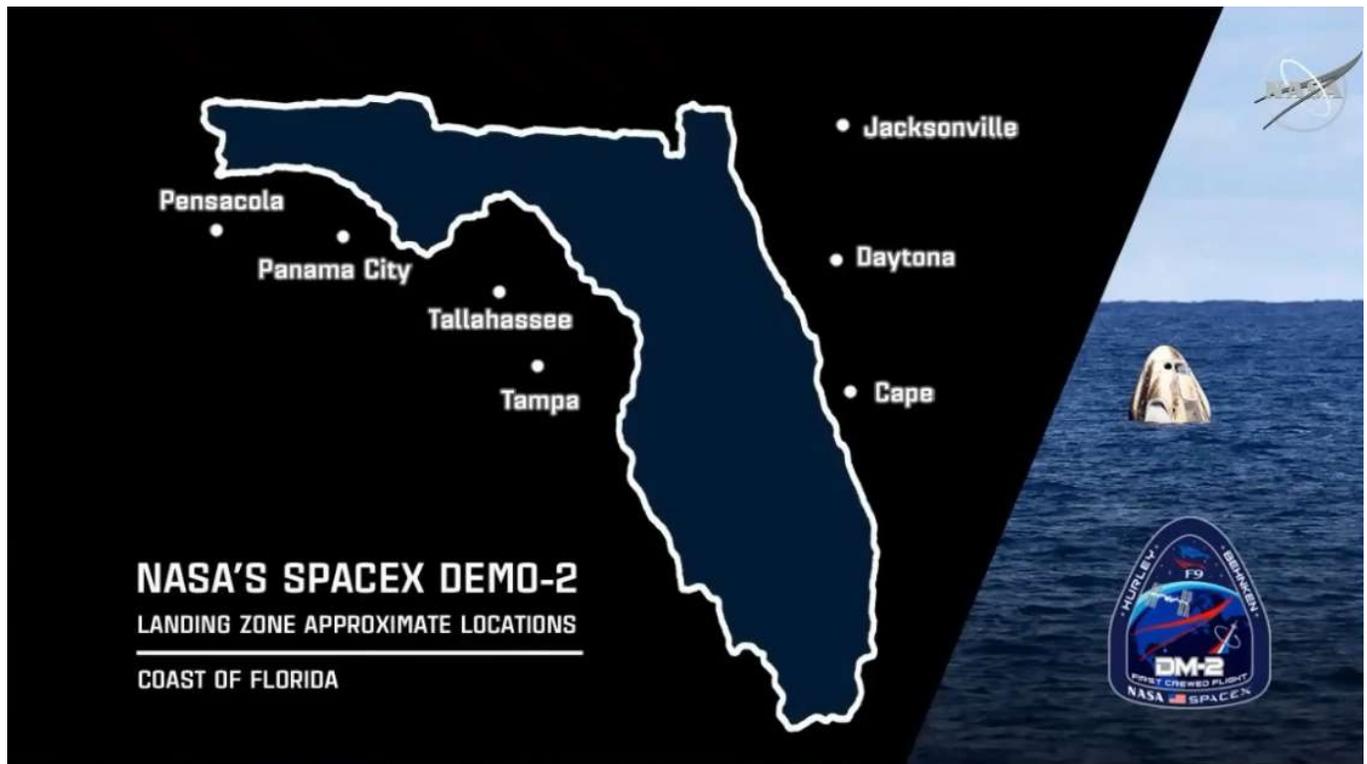
Space X Capsule Returns Safely

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Why in News

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.



Key Points

- 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.

Source: TH