

**The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE**

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The news highlights India's advancements in space exploration, including successful docking, private collaborations.

## Indian space programme breaks into 2025 in 'mission mode'

The PSLV-C60 mission laid the foundations for Chandrayaan-4 and the Bharatiya Antariksh Station. Forthcoming test flights will move India closer to human spaceflight, soon to receive a helping hand from a third launch pad at Sriharikota, continuing work on NGLV, and a change of guard at ISRO

### INDIA IN SPACE

Pradeep Mohandas

Just as 2024 was the year India developed a vision for its space programme, 2025 is likely to have the programme in mission mode. The PSLV-C60 mission, underway as the year began, laid the foundations for Chandrayaan-4 and the Bharatiya Antariksh Station.

Forthcoming test flights will move India closer to human spaceflight, soon to receive a helping hand from a third launch pad approved for construction at Sriharikota, continuing work on the Next-Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV), and a change of guard at ISRO.

**SpaDeX, a team effort**  
On December 30, 2024, the PSLV-C60 mission lifted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Center (SDSC) in Sriharikota. About 15 minutes after liftoff, the rocket delivered the Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) satellites at slightly different velocities into a 475-km circular orbit. Then ISRO chairman S. Somnath said the nominal date for the docking attempt would be January 7, 2025. M. Sankaran, director of the UR Rao Satellite Centre (URSC), said this was to allow the satellites to power up their solar cells. Indian private company Kepler Aerospace provided ground station as-a-service support for the mission alongside ISRO. It was able to simultaneously command the two SpaDeX satellites and provided "comprehensive mission support under a month."

Swiss space situational awareness company s2a systems also shared details of the distance between the two satellites on social media. This separation reached far rendezvous conditions, i.e., 10.20 km, on January 2, 2025, and started moving closer on January 6. ISRO had originally planned a weebat for January 7 but rescheduled by two days before calling it off altogether.

On January 8, the organisation said when the inter-satellite distance was reduced from 500 m to 225 m, the drift between the satellites was greater than expected. So it re-increased the separation to 6.8 km on January 9 and started over.

On January 10, the satellites were put on 'hold' mode to maintain an inter-satellite distance of 5 km then moved closer together on January 11 and 'held' at 200 m. On January 12, the inter-satellite distance was reduced further to 105 m, subsequently to 15 m, and then to 3 m. At this point, ISRO decided to move the satellites apart once again so it could analyse data from the satellites' sensors before the next attempt. According to s2a systems, the inter-satellite separation grew to 10.9 km on January 12, and from there the next docking attempt was launched. They came within 2.6 km of each other on January 13 and to 900 m on January 15.

Finally, on January 16, ISRO issued a statement saying the two satellites had successfully docked and stabilised themselves in orbit. ISRO thus made history by completing its first in-orbit rendezvous and docking. Later that day, both satellites were controlled together from one of them, a feat necessary for lunar and space-station docking. ISRO said the next steps involved transferring power from one satellite to the other and, later, undocking.

**POEM4, the orbital testbed**  
After the PSLV-C60 mission deployed the SpaDeX satellites, the rocket's fourth stage was moved to a 350-km circular orbit and had its fuel dumped in a process called passivation, done so that the fuel doesn't explode and create a debris field. In this form, it was ready for the PSLV Orbital Experimental Module (POEM4) phase of its mission, when the fourth stage was to orbit the earth like a satellite. It carried 24 payloads: 14 from ISRO and 10 from academia and private industry. ISRO's Relocatable Robotic Manipulator-Technology Demonstrator tested its movement and relocation capability by moving from one part of POEM4 to another. The Debris Capture Robotic Arm Manipulator also moved its arm, but ISRO wasn't clear about whether it managed to capture the piece of debris tethered to the payload. The Compact Research Module for Orbital Plant Studies (CROPS) had cowpea seeds germinate in orbit and studied the leaves.

On December 31, 2024, Manastu Space's Vyom 2U payload fired its green



ISRO launches the PSLV-C60 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on December 30, 2024. AP

propulsion system for 30 seconds, tilting the POEM4 stage by 24°. The system used the company's proprietary green fuel MS289. Manastu fired the system once again on January 13, this time having POEM4 perform a somersault with an angular velocity of 1.5° per second.

Similarly, Bellatrix Aerospace fired its RUDRA payload for 60 seconds to impart an angular velocity of 1.4° per second and POEM4 around by 80°. N Space Tech's payload, SwetChASATV0, established communications with its ground station. The payload, designed and built in-house, tested communications in the UHF to Ku bands.

The SJCI Institute of Technology and the Upgraha Amateur Radio Club at URSC said they had successfully received data from BGS-ARPT, their jointly-developed amateur radio messaging payload. Many amateur radio operators also shared images received from BGS-ARPT on amateur radio mailing lists.

GalaxyEye also announced the successful performance of its payload, GLX5Q. The company said it had

achieved all mission objectives, including using GLX5Q to create a synthetic-aperture radar (SAR) image.

TakeMe2Space successfully conducted an in-orbit demonstration of its MOETD payload. An artificial intelligence unit, it uploaded "large models from the ground station, [executed] external code on the satellite, and [downloaded] the... results." The company said it faced "a critical failure in the camera hardware," however. Amity University said its Amity Plant Experimental Module in Space (APEMS) yielded positive results in its attempt to grow a plant in controlled conditions onboard POEM4.

### Change of guard

While the SpaDeX and POEM4 missions were being executed in space, V. Narayanan took over from Somnath as ISRO chairman on January 14.

Narayanan was director of the Liquid Propulsion Systems Center, Thiruvananthapuram, and led work on the cryogenic and semi-cryogenic engines. He also chaired a committee to examine the failure of the Chandrayaan-2

On January 16 the two satellites docked and stabilised in orbit. Later both satellites were controlled together from one of them, a feat necessary for lunar and space-station docking. ISRO said next steps involved transferring power from one to the other and undocking moon-landing attempt.

### Aboard Transporter 12

Three Indian companies flew their payloads onboard Space's Transporter 12 mission on January 15. They were part of another 13 payloads that the Falcon 9 rocket delivered to orbit.

First, Pixxel Space's three Freely Hyperspectral Satellites became the first private Indian satellite constellation; three more are to fly in the future. The company announced on social media that all three satellites had deployed their solar arrays and had started generating power; were stabilised, and had established two-way communication links.

Second, Dignantara launched its Space Camera for Object Tracking for space situational awareness and to augment its ground capabilities. The company said the satellite was generating solar power and had stabilised. The satellite will now move to its commissioning phase to prepare for its mission: to precisely track objects in low-earth orbit.

Third, XDLINK Labs' Elevation 1 miniaturised communications satellite, built for US-based Almagest Space Corporation on its XDSATNS platform, was assembled, integrated, and tested by Ananth Technologies. The satellite has a small E-band satellite communications payload that sent a "hello from space" message to mark the start of its mission.

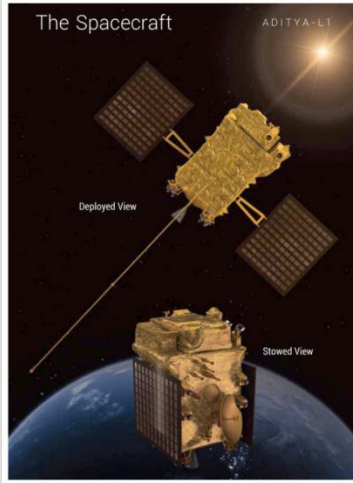
### Space tech and science

The Union cabinet approved the construction of a third launch pad at SDSC at a cost of ₹284.88 crore. It's expected to be built by 2023, to serve as a backup for the second launch pad as well as support for human spaceflight facilities and ISRO's NGLV.

ISRO also successfully tested its Vikas engine's ability to restart, i.e., stop firing, then start again, at its propellant complex in Mahendragiri. The engine was fired for 60 seconds, shut off for 120 seconds, and fired again for seven seconds. ISRO has more tests planned ahead of certifying the engine's readiness to operate in this way in the atmosphere. The fourth-stage liquid engine of the PSLV already has restart capability in the vacuum of space.

Finally, on January 6, ISRO released the first tranche of data collected by its Aditya-L1 mission, exactly a year after the mission had started to study the sun and its effects on the inner solar system.

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Aditya-L1 is India's first space-based observatory to study the sun. This artist's impression shows the spacecraft in its deployed and stowed configurations. ISRO

- ➔ It also highlights preparations for human spaceflight and advanced missions like Chandrayaan-4.
- ➔ Everything You Need To Know About 27 January 2025 : Daily Current Affairs

### PSLV-C60 Mission and SpaDeX Experiment

- ➔ On December 30, 2024, the PSLV-C60 mission launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), carrying the Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) satellites.
- ➔ Two satellites were deployed into a 475-km orbit and began preparations for docking, set for January 7, 2025.
- ➔ Initial attempts faced challenges, including unexpected drift between the satellites. ISRO adjusted inter-satellite distances multiple times.
- ➔ On January 16, 2025, the two satellites successfully docked, marking India's first in-orbit rendezvous and docking achievement.
- ➔ This milestone is crucial for future lunar and space-station docking operations.

### POEM4 Mission

- ➔ After deploying SpaDeX, PSLV-C60's fourth stage began the PSLV Orbital Experimental Module (POEM4) phase.
- ➔ POEM4 carried 24 payloads, including experiments by ISRO, academia, and private companies.
- ➔ The POEM4 mission uses the PSLV's fourth stage as an experimental platform for scientific payloads.
- ➔ It supports research in robotics, propulsion, and plant studies.

### Leadership Transition at ISRO

- ➔ On January 14, 2025, V. Narayanan took over as the new chairman of ISRO, succeeding S. Somanath. Narayanan, previously director of the Liquid Propulsion Systems Center, Thiruvananthapuram, played a key role in cryogenic and semi-cryogenic engines.
- ➔ He also led the committee investigating the Chandrayaan-2 moon-landing failure.
- ➔ The leadership change marks a new phase for ISRO as it advances towards human spaceflight and its next-generation launch vehicle.

### Leadership Transition at ISRO

- ➔ On January 14, 2025, V. Narayanan became ISRO's new chairman, succeeding S. Somanath.
- ➔ Narayanan has expertise in cryogenic and semi-cryogenic engines and led investigations into Chandrayaan-2's landing failure.

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## Indian Contributions on SpaceX's Transporter 12 Mission

- ▶ On January 15, 2025, three Indian companies launched payloads aboard SpaceX's Transporter 12 mission:
  - **Pixxel Space:** Launched three hyperspectral satellites as part of a private constellation.
  - **Digantara:** Deployed a satellite for space situational awareness.
  - **XDLINX Labs:** Deployed a miniaturised communications satellite for Almagest Space Corporation.

## Infrastructure and Technological Advances

- ▶ The government approved ₹3,984.86 crore for a third launch pad at SDSC, expected by 2029.
- ▶ ISRO successfully tested the Vikas engine's restart capability, essential for atmospheric operations.
- ▶ Data from the Aditya-L1 solar mission was released, showcasing India's advancements in studying the sun.

## Conclusion

- ▶ These missions advance India's goals in scientific research, technology development, and future space exploration initiatives.
- ▶ Collaborative efforts with private companies highlight the expanding role of India's private space sector in achieving national objectives.

### UPSC Mains Practice Question

**Ques:** Discuss the significance of India's achievements in space exploration and their impact on technological innovation, global collaborations, and the nation's strategic objectives. **(250 Words /15 marks)**

Fossils of *Mbiresaurus raathi*, a dinosaur approximately one meter tall with a long tail and weighing up to 30 kilograms, were discovered in Zimbabwe in 2019.

### Species in news – *Mbiresaurus Raathi*

- ➔ **Species:** *Mbiresaurus raathi* is a species of dinosaur discovered in Zimbabwe.
- ➔ **Size:** It was about one meter tall and weighed approximately 30 kilograms.
- ➔ **Tail:** The dinosaur had a long tail, which was typical for early dinosaurs.
- ➔ **Habitat:** It lived in what was likely a hot, dry environment with seasonal wildfires.
- ➔ **Discovery:** Its remains were found in 2019 in the northern part of Zimbabwe.
- ➔ **Era:** The fossils date back to around 230 million years ago, during the Late Triassic period.
- ➔ **Significance:** *Mbiresaurus* provides insights into early dinosaur evolution.
- ➔ *Mbiresaurus* is one of the oldest-known dinosaur species.



Remains of *Mbiresaurus raathi*, which was only about one metre tall, with a long tail, and weighed up to 30 kilograms, were found in Zimbabwe in 2019. AFP

### *Where did dinosaurs first evolve?*

Reuters

Dinosaurs long dominated the earth's land ecosystems with multiple forms, including plant-eating giants like *Argentinosaurus*, meat-eating brutes like *Tyrannosaurus*, and weirdos like *Therizinosaurus*, with its Wolverine-like claws. But the origin of dinosaurs – precisely when and where they first appeared – remains a bit of a puzzle.

Researchers are now proposing a surprising location for the birthplace of dinosaurs, based on the locations of the currently oldest-known dinosaur fossils, the evolutionary relationships among these early forms, and the earth's geography during the Triassic Period. This locale spans the modern-day Sahara desert and Amazon rainforest regions, now separated by thousands of kilometres and an ocean thanks to a geological process called plate tectonics. "When dinosaurs first appear in the fossil record, all the earth's continents were part of the giant supercontinent Pangaea. Dinosaurs emerged in the southern portion of this landmass, known as Gondwana," said Joel Heath, a palaeontology doctoral student at University College London and the Natural History Museum in London and lead author of the study, published on Thursday in the journal *Current Biology*.

"Our research suggests they likely originated in the low-latitude regions of Gondwana near the equator, an area that today includes northern South America and northern Africa," Heath added.

The earliest-known dinosaur fossils date to roughly 230 million years ago, including *Eoraptor* and *Herrerasaurus*

**Research suggests dinosaurs likely originated in low-latitude regions of Gondwana near the equator, an area that today includes northern South America and northern Africa**

from Argentina, *Saturnalia* from southern Brazil, and *Mbiresaurus* from Zimbabwe. While sharing certain traits defining them as dinosaurs, they had sufficient differences that suggest millions of years of dinosaur evolution had already occurred.

"While earlier research has focused on southern South America and southern Africa as the area of origin of the dinosaurs, based on where their fossils first appear, we suggest that significant gaps in the fossil record, particularly in regions that today include the Sahara desert and the Amazon rainforest, may hold the potential to reveal where the earliest dinosaurs were living," Heath said.

The researchers said dinosaurs probably emerged approximately 245-230 million years ago, when these equatorial regions were extremely hot and dry.

"It likely included deserts, savannah-like habitats, and possibly forested areas prone to seasonal wildfires. Previously, it was believed that dinosaurs were absent from these harsh environments," Heath said.

Fossils from this time and region are rare. This might be because the conditions were not ideal for preserving the remains of land animals or because the rocks containing these fossils haven't been discovered yet, Heath said.

The Amazon and the Sahara also are difficult for palaeontologists to explore due to the logistical challenges.

Dinosaurs evolved from more primitive reptiles after the earth's biggest mass-extinction event caused by extreme volcanism at the end of the Permian Period, about 252 million years ago.

The Governor's role as Chancellor of State universities is a matter of debate.

- It often leads to political interference, undermining university autonomy and governance.

#### **Governor as Chancellor of State Universities: A Colonial Legacy**

- It originated during British rule and was designed to restrict university autonomy rather than promote it.
- The position was formalized by British authorities in 1857 when they set up the first universities in Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras.
- Governors of the presidencies were made ex-officio Chancellors to maintain control over these universities.
- The role was adopted post-Independence without reassessment and continues in India today. It is not mentioned in the Constitution but is included in State university laws.

#### **Politicisation of the Governor's Role**

- From 1947 to 1967, the dominance of the Congress party led to Governors being mostly ceremonial figures, with Chief Ministers holding the real power.
- However, post-1967, as several states were ruled by opposition parties, Governors started to play an active role in university governance. This led to clashes with state governments.
- The office of the Governor began to be politicised, with many Governors appointed for their political loyalty rather than for academic expertise, leading to a decline in the office's credibility.
- The First Administrative Reforms Commission (1966–77) and the Sarkaria Commission (1983–88) criticized this politicisation.

#### **Dual Role of Governors**

- The Governor's role is divided constitutionally into two categories: acting on the advice of the Council of Ministers (Article 163) and acting independently in certain functions, like being the Chancellor of State universities.
- The Governor's discretion in university matters, such as appointing Vice-Chancellors and presiding over convocations, has caused issues, particularly in states ruled by opposition parties.

#### **Challenges of the Current System**

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## Daily News Analysis

- Governors have significant power over State universities despite these universities being funded by State governments. This creates confusion and conflicts.
- Delays in appointing Vice-Chancellors and other administrative issues affect the functioning of universities.
- Governors, often lacking academic experience, make decisions based on limited, non-transparent advice.
- Political interference by Governors often prioritises central government agendas over universities' needs.
- The system undermines the principle of federalism, as it places State universities under control by Governors appointed by the Centre.

### Commission Insights and Recommendations

- The Rajamannar Committee (1969-71) and the Sarkaria Commission (1983-88) recommended that Governors consult with Chief Ministers but retain independent judgment.
- The M.M. Punchhi Commission (2007-10) suggested that the Governor focus on constitutional duties, not statutory roles like Chancellor, to preserve dignity.
- Various commissions, including the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (2000-02), have advocated for greater university autonomy and a clearer role for Chancellors.

### Alternative Models for the Role of Chancellor

- Best practices suggest that the Chancellor should be a ceremonial leader, with no executive authority.
- Some States, like Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Karnataka, have implemented reforms where the Governor's role is reduced to a ceremonial one.
- The State-appointed Chancellor model, in which eminent academics or public figures serve as Chancellor, has been suggested as a solution.
- This model ensures academic independence while preventing political interference.
- This model is being considered in several States, but many Bills are awaiting Presidential assent.

### Dismantling Colonial Legacy

- Reforming the governance of State universities is essential for academic excellence, reduced political interference, and enhanced accountability to State governments.
- The central government should facilitate these reforms and encourage States to align their university governance models with global best practices.

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## Conclusion

- ➡ The Governor's role as Chancellor of State universities, a legacy of colonial rule, needs reform.
- ➡ Shifting to a more neutral, academic-focused leadership model would enhance university autonomy and governance.

## UPSC Mains Practice Question

**Ques:** Examine the impact of the Governor's role as Chancellor of State universities on academic independence and state autonomy. What reforms are needed to address the challenges associated with this system? **(150 Words /10 marks)**



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### In News : Paraquat Poisoning

A 24-year-old woman in Thiruvananthapuram was sentenced to death for poisoning her boyfriend in 2022 with paraquat, a highly toxic chemical herbicide.

#### Analysis of the news:

#### What is Paraquat?

- ➔ **Description:** Paraquat, also known as paraquat dichloride or methyl viologen, is a widely used herbicide for weed control and crop desiccation.
- ➔ **Hazards:** The WHO classifies it as a Category 2 (moderately hazardous) chemical. It is banned in over 70 countries, including the EU and China, but remains widely used in India and the US.
- ➔ **Toxicity:** According to the US EPA, even a small accidental sip can be fatal. Some studies suggest a link between paraquat exposure and Parkinson's Disease.

#### Modes of Poisoning and Symptoms

- ➔ **Exposure:**
  - **Ingestion:** Most common and highly fatal.
  - **Skin Contact:** Prolonged exposure can lead to absorption.
  - **Inhalation:** Can cause respiratory issues.
- ➔ **Symptoms:**
  - Immediate signs include abdominal pain, bloody diarrhea, mouth and throat swelling, and nausea.
  - Prolonged exposure can cause kidney, liver, lung, and heart damage, seizures, and respiratory failure.

#### Treatment for Paraquat Poisoning

- ➔ **Immediate Response:**
  - Swallowing activated charcoal or Fuller's earth to bind the chemical.
  - Thorough washing of exposed areas with soap and water.
  - Cutting and safely disposing of contaminated clothing.
- ➔ **Medical Interventions:**
  - No specific antidote exists.
  - Immunosuppression or charcoal hemoperfusion has been studied as potential treatments.

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## Regulation and Restrictions

- ➔ **United States:** Paraquat sales are limited to licensed commercial users, with safety measures like blue dye, strong odor, and a vomiting agent added to the chemical.
- ➔ **India:** Governed by the Central Insecticides Board under the Insecticides Act of 1968. A 2021 notification restricts its use to crops like wheat, rice, tea, coffee, and apples, among others. However, enforcement is weak, and untrained applicators often store it unsafely.



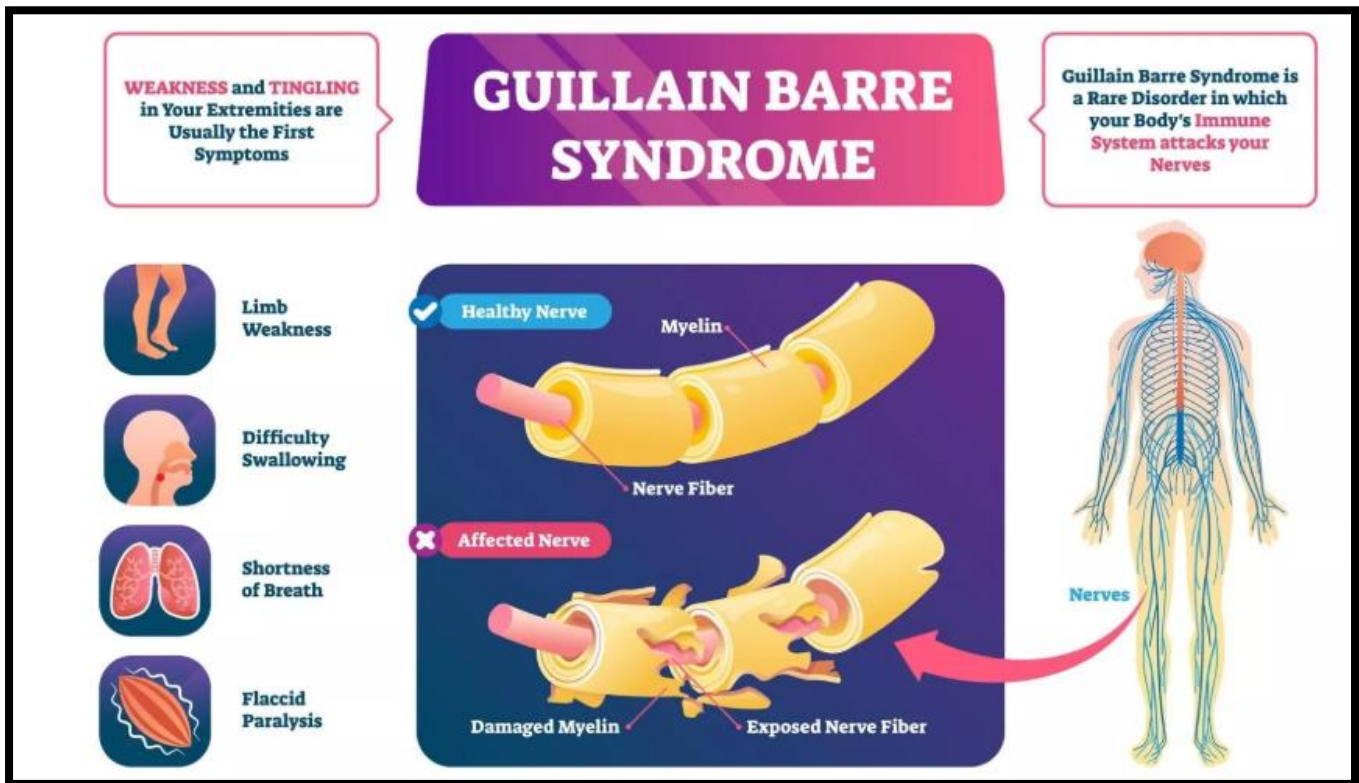
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**In News : Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS)**

The number of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) cases in Pune has crossed 100.



**Analysis of the news:**

**What is Guillain-Barre Syndrome?**

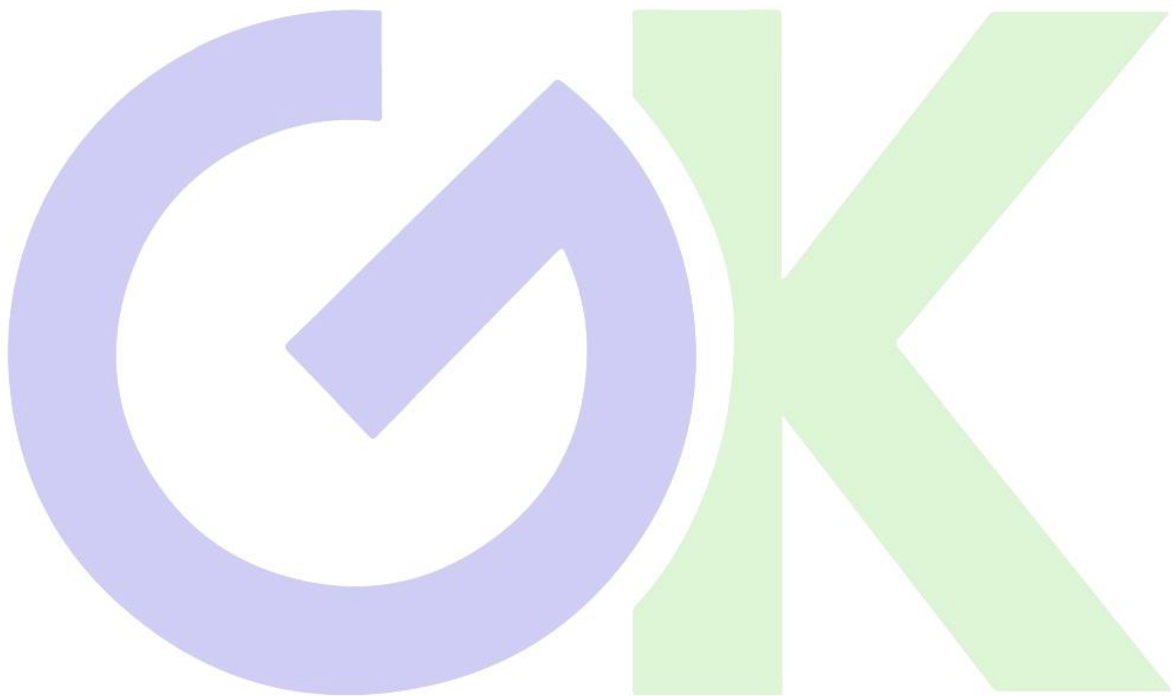
- GBS is a serious autoimmune disorder that affects the peripheral nervous system. It initially presents weakness, tingling, and numbness in the limbs, which can progress to paralysis lasting 6-12 months or longer.
- The syndrome affects the nerves responsible for muscle movement, pain, temperature, and touch sensations.
- While more common in adults and males, GBS can occur in individuals of all ages.
- **Cause:** The exact cause of GBS is unknown, but as per the World Health Organisation (WHO), GBS is often preceded by an infection. This could be a bacterial or viral infection. This leads the immune system to attack the body itself.
- In rare cases, vaccinations and surgery may slightly increase the risk of developing GBS, but the likelihood of this happening is very low.

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## Daily News Analysis

- ▶ Studies have shown that the risk of getting GBS from infections like the flu is much higher than the risk from vaccines, such as the flu vaccine.
- ▶ **Treatment:** GBS treatment involves procedures like plasmapheresis, which removes plasma and replaces it with other fluids.



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## An enduring commitment to the Indo-Pacific

The inauguration of Donald Trump as the 47th President of the United States marks an unparalleled comeback in American political history. It also signals a vital moment in global geopolitics, particularly for the Indo-Pacific region. During his first term, Mr. Trump redefined U.S. engagement in the Indo-Pacific. As he embarks on his second term, expectations of a more assertive U.S. security posture and strengthened alliances are high. The presence of the foreign ministers from India, Japan, and Australia – America's key Quad partners – at the inauguration underscores the strategic importance of this grouping in Mr. Trump's foreign policy vision. With the Indo-Pacific being central to U.S.'s strategic priorities, Trump 2.0 signals a renewed focus on deepening defence, economic, and technological cooperation with 'like-minded' nations to address persisting and emerging challenges, while ensuring regional stability.

### Importance of Indo-Pacific

Mr. Trump's first term marked a pivotal shift in Washington's approach to this region, redefining the strategic landscape in three ways. First, under Trump's leadership, the U.S. adopted the term 'Indo-Pacific', replacing the previously favoured 'Asia-Pacific', which reflected a recalibration of the geopolitical lens, moving beyond a focus solely on East Asia and the Pacific Rim to encompass a wider area critical for global trade, security, and strategic stability. The term expanded the geographic focus to include the Indian Ocean, emphasising the importance of securing sea lines of communication, addressing maritime challenges, and underscoring the U.S.'s intent to counterbalance China's growing influence. The Indo-Pacific expanded the strategic narrative, integrating defence, security, and political considerations alongside



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Under the new Trump administration, the Indo-Pacific is likely to regain prominence but with a sharper focus on hard power dynamics

economic cooperation.

Second, there were structural changes in the U.S. defence and security framework, including the renaming of the U.S. Pacific Command as the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command in 2018, reflecting the operational import accorded to the Indo-Pacific. The Office of the Secretary of Defence was reorganised to establish specialised units focusing on Indo-Pacific allies and partners.

Third, the revival of the Quad underscored the Trump administration's recognition of the Indo-Pacific as the fulcrum of 21st century geopolitics, reflecting a pragmatic convergence of interests among its members. The U.S. provided a robust push to institutionalise the grouping. The Trump administration elevated the Quad dialogue to the ministerial level, laying the groundwork for deeper collaboration in maritime security, supply chain resilience, and technological standards.

The Joe Biden administration inherited the Indo-Pacific framework and maintained its strategic centrality. Mr. Biden elevated the Quad further by convening the first-ever Quad leaders' summit in 2021, marking a significant institutional leap. He emphasised multilateralism and sought to broaden the Quad's agenda by initiating collaboration on vaccines, climate change, critical technologies, and infrastructure development. He also introduced the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework in 2022, complementing the strategic focus with economic engagement. The emphasis on a rules-based order and inclusive development in the Indo-Pacific aligned the Quad's mission with broader global governance goals.

### Prospects in Trump 2.0

The bipartisan consensus on the Indo-Pacific's importance ensures continuity in U.S. engagement. While Mr. Trump could take a more assertive stance against China, his reliance on India,

Japan, and Australia to share the burden of regional security would remain and likely be strengthened.

The new administration's first major foreign policy initiative was a meeting of the Quad foreign ministers on January 21. At his confirmation hearing, the U.S. Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, characterised China as the most formidable adversary the U.S. has faced, noting that the challenges prompting the Quad's revival under Mr. Trump have intensified. This was the administration's first significant engagement with foreign leaders. All four members reaffirmed Washington's unwavering commitment to the Indo-Pacific region while also setting the stage for this year's Quad Summit early in the Trump Presidency. Mr. Rubio also met with the three Quad foreign ministers separately with India being the first bilateral meeting.

A joint statement released after the meeting emphasised the importance of international law, peace, stability, and maritime security for regional prosperity while opposing unilateral actions to alter the status quo through force or coercion. It also highlighted the dedication to enhancing regional maritime, economic, and technological security, alongside promoting resilient and reliable supply chains. The members agreed to hold regular ministerial meetings and prepare for a leaders' summit to be hosted by India.

Under the new Trump administration, the Indo-Pacific is likely to retain prominence but with a sharper focus on hard power dynamics. The Indo-Pacific has changed since Mr. Trump's last term in office, and so have the priorities that would influence the President's approach this time. It is likely that alongside boosting security-related frameworks, Mr. Trump may also bolster mechanisms that have a broader and more diverse agenda so long as they serve to preserve the existing rules-based order.

**GS Paper 02 : International Relations**

**UPSC Mains Practice Question:** Discuss the strategic significance of the Indo-Pacific region in global geopolitics and analyze the role of the Quad in maintaining regional stability. **(250 Words /15 marks)**

**Context :**

- ▶ Donald Trump's return as U.S. President emphasizes a renewed focus on the Indo-Pacific region, strengthening Quad alliances to counter China's influence.

**Trump as U.S. President and Its Geopolitical Significance**

- ▶ Donald Trump's return to the presidency as the 47th President of the United States represents a historic political comeback.
- ▶ The inauguration highlights the Indo-Pacific's importance, with foreign ministers from India, Japan, and Australia attending.
- ▶ This signals a strong focus on the Quad partnership, emphasizing defense, economic, and technological cooperation for regional stability.

**Significance of the Indo-Pacific in Trump's First Term**

**Adoption of the Term 'Indo-Pacific'**

- ▶ Trump's first term introduced the term 'Indo-Pacific', replacing 'Asia-Pacific', to broaden the region's geopolitical scope.
- ▶ The term emphasized securing sea lines of communication, addressing maritime challenges, and countering China's growing influence.
- ▶ The approach integrated defense, security, and economic considerations, highlighting the Indian Ocean's strategic importance.

**Revival of the Quad**

- ▶ Trump's administration reinvigorated the Quad as a strategic grouping, elevating its dialogue to the ministerial level.

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- ➔ The focus was on maritime security, resilient supply chains, and technological cooperation, emphasizing shared regional interests.

### Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)

- ➔ The Quad is a strategic partnership between Australia, India, Japan, and the United States.
- ➔ **Focus:** Promoting a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.
- ➔ **Key areas of cooperation:** Maritime security, infrastructure development, counter-terrorism, and humanitarian assistance.
- ➔ **Significance:** Counterbalancing China's growing influence in the region and promoting a rules-based international order.
- ➔ Regular summits and meetings: Held to discuss regional challenges and strengthen cooperation.
- ➔ **Initiatives:** Quad Vaccine Partnership, supply chain resilience initiatives, and infrastructure development projects.

### Continuity Under Biden's Presidency

- ➔ The Biden administration maintained the Indo-Pacific's strategic importance and built on the Trump-era framework.
- ➔ Biden convened the first Quad leaders' summit in 2021, broadening the agenda to include vaccines, climate change, and infrastructure development.
- ➔ In 2022, Biden introduced the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework to strengthen economic engagement alongside security priorities.

### Prospects in Trump's Second Term

#### Strengthened U.S. Focus on the Indo-Pacific

- ➔ The Trump administration plans to sharpen hard power dynamics while addressing new regional challenges.
- ➔ Bilateral and multilateral engagements, such as the Quad leaders' summit, will prioritize maritime, economic, and technological security.
- ➔ The focus will remain on preserving the rules-based order and enhancing partnerships with 'like-minded' nations.

### Conclusion

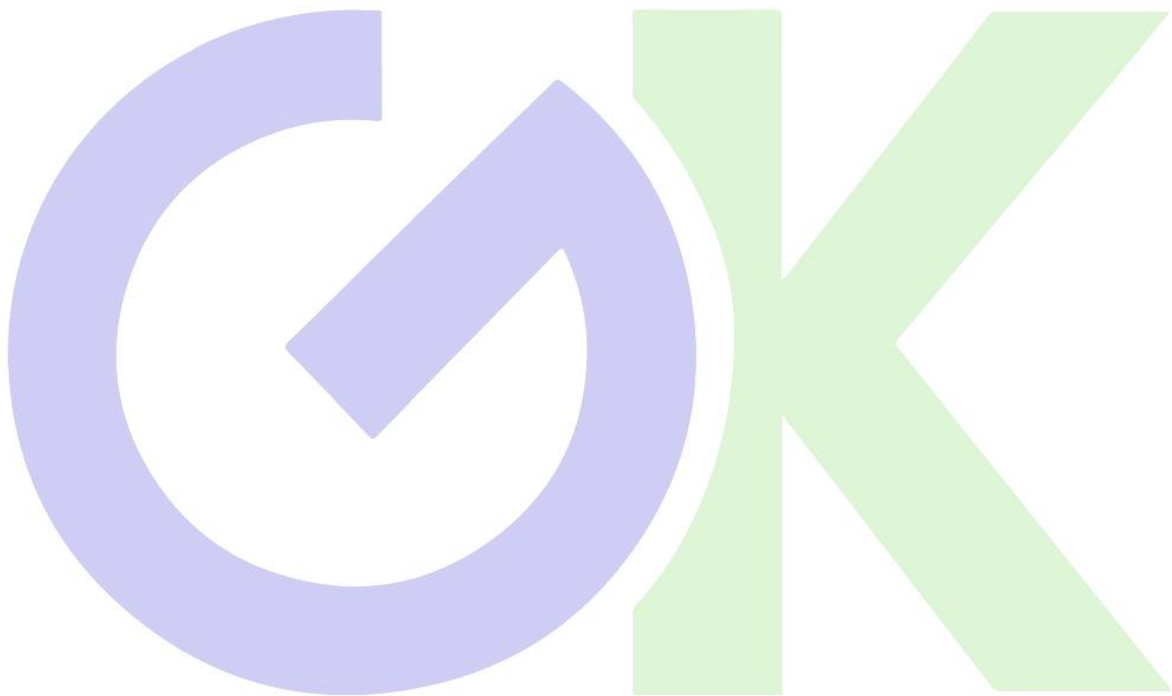
- ➔ Trump's second term is expected to maintain the Indo-Pacific's prominence in U.S. foreign policy.

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- The administration aims to strengthen security and economic frameworks to ensure regional stability and counter China's growing influence.
  - Collaboration with Quad partners will play a central role in advancing shared strategic goals in the Indo-Pacific.
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