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Important Facts for Prelims (29th December 2018)

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Mission Gaganyaan

- The union cabinet has approved the **indigenous manned space mission called Gaganyaan** under which a **three-member crew** will be sent to space for **at least seven days**.
- The **testing phase** of the mission is expected to begin from **December 2020** and the mission will be **undertaken in 2022**.
- The mission, if successful, will add India into the elite club of three countries (the US, Russia, and China) that have sent a manned mission to the outer space.
- A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between ISRO and the Federal Space Agency of Russia 'ROSCOSMOS' on joint activities in the field of the human spaceflight programme during Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to New Delhi in October 2018.

In Depth: Mission Gaganyaan

Kashmir Stag

- Kashmir Stag locally known as **Hangul** is a **subspecies of the European red deer**, found in **Kashmir**. It is the only subspecies of red deer in India and the **state animal of Jammu and Kashmir**.
- First identified by Alferd Wagner in 1844, the species is believed to have traveled all the way from Bukhara in Central Asia to Kashmir.
- The animal is classified as '**critically endangered**' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- **Dachigam National Park** near Srinagar is considered the last undisturbed home of the Hangul.
- The challenges that hangul faces include poaching, threats from insurgency and the border conflict between India and Pakistan.