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Important Facts for Prelims (18th February 2019)

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Punjab's Blackbuck Under Threat

- **Blackbuck** is fighting for its existence at the **Abohar Wildlife Sanctuary (AWS)** located in the Fazilka District of Punjab which is an open sanctuary, spread across private land in several villages.
- Blackbuck's status is '**Least Concern**' species (IUCN Red List) but it faces a severe threat from **stray cattle, attacks by stray dogs, barbed wire and habitat fragmentation** due to change in land use and cropping patterns over the past few years.
- The blackbuck was notified as the **State animal of Punjab** in 1989 and its presence in the State is confined to AWS due to the unique habitat of semi-arid plains consisting agricultural fields, intermittent fallow-barren lands, scattered sand dunes, sand mounds, and ridges.

Munich Security Conference

- Recently, the 55th Munich Security Conference (MSC) concluded in **Germany**.
- MSC is an **annual conference on the international security policy** that takes place in Munich, Germany since 1963.
- During the MSC 2019, **India raised the issue of the Pulwama terror attack** during bilateral meetings with several countries, including the US, Germany, and Russia.
- MSC is an **independent venue for policymakers and experts for open and constructive discussions** about the most **pressing security issues** of the day and of the future.
- MSC publishes the Munich Security Report, an annual digest of relevant figures, maps, and research on crucial security challenges.

Tagore Cultural Harmony Award

- Recently, the President of India has presented the Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony.
- The award was given to **Shri Rajkumar Singhajit Singh (scholar of Manipuri dance), Chhayanaut (a cultural organization of Bangladesh)** and **Shri Ram Sutar Vanji (a renowned sculptor)** for the years 2014, 2015 & 2016 respectively.
- The Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony was **instituted by the Government of India from 2012 recognizing the contributions made by Rabindranath Tagore to humanity** at large with his works and ideas, as part of the Commemoration of his 150th Birth Anniversary in 2012, for promoting values of Cultural Harmony.
- The Award is **open to all persons regardless of nationality**, race, language, caste, creed or gender.