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## News Analysis (24 Dec, 2019)

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## Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban

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### Why in News

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Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U) has achieved its target of creating **Urban India Open Defecation Free (ODF)**.

Urban areas of 35 states / UTs have become ODF and certified through **third-party verification**.

### Key Points

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Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) launched various initiatives to make SBM-U a successful project. Some of them include,

- **ODF, ODF+ and ODF++ Protocol:**
  - **Norms under ODF:** No visible faeces shall found in the environment and every household, as well as public/community institutions, should be using safe technology option for disposal of faeces.
  - **Norms under ODF+:** Not a single person should be defecating and/or urinating in open. All community and public toilets should be properly maintained and cleaned.
  - **Norms under ODF++:** Proper treatment and management of faecal sludge/septage and sewage is safely managed and treated. There should be no discharge or dumping of untreated faecal sludge/septage and sewage in drains, water bodies or open areas.
- **Water + Protocol:** It is designed to ensure that no untreated wastewater is discharged into the open environment or water bodies.
- **Star rating protocol for Garbage free cities:** It is based on 12 parameters which follow a **SMART framework** – Single metric, Measurable, Achievable, Rigorous verification mechanism and Targeted towards outcomes.  
As on date, **4 cities** namely, **Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Ambikapur (Chhattisgarh), Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra) and Mysuru (Karnataka)** have been certified as **5-star cities**.
- **Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs):** MoHUA has also partnered with National Highways Authority of India(NHAI) to use the plastic waste for road construction. Additionally, cities have been asked to set up adequate **Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) to handle the segregation, processing and recycle of plastic waste.**
- **Swachh Surevkshan:** MoHUA launched the **Swachh Survekshan 2020 (SS 2020)** league, a quarterly cleanliness assessment of cities and towns in India.

**Source: PIB**

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## Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth

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### Why in News

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The **newly-formed Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth (CCIG)** held its first meeting to discuss issues related to the slowdown in the economy.

- The meeting also discussed about the **slowing GDP growth to 4.5% (a six-year low)** as **investment, exports and consumption** have **declined** in the country.

- Alongside CCIG, a **Cabinet Committee on Employment & Skill Development** was also constituted in response to rising unemployment in the country.  
The **Periodic Labour Force Survey** had shown the **overall unemployment rate to be 6.1%** during 2017-18.

## Cabinet Committees

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- Cabinet Committees are **extra-constitutional** in emergence. In other words, they are **not mentioned** in the Constitution. However, the **Rules of Business** provide for their establishment.  
These Rules emerge out of **Article 77(3)** of the Constitution, which empowers the President to make rules for the more convenient transaction of the business of the Government, and for the allocation among Ministers.
- These committees are of two types—**standing and ad hoc**. The **standing** Cabinet Committees are of a **permanent** nature while the **ad hoc** Cabinet Committees are of a **temporary** nature.
  - The **Prime Minister** constitutes **Standing Committees of the Cabinet** and sets out the specific functions assigned to them. He can **add or reduce** the number of committees.
  - The ad hoc committees are constituted from time to time to deal with special problems. They are disbanded after their task is completed.

**Note:** All committees except Cabinet Committee on Accommodation and Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs are headed by Prime Minister.

**Source:TH**

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## Water Hyacinth Helps Detect Herbicide Pollution

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### Why in News

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Researchers have used **invasive plant water hyacinth** to produce **carbon nanoparticles** which can be used for **detecting** a commonly used **herbicide — pretilachlor**.

The nanoparticles were found to be **selective and sensitive** for the **detection of the herbicide**.

## Key Points



- **Carbon Dots:**
  - The water hyacinth without chlorophyll is powdered and heated at 150-degree Celsius to **convert it to carbon dots**.
  - When a nanoparticle is less **than 10 nanometre** it is known as a **dot or nanodot**.
- **Working Principle:**
  - The **carbon dots** gives a **green fluorescence** under **UltraViolet (UV) light**, due to the presence of **oxygen functional groups** on the surface of the dot.
  - The fluorescence intensity of carbon dot **increases** in the **presence** of the **herbicide**.
    - The electron transfer between the dot and the herbicide enables the fluorescence enhancement.
    - The carbon dot is **extremely sensitive** to **pretilachlor** and could detect even very small quantity of it.
- **Advantages:**
  - The detection of herbicides through carbon dots is a **commercially viable option** compared to the currently available sensors in the market as the raw material i.e. water hyacinth is readily available.
  - It will help to convert waste material like the water hyacinth to produce useful technology.

## Water Hyacinth

- Water hyacinth is a free-floating aquatic plant native to **South America**. It is considered as an **invasive alien species**.
- Single plant of water Hyacinth is capable of duplicating itself every **nine** days.
- It is also referred to as the **terror of Bengal** given its effect on the local ecology and lives of the people.
- It has an effect on irrigation, hydroelectric generation and navigation.
- It also leads to a drastic reduction in fish production, aquatic crops and an increase in diseases caused by mosquitoes.

## Eco Clubs

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### Why in News

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The first annual meeting of the State Nodal Agencies implementing the **National Green Corps Ecoclub programme** was recently organized by the Environment Ministry's Education Division in collaboration with the GEER Foundation (Gujarat). It was held from 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> December 2019 in **Kevadia, Gujarat**.

**Best Ecoclub Award** at national level were also awarded to the students of the Ecoclub from Chhattisgarh, Kerala and Telangana who secured First, Second and Third position respectively.

### Key Points

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#### **Environment Education Awareness and Training**

In the fiscal year 1983-84, the **Environment Education Awareness and Training (EEAT)** was launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) as the **central sector scheme**.

- It aims to promote **environmental awareness** among all sections of the society and to **mobilize people's participation** for conservation of environment.
- Its objectives are achieved through the implementation of **four** programmes:
  - National Green Corps (NGC),
  - National Environment Awareness Campaign,
  - Seminars/Workshops, and
  - National Nature Camping Programme.
- Under these programmes, **financial assistance** is provided to various organisations for undertaking activities and awareness campaigns for the protection of environment in the country.

### NGC- Ecoclub Programme

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- Under National Green Corps (NGC), the **Ecoclub programme was initiated in 2001-2002**.

- **Objectives:**

- To **impart knowledge** to school children through hands on experience, about their immediate environment, interactions within it and the problems therein.
- To **inculcate compassion** among people towards environment and **sensitize children** on issues related to environment and development.
- To **build young cadres** of students and trigger their sensitivity towards environment protection and conservation. Although it is envisaged that the number of Ecoclubs must be enhanced from about 1.5 lakh at present to 2 lakh in the ensuing year 2020-21.

**Source: PIB**

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## Space Force by USA

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### Why in News

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Recently, the US President signed the **National Defense Authorization Act, 2020** directing the establishment of the **U.S. Space Force (USSF)** as the **sixth branch of the armed forces**.

The establishment of USSF comes after the launch of a new Pentagon Command named **Spacecom** earlier in September, 2019.

### Key Points

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- The USSF will be the **sixth formal force** of the U.S. military, after the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard and will be headquartered at the **Pentagon**.
- It will comprise of about 16,000 air force and civilian personnel.
- **Objectives:**
  - Maintaining and enhancing the competitive edge of the **Department of Defense** (DOD) in space.
  - Developing **military space** professionals, acquiring military space systems, maturing the military doctrine for space power and organizing space forces, etc.
  - Effectively organizing the defence for US interests in space, especially related to satellites used for navigation and communication.
- **Concerns: China and Russia** have apprehensions regarding this development. It is being perceived as increasing **weaponization of outer space** and turning cosmos into a battlefield.

**Source: TH**

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## Konda Reddy Tribe

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- It is **one of the most backward tribal groups** in the states of **Andhra Pradesh and Telangana**.
  - They inhabit on both the banks of the Godavari River (East and West Godavari districts), in the hilly-forest region of Khammam (Telangana) and Srikakulam (Andhra Pradesh).
  - They live in the **interior forest areas largely cut-off from the mainstream**. Traditionally, they were **shifting cultivators** and recently, some of them have adopted **settled agriculture and horticulture**.

Collection of non timber forest products and basket-making supplement the sources of their livelihood.
  - Their mother tongue is Telugu with a unique accent.
  - Konda Reddis have also been recognized as **Primitive Tribal Group** (now **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups**)
  - The Konda Reddis are known for their **eco-friendly practices** such as use of household articles made of bamboo, bottle gourd, and seed.
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