Conocarpus Erectus

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Environment*

Why in News?

Recently, Ecologists warned against the planting of Conocarpus erectus along highways and medians in Tamil Nadu, despite bans in Gujarat and Telangana due to its invasive nature and public health risks.

- **Common Name –** Buttonwood and Button mangrove.
- **Scientific Name –** Conocarpus erectus
- **Kingdom –** Plantae
- **Family** – Combretaceae
- **Genus** – Conocarpus
- **Native Range** – Tropical America and Mexico
- **Introduced in India** – For urban afforestation and highway greening projects.



Key Characteristics

- **Growth** – Extremely fast, remains lush even in harsh summers.
- **Foliage** – Dense canopy, often obstructs streetlights, signage, and cameras.
- **Root System** – Aggressively invasive, penetrates concrete, pipelines, cables, and sewage networks.
- **Water Use** – Extracts large volumes daily, depleting groundwater and drying adjacent agricultural soil.
- **Pollen Release** – In winter, produces airborne pollen linked to allergies, chronic cough, and asthma.
- **Sustainable Alternatives –** Replace Conocarpus with native species like Neem, Peepal, Pongam, and Banyan for shade, ecological balance, and sustainable greening without invasive impacts.

Reference

- *The Hindu | Conocarpus erectus*

