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News: Plan in place to eradicate invasive plant species from Kerala's wildlife habitat

Senna Spectabilis

- The **Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR)** is facing the threat of invasive species of **Senna spectabilis** which is making incursions into the reserve from neighbouring Kerala and Bandipur.
- The trees are seen in both the **core and buffer areas of MTR**, with parts of **Nilakottai, Kargudi, Singara and Masinagudi ranges** being affected.
- **Introduced as an ornamental species and for use as firewood from South and Central America**, the species has become highly invasive in the Sigur plateau.
- The tree bears a **bright yellow flower**.
- According to the Forest Department estimates that the **species has spread over 800 - 1,200 hectares of the buffer zone** over the last five years.
- According to officials, policy level discussions are under way on **Tamil Nadu Newsprint and Papers Limited (TNPL)** plan to use wood from **Senna spectabilis from the MTR for papermaking**.
- They said the funds so raised **would be used in eco restoration** to bring back native species.

- *Senna spectabilis*, along with *Lantana camara*, is among five major invasive weeds that had taken over vast swathes of the Nilgiris, with *wattle* being the other major invasive species.
- *Eucalyptus* and *pine*, though exotic, do not spread as quickly as the other species and are considered easier to manage.