

Indore: Smuggling of African tortoise, DRI arrests two from Kolkata

written by Staff Reporter November 30, 2018 10:59 am



The city Zonal Unit of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI-IZU) received major success in intercepting the network of smuggling of rare wildlife animals by arresting 2 persons. Six live tortoises of exotic species were recovered from them. Based on specific information, DRI officers of city zonal unit, Forest Department of MP and MP police intercepted a vehicle carrying 6 live tortoises of exotic species in Seoni district early on Wednesday.

Two persons hailing from West Bengal Balram Naiya and Koshik Das were found involved in the smuggling and transporting without any documents of the exotic species of tortoise in a vehicle from Kolkata to Maharashtra. The case was booked under Indian Customs Act 1962. Both the accused hailing originally from Hooghly district of West Bengal have been arrested and sent to Judicial Remand in Seoni Jail. Further investigation is underway. Both are part of cartel of smugglers, which deals with tortoises. They confessed to similar crimes in the past.

The seized African spurred tortoise inhabits in the southern edge of Sahara desert in Africa. Smuggling of African spurred tortoise is a serious threat to the environment as such animals are important part of food chain and maintain ecological balance in their natural habitat. Their dwindling numbers have forced to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to put them in the list of Threatened category and agencies like DRI keep a close watch on such smuggling syndicates. The African spurred tortoise was handed over to the officers of forest department.

Now a days wildlife trafficking is one of the most serious environmental crimes, encompasses all stages in the supply chain, from taking wild fauna from its habitat, to trading, importing, exporting, processing, possessing, obtaining and consuming of these species.

India is also a member of the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora) since 1976. CITES is an international agreement between governments that aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. CITES works by subjecting international trade in specimens of selected species listed on Appendices to certain controls. CITES aims to end wildlife smuggling and to ensure that international trade does not threaten endangered species.

Wildlife crime is a huge business run by dangerous international networks, wildlife and animal parts are trafficked much like illegal drugs and arms. The world is dealing with an unprecedented spike in illegal wildlife trade, threatening to overturn decades of conservation gains.