

Gujarat: DRI seizes red sanders worth Rs 4.82 crore at Mundra port

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AHMEDABAD: Working on specific information, a team from Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), Gujarat zonal unit, carried out a search in a trailer marked for export at Mundra port on January 14 and found red sanders logs weighing 9.64 tonnes. The seized goods have approximate market value of Rs 4.82 crore, said DRI officials.

“The consignment was marked as ‘Sanitaryware’ and having its origin from Morbi. Upon search of the container, still loaded on a trailer, it was found that there were 160 pieces of sanitaryware along with the logs of red sanders. The trailer, container and sanitaryware have also been seized along with the logs,” said a DRI official.

The officials added that a person has been apprehended in connection with the case but refused to divulge name of the suspect. “All we can mention is, the person has been apprehended earlier in similar cases where his modus operandi was the same. He would export red sanders illegally from Mundra port using forged identities each time,” said an official.

DRI officials said that red sanders, locally known as rakta chandan, is a species protected under Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora (CITES), 1973, and Wild life (Protection) Act, 1972.

“Red sanders are in huge demand in east Asian nations, including China and Japan, due to the wood’s cultural importance – it’s used for making furniture, musical instruments and medicines. It’s considered auspicious by many and is also used to make luxury goods. Districts in Andhra Pradesh including Cuddapah, Chittoor, Anantapur, Kurnool, Prakasam and Nellore,” said an investigator. “It’s generally smuggled through air route where it first reaches to Singapore, Malaysia or Dubai from where it’s re-routed to China or Japan.”

Officials said that further probe to identify the supply channel and source of red sanders is on.