

## 43 Assam Roof Turtles seized

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In a joint operation, the sleuths of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized 43 rare Assam Roof Turtles from the Central Railway Station on Tuesday. Two of these turtles died. The officials from the Advanced Institute for Wildlife Conservation (AIWC) and Arignar Anna Zoological Park (AAZP) were involved in the operation. These freshwater turtles from Brahmaputra are found only in Eastern Assam and south-eastern parts of Bangladesh.

According to sources, the DRI received information about the smuggling of the rare turtles through train from the North-East. They maintained surveillance at the station and during the early hours of Monday, nabbed a passenger who was carrying 43 turtles. The officials of the AIWC and AAZP were informed immediately and a team of doctors arrived at the station in an ambulance and rescued the turtles.

“The rescue part is very important during such operations as these turtles are very sensitive beings and cannot bear stress. We took 41 of them to the Vandalur zoo and are being monitored by four veterinarians. All health parameters will be checked by the scientists from AIWC before rehabilitating them in their original habitat in Assam,” said a senior official from the Forest Department.

The turtles are usually smuggled from North East to Tamil Nadu and from here to Sri Lanka, Myanmar and parts of South- East and East Asia. This is the third such seizure this year.