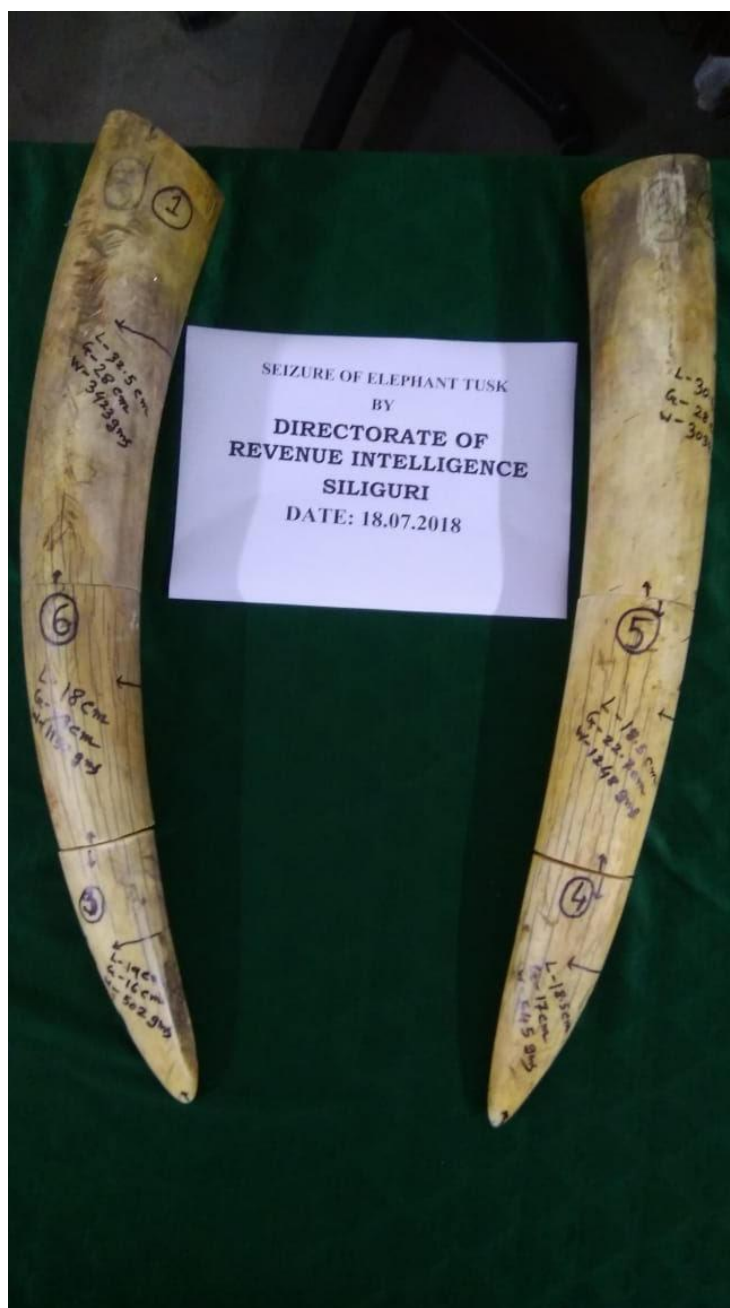


## PRESS RELEASE

**DRI detects case of Elephant poaching and seizes six pieces of ivory collectively weighing 9.908 kgs - preliminary analysis of the seized tusk indicates that the Elephants have been poached very recently - Two persons have been nabbed.**



Based on intelligence developed, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence intercepted two persons near TenzingNorgey Bus stand, Siliguri and recovered **six pieces of ivory collectively weighing 9.908 kgs** from their possession at 19.30 hrs. of 18.07.2018.

2. The interception took place when Shri Padum Bahadur Baidya, a resident of Assam and Shri Kishor Kumar Rai, a resident of Salugara, Dist- Jalapiguri, West Bengal were supposed to deliver the ivory to the prospective buyer from West Bengal. Interrogation of the two persons reveals that the ivory was smuggled from Nepal through Panitanki border by the duo.

3. Sections 48 and 49 of the Wild Life Protection (WPA) Act, 1972 prohibit trade or commerce in Wild Animals or Animal Articles or Trophies. Further, illegal import of wild life which is in violation of the Wild Life Protection Act automatically becomes a violation of the Customs Act by virtue of Section 111(d) of the Customs Act. Elephant tusks have consequently been seized under the provisions of Customs Act read with Wild Life protection Act, 1972.

4. Such offenses are punishable under Section 135 of the Customs Act as also under Section 51 of the WPA. The accused could be awarded a sentence of upto seven years of imprisonment in respect of trading in wild life listed in Schedule I of the WPA. Consequently, the two persons have been arrested in this case in terms of Section 104 of the Customs Act and further investigation is under progress. A preliminary analysis of the seized tusk indicates that the Elephants have been poached very recently in the past.

5. This is the third seizure of Elephant tusks effected by DRI this year in North Bengal and Assam region. DRI had seized 12.410 kgs of ivory at Siliguri on 15<sup>th</sup> Feb earlier on and another 5.838 kg of ivory in Guwahati on 26<sup>th</sup> May this year in the form of **24 pieces of ivory**.

DRI is committed to combating Wild Life Crime. It has been regularly making seizures of other Wild Life articles as well such as Red Sanders wood, a CITES listed species of timber, highly valued in the markets of China and East Asia, Star Tortoises and other species of turtles, Deer antlers, Tiger & leopard skins, exotic birds and primates amongst other species.

6. Thus, only last month, DRI seized **live exotic birds** of foreign origin smuggled into India from Bangladesh through Indo-Bangla border in Kolkata. In May, DRI had seized two **Hollock Gibbons** (Endangered species under Schedule 1 of the Wild life Protection Act, 1972) and two **Palm Civets** (Endangered species under Schedule II of the Wild life Protection Act, 1972) from Kolkata. In March this year, **DRI made a seizure of 214 numbers of Indian star tortoise** at Kolkata.

7. There is an urgent need to step up the fight against wild life crime, which has environmental, social and economic impact and a concerted effort is need by all the law enforcement agencies in combating the same.

8. Apart from preserving the flora and fauna, DRI remains committed to combating all other types of cross border crime as well, such as smuggling of gold, consumer goods, drugs and narcotics, Fake Indian Currency Notes and counterfeit goods, import-export frauds and trade based money laundering.