

PRESS NOTE

24th June 2018

Subject: DRI seizes 20.5 Metric Tonnes of Red Sanders at Mundra port

DRI developed intelligence that smugglers would attempt to send Red Sanders logs to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Vietnam from Mundra port in Gujarat. Acting on the intelligence, DRI officers from Mumbai and Gandhidham intercepted two containers destined for export to the above two countries. On examining the same, red sanders logs were found concealed in a consignment of sanitary ware. A total of 20.530 MT of Red Sanders logs valued at Rs 9.24 Crore were found in the two containers.

Red Sanders, botanical name *Pterocarpussantalinus*, is a non-fragrant variety of sandalwood which is used to make oriental musical instruments. The species has negligible utilization within the country mainly in Ayurvedic pharmacopoeia and sometimes for making small toys. The species has virtually no domestic demand for constructional or furniture use. It is a protected species under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) of Wild Fauna and Flora. Until 2014, auction or trade of even seized logs was banned. China, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia and UAE are primary destinations or transit points, with the consignments usually smuggled through ports in Chennai and Mumbai. The attempted smuggling through Mundra indicates that smugglers are attempting newer strategies to take out red sanders to overseas markets as it is hugely lucrative business. Further investigations in this case are in progress.