

12 kg elephant tusks, tiger teeth worth ₹1.14 cr seized

Kolkata: About 12 kg of elephant tusk and five pieces of tiger tooth, valued at ₹1.14 crore, have been recovered here, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officials said.

Three persons were arrested in this connection, the agency said in a statement on Tuesday.

"Acting on a tip-off, the DRI sleuths nabbed Muslima Begum and her husband Habibullah, suspected kingpin of the racket, at Sealdah Railway Station on Sunday and recovered two elephant tusks weighing 4.27 kg from Begum," it said.

DRI said that she had brought the items from Assam

and was poised to deliver the consignment to her husband, before which both were nabbed.

"Habibullah was wanted in several cases booked by the agency's Kolkata, Siliguri and Guwahati units, where he had attempted to smuggle around 48.79 kg elephant tusks and ivory statues with a total worth of ₹6.01 crore," a DRI official said.

He was involved in smuggling of elephant tusks, ivory items, tiger teeth and other animal body parts to neighbouring countries of Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar, the official said.

Interrogation of the couple led to the arrest of their son-in-

law Adil Hussain from a flat in Park Circus area on Monday.

A total of 31 pieces of ivory items and five pieces of tiger tooth were recovered from the flat, the agency said.

DRI said they also found tools and ₹1.48 lakh in cash from Habibullah's residence at Karaya Road.

While elephant tusks fetch lucrative prices in Nepal and Bangladesh, tiger teeth are in demand in China and Myanmar, the DRI said.

Animal body parts are prohibited from export under the provisions of Foreign Trade Policy, Customs Act, 1962 read with Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, it added. **PTI**