

DRI detects 18 non-indigenous animals in checked-in baggage with 3 passengers arriving from Bangkok

Follow up searches lead to recovery of another 139 animals belonging to 48 different species, 4 arrested

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Acting on a specific intelligence, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officers intercepted three passengers, including a lady passenger, arriving from Bangkok at the Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru on 22-01-2023.

Upon examination of their checked-in baggage resulted in the recovery of non-indigenous 18 animals (4 primates and 14 reptiles) with the assistance of Karnataka Forest Department officials. 10 of these were also included in Appendix II of CITES; The import of wild animals (including their parts and products) as defined in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (as amended from time to time) is prohibited and those species which are listed in CITES (**the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora**) are subject to the provisions of CITES. The animals attempted to be so smuggled by the said passengers were seized under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962.

The quick follow-up action with the assistance of Karnataka Forest Department officials and an officer deputed from WCCB Chennai, resulted in the recovery of another 139 animals belonging to 48 different species, including 34 CITES listed species from a farmhouse in Bengaluru used as a place of storage of similarly smuggled wildlife. Neither any documents evidencing the licit import of the wildlife items nor any filings under Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (Wildlife Division), Voluntary Disclosure Scheme till its extended deadline of March, 2021 were available. However, evidences of financial transactions to source Non indigenous wildlife through the route of smuggling, buy – sell transaction on the WhatsApp and other social media platform have been unearthed.

The recovered animals include extremely rare and threatened species like the Yellow and Green Anaconda, Yellow Headed Amazon Parrot, Nile Monitor, Red Foot Tortoise, Iguanas, Ball Pythons, Alligator Gar, Yaki Monkey, Veiled Chameleon, Raccoon Dog, White Headed Piones etc. were handed over to Bannerghatta Biological Park.

4 persons involved in the smuggling into India have also been placed under arrest, so far. Further investigations in the matter are on.

Pictures



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