

DRI seizes exotic birds smuggled into India from Bangladesh

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Kolkata, Sep 28 (PTI) The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has seized exotic birds smuggled into India from Bangladesh at Kolkata airport, according to an official statement.

Acting on intelligence, the officials intercepted a consignment at air cargo, Kolkata airport, which was to be transported to Hyderabad Thursday, it said.

The consignment, containing 38 exotic birds badly cramped in four narrow cages, was off loaded from the flight, the DRI said in the statement.

On inspection, the live exotic birds were identified as Java Sparrow, Star Finches, Golden Finches, Cockatiel and Aracari, it said.

All the birds have been handed over to Kolkata Zoo authority for safe custody.

"All these birds are of foreign origin," the DRI said.

Aracari is mostly found in South American continent and is a kind of Toucan, while the Finches and Cockatiel are Australian in origin.

The Java Sparrow as the name suggests is Indonesian in origin.

"All these birds appear to have been illegally imported into India without declaration or through illicit routes making their import into India liable to confiscation," the probe agency said.

In another case, the DRI in a joint operation with Tripura Police conducted a search operation Thursday at two separate locations under Sonamura and Kalamcherra police stations of Sepahijala district of Tripura and recovered 1,400 Kg of cannabis stored in plastic vats hidden underground.

The operation ran into almost 20 hours and heavy earth movers had to be used in the operation.

The plastic vats containing high quality cannabis were hidden about 10 to 12 feet under the earth in the hilly tracts of the area, and large plots of open land had to be dug up for the detection and recovery, the DRI said.

The market value of the seized cannabis is Rs 1.5 crore, it said.

"Organized cultivation and harvesting of ganja for commercial purpose in Tripura is seen to be a new trend and DRI is closely monitoring the development in the Eastern sector in partnership with Tripura Police and other enforcement agencies and paramilitary forces," the agency said.

It has been observed that cultivation of ganja is taking place in the hilly tracts and jungles of Tripura under the thick foliage of rubber plantations, the agency said.

Often business persons obtain lease of land and government sanction for cultivation of rubber plants and misuse bank loans by concentrating more on cultivation of ganja contrary to the government approval and to what bank loans were intended for, the DRI said.

This is the fourth successful operation with Tripura Police in the last eight weeks where ganja has been seized.