

DRI cracks down on illegal wildlife trafficking; elephant ivory, leopard skin, live pangolins and tiger parts seized; 11 persons arrested

Intelligence-led operations across Maharashtra expose attempts to trade in protected wildlife and wildlife derivatives

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Continuing its efforts to combat illegal wildlife trafficking and the illicit trade in protected wildlife products, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has, in three intelligence-led operations, seized four elephant ivory articles including intricately carved ivory articles, one leopard skin, two live pangolins, 3 kg tiger bones and two tiger canines. Eleven persons have been apprehended in the three operations.



Seized Ivory Tusks and articles

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In an operation targeting illegal trade in elephant ivory, DRI officers conducted a decoy operation based on specific intelligence regarding attempts to illicitly sell four elephant tusks, including intricately carved ivory articles. The operation resulted in the recovery of the four wildlife articles and apprehension of three

persons involved in the transaction. Possession without licence and trade/dealing in elephant ivory and articles made therefrom are prohibited under Section 49B of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. The seized articles and the detained persons were subsequently handed over to the jurisdictional Forest Range Officer for further investigation and necessary action.

In another intelligence led operation on 29.09.2026, DRI officers, after a surveillance, intercepted two persons near Purada village in Gondia district, Maharashtra, suspected to be attempting to sell leopard's skin after killing it. The interception resulted recovery of **one leopard skin**. The leopard (*Panthera pardus*) is listed under Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, and the recovered skin was accordingly seized under the relevant provisions of the Act. The two persons, along with the seized leopard skin, were handed over to the Forest Range Officer, Deoria Range, Gondia, for further necessary action.



Seized Leopard skin

Seized Leopard skin

In a major joint operation conducted on 26–27.09.2026 in the Allapalli forest area of Maharashtra, DRI, along with the Forest Department, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), Mumbai and USTR Anti-Poaching Unit, intercepted six persons suspected to be involved in the illicit trade of endangered wildlife. The operation resulted in the recovery of **one live adult pangolin, one live baby pangolin, 3 kg tiger bones and two tiger canines**. The pangolins, protected under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and listed in Schedule I, are also listed in Appendix I of CITES, with their international trade prohibited. Tigers and their body parts are similarly protected under Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

The investigations and follow up searches resulted in recovery of incriminating evidence relating to the alleged poaching, possession, transportation and proposed sale of tiger body parts. The two live pangolins, tiger bones, tiger canines and two motorcycles used by the persons were seized under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 for further necessary action by the Forest Department.



Seized Pangolin with Baby, two Tiger canines and Tiger bones

Seized Pangolin with Baby, two Tiger canines and Tiger bones

The three operations highlight DRI's continued focus on disrupting wildlife trafficking networks at the point of illegal possession, transportation and attempted sale of protected species and their derivatives, in close coordination with specialised wildlife enforcement agencies.

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