

Four top red sanders smugglers with international links arrested

COPS BUST SMUGGLING LINKS

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REDDY | DC

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Crackdowns by the AP police on top red sanders smugglers with international links have broken the spine of major modules involved in smuggling of the prized wood.

Recently, police arrested four top smugglers, including Dubai-based sanders don Sahul Hameed's son Azharuddin, K. Venkatesh, a rich smuggler, Lakshman, linked to a Bhutan-based module and Jayapal, another smuggler.

Investigation has also revealed that Sahul Hameed was funding the expenses of wanted smuggler K. Gangi Reddy in Mauritius, as he owed ₹70 crore to him.

Chittoor superintendent of police G. Srinivas said, "Venkatesh is a kingpin from Chennai and has rich connections. He, along with Selvaraj, tried to stop even the government auction of red

sanders. They adopt different modi operandi. Most of it is illegal. Venkatesh moves around in BMW cars."

Ten cases are booked against him and he has smuggled more than 350 tonnes of red sanders.

A top AP police official said, "We have been getting information on this network from various sources. Venkatesh sponsored the flight tickets of 178 persons who went for Azharuddin's wedding in Dubai recently. Most of them are smugglers and their aides."

The official also said, "Gangi Reddy was in Mauritius for several months. Sahul was funding his stay in mauritius as he owed ₹70 crore to him."

Azharuddin was arrested at Mumbai immigration when he arrived from Dubai.

The Enforcement Directorate has been informed about the properties of the accused so that they can be attached.



K. Venkatesh



Lakshman Thamang



Azharuddin

Delhi firms sell red sandalwood beads

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 3

■ The beads, made out of red sandalwood, are sold for around ₹20,000 to ₹30,000.

The AP police has said that illegal red sandalwood factories are mushrooming in and around New Delhi.

The Kadapa police, recently arrested a factory owner from Delhi for red sanders smuggling. Cops found several factories making red sanders beads and wooden crafts illegally and selling them at a high price.

Kadapa police arrested one Jayapal, a factory owner in Delhi, and also one T. Lakshman, who has links with the China and Bhutan modules.

Kadapa superintendent of police Navin Gulati said, "So far, we

knew that red sanders had a huge demand abroad, but it is now highly sought after in Delhi too. Factories on the outskirts of Delhi make beads and each bead is sold for around ₹20,000 to ₹30,000. These smugglers, including Lakshman, are linked to Katiganahalli in Karnataka. They were in close touch with each other."

Police said that the wood smuggled via Karnataka is mostly going to Delhi and from there to Nepal, China and Bhutan.

**SMUGGLERS
IN THE DOCK**

■ DUBAI-BASED SANDERS DON SAHUL HAMEED'S SON AZHARUDDIN WAS HELD AT MUMBAI IMMIGRATIONS.

■ K. VENKATESH, A RICH SMUGGLER FROM, TRIED TO STOP THE GOVERNMENT'S AUCTION OF RED SANDERS.

■ COPS SAID THAT SAHUL HAMEED WAS FUNDING WANTED SMUGGLER GANGI REDDY'S STAY IN MAURITIUS.