

Man held with red sandalwood at IGI

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NEW DELHI: The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) on Sunday said it nabbed a foreign national at Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport in Delhi for trying to smuggle red sandalwood out of the country. Two red sandalwood logs weighing 12kg worth ₹25 lakh were found in the man's luggage, who was set to board VietJet Flight VJ972 to Hanoi, Vietnam at 12.05am on Sunday, officials said.

The export of red sandalwood is restricted, and people exporting the sandalwood need to declare the same with appropriate documentation while exiting the country. CISF said the man did not possess any documents.

Officers discovered the crime at 9pm on Saturday when its surveillance team spotted a Vietnamese national, identified as Nguyen Thanh Tung, behaving suspiciously, officials said.

"On suspicion, he was diverted to a checking point so his luggage could be checked thoroughly through an X-BIS machine. The machine showed what appeared to be two logs inside his luggage," said a CISF official.

The suspect was allowed to complete check-in formalities but was closely monitored



The logs were worth ₹25 lakh.

through physical and electronic measures, the official said.

"After clearing the check-in process and immigration formalities, the passenger was intercepted by CISF surveillance and intelligence staff and was brought to the departure customs office. The baggage was opened in the presence of customs officials and two logs were found inside. Upon checking with forest department officials, the logs were confirmed to be of red sandalwood," said the CISF official.

"The logs were between 15 and 17 inches wide and each weighed more than 5kg. The suspect and his baggage have been handed over to the forest department for further action," the official added.

Red Sandalwood is valued highly in the international market owing to its medicinal properties. The wood and its oil are used to make skincare products.