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10 poachers netted in ops

Wildlife parts worth close to RM1mil seized in raids

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KUALA LUMPUR: An elephant tusk, parts of a tiger's skin and pangolin scales are among the wildlife parts worth almost RM1mil seized following a special operation against poachers in several parts of the country, says Deputy Comm Datuk Mastor Mohd Ariff.

The Bukit Aman Internal Security and Public Order Department (KDNKA) deputy director said the operation, codenamed Ops Bersepadu Khazanah (OBK), also saw 10 men, including seven Cambodians, arrested following several raids held between Oct 10 and 20.

He said the first to be arrested was a local man in Felcra Sungai Temau in Kuala Lipis, Pahang, on Oct 10.

"We seized various animal parts, including parts of a tiger skin and pangolin scales," he said at a press conference in Bukit Aman yesterday.

The second series of arrests was made at Kampung Padang Kunyit in Grik, Perak at about 6.10am on Oct 11, DCP Mastor said.

"Two local men were detained.

"We checked the premises and discovered 25kg of agar wood along with other wildlife, including five species of birds," he added.

The next raid was on a transit camp at the Endau-Rompin National Park on Oct 16, where a Cambodian man was detained, he said.

"We seized 162 nylon nets, 1kg of agar wood, four parts of a wildboar, five axes and machetes, as well as a tool to extract agar wood.

"We will investigate further to uncover whether the suspect has any accomplice," he said.

DCP Mastor said the OBK special task force then raided a big transit camp in Hutan Simpan Tembat in Hulu Terengganu on Oct 20.

"We detained six Cambodian men who used the transit camp for lodging and to refill their rations.



Taken into custody: Some of the weapons and tools that were seized from the detained Cambodians. (Inset) DCP Mastor.

"We believe the suspects spent between one and three months in the jungle to hunt and collect wildlife," he said.

Various parts, including an elephant tusk, two bone necklaces made from animal fangs and a turtle shell, were seized from the camp, he added.

"The suspects moved in groups and they received rations such as food from other accomplices," he said.

The successful operation was made possible due to cooperation between 143 Senoi Praaq and 106 Wildlife and National Parks department (Perhilitan) personnel, who combed the jungles in search of the poachers, DCP Mastor added.

"The modus operandi for the foreign poachers is to enter the country either legally or illegally and then an agent will send them to the edge of a jungle.

"They will then move in groups and enter the jungle in search of their loot," he said.

The poachers would leave thou-

sands of animal traps in the jungles, leading to the torture of wildlife.

"We discovered tigers with legs missing due to the traps.

"These poachers would place the traps and leave it there for months. It is not uncommon to find animals dying because they were trapped for long periods of time," he said.

In the black market, tigers are worth RM500,000 each in neighbouring countries while on the Internet, the price can reach up to RM800,000, he added.

"That is why the poachers prefer to collect their wildlife loot and sell it in the neighbouring countries as it will fetch a higher price," he said.

Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister Dr Xavier Jayakumar commended the OBK task force on their excellent work in catching the poachers.

"The operation and task force were formed on Sept 3 with the main mission of combating and nabbing poachers nationwide.

"It is also aimed at curbing illegal hunting, wildlife smuggling and

other offences that infringed on the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010," he said in a statement.

He also urged anyone with information to continue and support efforts of the OBK's task force by supplying relevant information.

"Those with information can contact the Perhilitan hotline at 1800-88-5151 or e-aduan through www.wildlife.gov.my," he said.

The OBK was launched on Sept 3 by Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Hamid Bador.

It consists of cooperation between Perhilitan and the General Operations Force's Senoi Praaq Team (Battalion 3) and Battalion 18.

The Senoi Praaq battalion comprises Orang Asli officers who are highly skilled at tracking in the forest.

Watch the video
thestartv.com

