

600 star tortoises seized at Anna In'tl airport

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Chennai, July 18 (UNI) In what could be termed as a serious security lapse, a Bangkok-bound passenger, who was "smuggling" more than 600 live star tortoises, was cleared, before he was apprehended by the CISF Security personnel at the Anna International airport here today.

Airport sources said the value of the tortoises kept in a plastic box and concealed in a suitcase, were estimated to be about Rs eight lakh. The endangered species, the most sought after delicacy in South East Asian countries, also have high medicinal value.

The sources said Faizal Rahman, hailing from Tondiarpet in the city, appeared a bit tense and was intercepted by the CISF personnel after his suitcase was cleared and the security clearance sticker affixed by the personnel manning the scanning machine.

The person at the scanning machine "inadvertently" failed to notice the movement of the tortoises in the suitcase, they added.

When the CISF personnel re-scanned the suitcase, they found the star tortoises hidden in the box and effected the seizure.

Faizal was arrested and handed over to the police.