

Two Tibetans and a Nepali jailed for wildlife skins

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(WTI; TibetInfoNet) Three men - two Tibetans and a Nepalese national - were sentenced to five years' rigorous imprisonment by a Delhi Court after being arrested in Delhi on 06 April 2005, with a cache of 45 leopard skins and 14 otter skins. Tashi (alias Anand), Lobsang Phuntsok, and Jeet Bahadur claimed to be working for notorious smuggler Tashi Tsering, alias Tsewang. Tsewang has allegedly been involved in smuggling wildlife products since the early 1990s and was only arrested on 11 December 2005 in Baudha after a massive surveillance operation staged by Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) and Wildlife Conservation Nepal (WCN) agents and supported by Indian and Nepali security personnel. Ashok Kumar, Vice Chairman, of the WTI said: *"It is unfortunate that the mastermind of the wildlife trade Tashi Tsering has not stood trial in India because of the lack of an extradition treaty with Nepal"*.

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