

India reports major tiger poaching bust

by UPI

NEW DELHI -- Four men and 10 women have been arrested in northern India and charged with poaching and illegally trading in tiger skins and skeletons. Belinda Wright, executive director of the Wildlife Protection Society of India, told a Times of London correspondent the organization worked with police in Uttar Pradesh by tipping the whereabouts of the smugglers through its network of informers. Among those arrested was Shabbir Hasan Qureshi, a known dealer of exotic animal parts, who has eluded police since January 2000, the report said. "Qureshi was probably handling a quarter of all the trade in India and many tigers have been through his hands this year alone, Wright said. "Taking him out is huge -- a major breakthrough." Tiger pelts can fetch more than \$12,000 from trophy hunters, while practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine will pay nearly \$5,000 for a set of tiger skin and bones, Wright said. Those arrested face sentences of up to seven years in prison, police said.

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