

Smuggling suspect returned to China

One of China's most-wanted fugitives, suspected of smuggling ordinary goods valued at 438 million yuan (\$65.7 million), was captured and returned from Indonesia to face trial, according to the General Administration of Customs on Sunday.



Ji Wenhong is detained on suspicion of smuggling luxuries at Xiamen Gaoqi International Airport in Fujian province on Wednesday. Ji was returned to China after Interpol captured him in Indonesia. [Photo/Xinhua]

Ji Wenhong, founder and former chief executive officer of online luxury retailer Shenzhen Zouxu Network and Technology – branded as Xiu.com was arrested in the island province of Bali in early August and returned to China on Thursday after spending 15 months on the run in Indonesia.

An online statement on Sunday by Xiu confirmed that the third-party cross-border operation platform had been involved in smuggling, and that some individuals in the company were under investigation.

“We believe the judicial departments will make a fair judgment,” the statement said; meanwhile, “all the company’s business is normal”.

“We have always had legal operations. We feel that giving back to society is our responsibility, and we will adhere to that purpose in the future,” the statement said.

According to Gongbei customs in Guangdong, under Ji’s leadership Xiu transported luxury clothing purchased in Europe and the United States to Hong

Kong.

The goods were then sent to an employee of a logistics company, identified only as Wu, who hired travelers to carry the merchandise through customs inspections. The smuggled goods were then transported to a Xiu company warehouse.

Xiu also offered false price information to an online retailer in Shenzhen and a logistics company in Guangdong, then smuggled the goods into China via express by declaring a low price and fabricating other information, customs officials said.

According to the authorities, imported goods were made to look like ordinary personal belongings, lowering the declared price below China's 800 yuan threshold, to reduce fees.

The administration said goods worth as much as 321 million yuan were handled by Xiu.com. Ji was also involved in other smuggling, it said.

When the operation was exposed, Ji fled the country on May 17 last year, a few days after being charged with smuggling ordinary goods.

In October, Interpol issued a red notice for Ji, and Indonesian police captured him on Bali island on Aug 4. Chinese anti-smuggling police escorted him to Xiamen airport on Aug 16.

Interpol issued red notices for the 100 most-wanted Chinese officials in April 2015. So far, more than 40 have returned from more than 16 countries and regions – including the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand – to stand trial.