[Over 1,600 crocodile skins seized in S. China](#)

Crocodile skins seized by coast guards are on show in Fangchenggang City, South China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Feb. 7, 2017. [Photo: China News Service/ Wang Lidan]

More than 1,600 pieces of crocodile skins and 500 kilograms of what appears to be crocodile meat were seized in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, coast guards said Thursday.

During a patrol Tuesday, a group of coast guards boarded a boat around 3 a.m., which was carrying a number of large polystyrene boxes. Upon inspection, the boxes contained what appeared to be 1,609 crocodile skins, each around 1.4 meters long, and 506 kilograms of crocodile meat.

The boat and its owner have been detained. A suspect caught said he was hired by a buyer in the city to receive the goods from a port in Vietnam.

Crocodiles are under state protection in China and are also classed as endangered by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Crocodile skin is the upmarket of consumer goods because of its small quantities and luxurious quality. The smuggling of alligator skins is emerging as the high-end leather market flourishes.

Crocodile skins are often used for luxury handbags.

The investigation continues.

Jail sentences for selling data on 200,000 newborns

Eight people involved in stealing, selling and buying information of more than 200,000 newborns have been sentenced for infringing citizens' personal information.

The Pudong New Area People's Court said yesterday that the defendants included two former employees of the city's Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The eight were sentenced from seven to 27 months, and were ordered to pay penalties ranging from 2,000 to 5,000 yuan (US$290 to US$730).

One of the accused, surnamed Han, 41, was working in the city-level Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and another surnamed Zhang, 50, was working for the district-level authority. In 2014, Zhang persuaded Han to steal information of newborns from the center's database to help his friend promote infant health products, promising a commission fee.

From the beginning of 2014 to July last year, Han illegally downloaded the information from the system and sent the details to Zhang via e-mail twice a month. Each time information on about 5,000 newborns was given. Zhang then sold the information to another of the accused, surnamed Fan, who was in the infant health products business. According to the court, Han, Zhang and Fan stole personal information on more than 200,000 newborns.

Moreover, Fan sold more than 250,000 pieces of information to another of the defendants, surnamed Li, who sold on the information to two of the accused, surnamed Huang and Wang. All three were also involved in infant health products. Wang's ex-driver, surnamed Wu, also stole information of more than 70,000 newborns.

All eight confessed their guilt to the court, returned their illegal income and paid the penalties imposed.

Shanghai ranks No. 4 of world's top-30 cities

Shanghai is the highest of five Chinese mainland cities at No. 4 in the list of the world's 30 most dynamic cities, according to the Global City Momentum Index released Thursday by real estate services provider JLL.

Beijing, Shenzhen, Hangzhou and Nanjing are the other four Chinese cities that appeared in the fourth annual list, ranking 15th, 22nd, 26th and 29th, respectively, according to the index, which monitors 134 major business hubs across the world and tracks the rate of change of a city's economy and commercial real estate market.

The most dynamic cities are able to embrace technological change, absorb rapid population growth and strengthen global connectivity, JLL said.

"Shanghai has strong ambitions to continue its growth and explicitly aims to become a global center for both financial services and technological innovation," said Joe Zhou, head of research for JLL China.

"For now, Shanghai's real estate market remains one of the world's most dynamic markets, with strong demand being driven by the growth of domestic firms."

Asian cities made up half of the top 10, with Bangalore in India replacing London to take the top spot for the first time.

"Our research showed that the Asia-Pacific region is home to more than half of the globe's 30 most dynamic cities and real estate markets, highlighting the rise of commercial cities such as Bangalore and Ho Chi Minh City as major hubs of commerce," said Megan Walters, head of research for Asia Pacific at JLL.

41.2 pct of Chinese hold urban hukou in 2016

China's registered permanent urban residents rose to 41.2 percent of the total population in 2016, after easing of "hukou" (household registration) policy, the Ministry of Public Security announced Thursday.

In 2015, only 39.9 percent of the population held urban status and the current urbanization drive is aiming for 45 percent by 2020.

At a video conference held on Thursday, the ministry of public security called for a more reasonable points system and for registration in most cities for students and migrant workers to become easier still.

The government is gradually bringing the unregistered population into the hukou system, including orphans, second children born illegally during the one-child policy and the homeless.

Last year, more than 1.43 million people formerly without hukou were registered, the ministry said.

Various benefits such as health care and education are based on hukou, and are supposed to be in line with long-term places of work and residence.

[Security guard stole 6 million yuan 'to pay off debts']

A man in northeastern China who stole 6 million yuan (US$874,000) after hijacking an armored bank truck he was driving said he carried out the heist to pay off his debts.

Li Xuyi took four security guards hostage on Sept 7 using a "gunlike object" and then fled with the truck, according to a statement by the Yingkou Intermediate People's Court in Liaoning province.

The defendant, who confessed to the crime, was hired by a security company in July and was transporting 35 million yuan in cash from the Agricultural Bank of China's Yingkou branch to a cash storage center.

He was arrested at his home eight hours after the robbery. Police recovered 6 million yuan from the home of one of Li's relatives, while the rest of the cash was left in the truck, which was abandoned in a residential parking area.

China Central Television reported that a guard in the truck said Li diverted the vehicle from its normal route and disarmed the guard in the passenger seat by threatening him with a "black gun", which it was later discovered was not a real firearm.

Li then produced duct tape and ordered the guard and two other unarmed guards to tie themselves up. According to police, he took three bags of cash, which he intended to use to pay off his debts to a bank.

A news website owned by NetEase reported that Li, who was tried on Jan 24, used to be a construction contractor and once had a car wash business.

The Yingkou court will sentence Li at a later date.