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THAILAND

1. Ultraman fight

*(from Post Today Newspaper, Business Market Section, Page B2, Thailand, 11 January 2007
Post Today Newspaper, Business Market Section, Page B1, Thailand, 12 January 2007)*

Sompote Saengduenchai, chairman of Tsuburaya Chaiyo Production, had to seize the Ultraman models in the department store where was held for New Year celebration and Children Day. He said he had to seize the models as his company won the case with Tsuburaya Production (of Japan). The ruling gives Sompote, owner and chairman of Chaiyo Productions, exclusive rights to all Ultraman characters and the Ultraman trademark in all territories except Japan. He will have distribution, reproduction and broadcasting rights in all mass media including radio and television.

However, later Sampote Thienthong, managing director of Pro-link company, the representative of Tsuburaya Production (of Japan), had hand the letter to the police explain that all 6 models that Tsuburaya Chaiyo seized were not include in the ruling.

2. Thailand-Japan agreement

(from Bangkok Post Newspaper, Home News Section, Page 4, Thailand, 12 January 2007)

The National Legislative Assembly should think carefully before endorsing the delayed free trade deal between Thailand and Japan since its members were not directly elected by the people, social advocates said.

Because the deal would have widespread and long-term impacts, it was inappropriate for an agency appointed under a particular political circumstance to make a decision on it, said Buntoon Srethasirrote, of the National Human Rights Commission's sub-panel on intellectual property rights. Social activists said there were some risky points.

These included tariff cuts for waste sent from Japan to Thailand, patent rights for organisms, and the basic lack of transparency and public participation in the accord's development process.

The officials involved have made repeated claims about the huge benefits that Thais could gain from the deal, while playing down social advocates' fears over its negative effects. Despite mounting public concerns, the interim government late last year declared that it would proceed with the deal.

Mr Buntoon said the government should suspend the trade pact and disclose the draft agreement to the public. Instead of going ahead with the FTA, the interim government should develop a clear direction and guidelines on free trade negotiations and implementation to ease conflicts in society that might erupt as a result of the pact.

3. DIP to promote more IP

(from Bangkok Post Newspaper, Business Section, Page B10, Thailand, 13 January 2007

The Nation Newspaper, Business Section, Page 2B, Thailand, 13 January 2007

Post Today Newspaper, Business Market Section, Page B3, Thailand, 13 January 2007

Krung Thep Thurakit Newspaper, Economic Industry Section, Page 5, Thailand, 13 January 2007

Thai News Service, 15 January 2007)

The Director-General of the Intellectual Property Department, Mrs. Puangrat Asavapisit, said her department would continue to work in accordance with the four-year strategy from 2006-2010.

For this year, the department will promote the intellectual property for businesses, the development of the intellectual property rights system, the suppression of intellectual property rights, as well as the promotion of trade discipline.

On the occasion to celebrate His Majesty the King's 80th birthday, the department will also organize an event to display exceptional inventions. The database for Thai patents will also be developed and the information will be linked with the European Patent Office.

Mrs. Puangrat said her department would have a discussion with the Royal Thai Police next week to find effective ways to suppress intellectual property infringement. They will work together to solve this problem in the northern region of Thailand. The department and the record companies will also work on the copyrights of songs. The department has also asked the owners of some department stores to terminate leasing contracts with tenants who sell counterfeit goods. Officials say that about half of all counterfeit goods are sold in certain department stores while the rest are found at street stalls and other markets.

A total of 8,895 IP violations were brought to courts between January and November 2006, with 2.68 million units of illegal products seized, compared with 7,689 cases and 2.26 million units seized for all of 2005.

IP owners such as the US-based Motion Picture Association, one of the most powerful lobby groups, have expressed satisfaction with improved crackdowns in recent years, she said.

She said the response of industry groups such as the MPA was the best measure of Thailand's attempts to suppress illegal activities. Even so, Thailand remains among a number of countries on the "watch list" of the US Trade Representative, under Washington's so-called Special 301 law, which could mean a reduction in trade preferences.

Moreover, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development will help Thailand fight intellectual piracy by sending an official team in the near future to assist in drafting a suppression plan against copyright violation. Unctad secretary-general Supachai Panitchpakdi initiated the plan to support Thailand in improving standards for suppressing and preventing rights violations, she added.

This will boost Thailand's image among foreign countries, she said. Although Thailand remains on the US Trade Representative's (USTR) watch list of countries that need close monitoring, the country could be upgraded to a higher status if it showed significant suppression plans to reduce both the volume and value of counterfeit goods, she said. Normally, the USTR reviews IP protection by its trading partners in January and February of each year, she said.

To promote international cooperation in reducing piracy, the Kingdom will soon sign a memorandum of understanding with Indonesia, and another with Australia, to help promote IP awareness and suppress violation in each country.

4. Fake drugs

*(from Bangkok Post Newspaper, Home News Section, Page 4, Thailand, 18 January 2007
The Nation Newspaper, Local News Section, Page 2A, Thailand, 18 January 2007)*

At least 90% of these drugs are fake, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said. Werawan Tangkeo, the deputy secretary-general, said most counterfeit drugs for people with erectile dysfunction came from China and India.

He conceded the FDA's stringent regulations prohibiting chemists from selling sex-enhancing drugs freely might be the main reason for the spread of fake drugs.

Drug counterfeiting is a thriving global business. The World Health Organisation estimated sales of fake drugs would rise from US\$35 billion in 2005 to at least \$75 billion by 2010. It also found that 32.1% of counterfeit drugs have no key active ingredients and 21.4% had false ingredients.

Pfizer Global Pharmaceuticals, the world's leading manufacturer of erectile dysfunction treatments, surveyed five main tourist destinations - Chiang Mai, Pattaya, Koh Samui, Phuket and Bangkok – and initial results were similar to those of the FDA.

The company has asked the FDA to lift the controls on sale of the legal drug, Ms Werawan said.

Ralph Paul Horton, of product security at the US-based Eli Lilly pharmaceutical company, has asked for closer cooperation from local and international communities to tackle the growth in counterfeit drugs.

This is a crime that affects human health, he said at a workshop on pharmaceutical anti-counterfeiting strategies organised by the US-Asean Business Council. He urged the government to enact laws to deal with the issue effectively.

The FDA is preparing a legal amendment increasing jail terms and fines for people selling or producing fake drugs.

5. VCD companies fight piracy

(from Krung Thep Thurakit Newspaper, Business Section, Page 32, Thailand, 24 January 2007)

Thirteen VCD/DVD producers announced that they would set up the company, Supplier Right, which would be the representative for those 13 companies to exam and seize pirated VCDs and DVDs. Mr Seksan Sunankingetch, CEO of EVS Entertainment, one of them, said they could not rely on government because the changed government made the suppression stuck.

6. Hollywood hopes law will better curb piracy

(from Bangkok Post Newspaper, Business Section, Page B3, Thailand, 25 January 2007)

Hollywood producers hope amendments to the 1994 copyright law will reduce counterfeiting in Thailand, which they say has one of the poorest records for intellectual property protection in Asia Pacific.

Thailand had the third-worst record in the region in 2005, with piracy costing the US movie industry potential revenue of US\$148 million, according to an independent survey commissioned by the Motion Picture Association (MPA), the powerful Hollywood lobby group.

The worst offender was China, where piracy cost moviemakers \$244 million. Japan, while a developed country, was the second-worst because of its huge market value as opposed to being a production base for pirated films as Thailand and China are.

The survey said Thailand's total film industry in 2005 lost 17.44 billion baht to counterfeits. Home-entertainment products such as DVDs and VCDs suffered the most with losses of 12.94 billion baht, cinema 2.66 billion baht and home entertainment rentals 1.84 billion baht.

The Intellectual Property Department and the Commerce Ministry are amending Section 66 of the Copyright Law, which will not allow violators, including manufacturers and distributors, to make out-of-court settlements. On the other hand, violations would face criminal charges and jail terms.

Michael Ellis, the MPA's senior vice-president and regional director, said the association would rather see the draft of Section 66 cover all violators, including small retailers and street vendors.

The department has already submitted the draft to the Council of State for consideration. Mr Ellis anticipated that once the draft was approved, the Thai government would be able to use other laws as the anti-money laundering law to increase efficiency of law enforcement. The MPA believes organised crime groups are behind rampant pirated goods worldwide.

The profit margin on heroin trafficking is 350%, while the margin on pirated DVDs is up to 1,150% with no risk, said Mr Ellis.

He said counterfeited optical discs dominated 90% of total sales of optical discs supplied by MPAs members.

7. Neglected diseases of poor nations in focus

(from The Nation Newspaper, Thailand, 25 January 2007)

Unlike other medical conferences, the upcoming Prince Mahidol Award Conference will focus on policies aimed to countering health problems faced by minority groups around the world.

Highlights of the conference include a discussion on the adverse effects of the drug patent system on people living with HIV/Aids - to life-saving medications, said Prof Vicharn Panich, chairman of the conference.

The session will be jointly organised by the World Bank and UNAids. It will be held in Bangkok from February 1-2.

Organisers expect to welcome about 200 international delegates who are prominent figures in the fields of medicine and public health, as well as organisations on development, plus an estimated 100 Thai participants.

8. Thailand stuns drug firms with generic licences

(from Reuters News, 25 January 2007

AFX Asia, 25 January 2007

Bangkok Post Newspaper, Home News Section, Page 2, Thailand, 27 January 2007

The Nation Newspaper, Local News Section, Page 3A, Thailand, 27 January 2007)

Thailand's army-installed government has issued licences for cheap generic versions of a heart disease and an AIDs drug, the health minister said, dealing a shock blow to foreign pharmaceutical firms.

"The laws have been signed and they are now effective," said Mongkol na Songkhla, who became health minister after a Sept. 19 military coup. He cited the ballooning costs of treatment as the reason for the move.

"We have to do this because we have so many patients to treat with so little budget. We can't watch our people die and their patents have been here for so long," he said.

Mongkol said the drugs were HIV-AIDs and heart disease treatments but declined to confirm newspaper reports that they were Abbott Laboratories' Kaletra, and Plavix, a blockbuster anti-clotting agent sold by Sanofi-Aventis and Bristol-Myers Squibb.

In November, two months after the army's removal of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, the interim government issued its first compulsory licence, to make a generic version of Efavirenz, an anti-retroviral.

That decision drew a swift riposte from U.S. drug maker and patent holder Merck & Co Inc. By contrast, AIDs activists applauded Bangkok for taking a bold stance.

The widening of compulsory licensing is another blow to foreign investors still reeling from capital controls imposed in December to stem a rise in the baht and a proposed tightening of laws governing overseas firms in Thailand.

The Thai government said it would break the patents on two AIDS and heart disease drugs, prompting a swift threat from pharmaceutical firms to review their investment plans in the kingdom.

The announcement came less than two months after Thailand decided to issue "compulsory licenses" for pharmaceutical giant Merck's high-priced HIV/AIDS drug Efavirenz.

AIDs activists praised the decision to break that patent, halving the cost of the medication, but pharmaceutical companies condemned the move as a threat to their intellectual property rights.

With Thailand set to use generic versions of more drugs, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers' Association (PhRMA) warned that companies would reassess their plans for investment in the kingdom.

"Leading members of the association have been stunned by these statements and have confirmed to me that their plans for further investment in Thailand will be put on hold pending a review of the foreign investment climate," PhRMA president Teera Chakjarnarodom said in a statement.

"They are concerned about continuing to invest in a country where the government cannot provide a basic guarantee for the safety of their assets."

The World Trade Organization (WTO) allows governments to declare a "national emergency" and produce generic versions of patented drugs without the permission of the drug's maker. But Teera said the health ministry had taken its decision without consulting pharmaceutical firms and accused the government of using an overly broad definition of an emergency.

"The law allows such actions with pharmaceutical products only in cases of extreme national emergencies, or during wartime, and only after negotiation with the companies concerned," he said.

"It is a provision in the law that has to be used judiciously and with extreme caution if one is not to undermine the confidence of the investment community."

International companies are still reeling from proposals to tighten rules on foreign investments in Thailand, which have dampened investor confidence in a country that underwent a military coup just four months ago.

Health promotion groups have lauded the Public Health Ministry for its "politically courageous move" to push for cheaper versions of patented drugs for HIV/AIDS and heart disease and say the action complies with both Thai law and international agreements.

The groups gave a boost to the ministry's morale after its decision to seek compulsory licences for the drugs enraged foreign drug-manufacturing giants, which threatened to stall their investments Intellectual Property Thailand.

Compulsory licensing is a measure permitted under the World Trade Organisation allowing member countries to import or produce generic versions of the drugs in cases of "national emergency".

It is a good opportunity for the interim government to push for work that benefits the public, he said. A government that is the result of a general election would not be brave enough to risk itself over such a political move, he said.

The ministry's decision also conforms with the Patent Act, he said citing Act 51 in the law that allows the government to enforce compulsory licensing. However, intellectual property law expert Jade Donovanik said the government needed to give sound explanations to the drug firms' countries of origin.

The drug firms have a right to petition the Administrative Court once the compulsory licensing takes effect, he said. However, they would also have to prove why the government could not enforce the compulsory licensing.

Kannikar Kijtiwatchakul from Medicins Sans Frontieres called on the multinational drug manufacturers threatening to halt their investments if their patents are broken to stop "lying" at a press conference held in response to the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers Association's statement. "They halted their medical research here long ago and what they're doing now is simply importing drugs to sell in the country," she said

"What investment are you talking about? Let me refresh your memories, you're investing in nothing here but selling drugs, aren't you?" said Supatra Nacapew, the chairperson of the Thai NGOs Coalition on Aids. "Well, if it's best for you to abandon the Thai pharmaceutical market, we'll be more than happy to help you pack up - free of charge," she added.

9. Customs to get tougher on pirates

(from The Nation Newspaper, Business Section, Page 2B, Thailand, 27 January 2007

Bangkok Post Newspaper, Business Section, Page B10, Thailand, 27 January 2007)

The Customs Department will re-enforce its campaign against pirated goods, as well as get tougher on importers avoiding full duties, director-general Chavalit Sethameteekul said.

Thailand and other Asian countries are under pressure from the US and Europe to be tougher on fake goods violating intellectual property rights. Chavalit conceded Thailand was a transit point for pirated goods heading to Europe and the US.

The government is drafting new laws to give the department powers to inspect containers bound for third countries. Australia imposed a similar law, he said.

Random transshipment checks will reduce the volume of pirated goods transiting from Thai ports, he said. Western governments have identified China as one of a number of countries producing copied brand-name goods.

The department will also impose tough measures on importers declaring goods at artificial purchase prices in order to evade full duties, Chavalit said. The department will focus on products such as automobile parts and cigarettes.

10. Cheap, generic forms of two drugs approved

(from Bangkok Post Newspaper, Home News Section, Page 2, Thailand, 30 January 2007)

Public Health Minister Mongkol na Songkhla yesterday shrugged off pharmaceutical giants' threats to freeze investment in Thailand in protest at his decision to allow generic, inexpensive versions of heart disease and Aids drugs.

Dr Mongkol said he had issued compulsory licences for two drugs -- Kaletra, an advanced anti-Aids drug, and Plavix, a blockbuster treatment for heart disease.

The minister invoked article 51 of the 1992 Patent Law to import or produce a generic version of the two drugs. In November, the ministry invoked the same law to import and produce the anti-Aids drug Efavirenz.

The ministry would issue a compulsory licence for Kaletra for a period of five years. The compulsory licence for Plavix would run until the government could find another regimen to substitute for this heart disease medicine, he said.

MALAYSIA

1. Enact tougher laws against counterfeit goods

(from Business Times, 24 January 2007)

Malaysia can improve its attractiveness to foreign investors by further tightening policies against counterfeit consumer products, said a visiting US Patent and Trademark official.

Senior Counsel Peter N. Fowler said enhanced legal framework and regulatory regime, combined with strong enforcement, would produce results. He was speaking to the Press after a briefing on intellectual property rights (IPR) to the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers in Kuala Lumpur.

He said having IPR on the agenda of ongoing US-Malaysia free trade agreement (FTA) talks would help support the fight against piracy.

Fowler said Malaysia already meets the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPs) obligations under the World Trade Organisation.

The International Chamber of Commerce estimates global trade in counterfeit goods at more than US\$600 billion (RM2.1 trillion) per year, he said.

"Compared to white collar embezzlement, the laws don't see intellectual property crime as a 'true economic crime' and this poses huge challenges to law enforcement everywhere, including Malaysia," Fowler said.

Karen M. Hauda, director from the Office of Intellectual Property, meanwhile, highlighted benefits of patents and data protection. They create incentives necessary to promote the development of life-saving drugs, she said.

"This also increases the willingness of companies to release innovative drugs in protected markets," Hauda added.

2. MPA praises Malaysia for tough action on copyright pirates

(from Asia Pulse, 24 January 2007)

The Motion Picture Association (MPA) Tuesday praised Malaysian law enforcement agencies for unrelentingly hounding copyright property pirates, who so badly damage the country's economy and reputation.

MPA's Asia Pacific senior vice president and regional director Mike Ellis said numerous seizures made by the police sent a strong message to copyright pirates that Malaysia was making a strong commitment to intellectual property protection.

"The MPA is committed to fully supporting Malaysian law enforcement agencies in their anti-piracy and intellectual property rights protection efforts and will continue to do so," he said.

Ellis praised the police on their successful raid of unlicensed replicating facility in Klang on Jan 16 where they arrested four men and seized six VCD replicating lines, two printing machines, two metalising and coating machines and other ancillary machinery.

He said the seized replicating machines were worth an estimated US\$1.7 million (RM6.46 million) and were capable of producing 21 million pirate discs per year, generating potential revenue of US\$30 million (RM114 million).

Ellis said in 2006, Malaysian law enforcement authorities seized or sealed 14 DVD and 11 VCD replicating machines that were suspected of having been used to manufacture pirated optical discs. The seized machines were capable of producing more than 87 million pirated discs in a year.

3. Malaysia trade talks could scupper disk pirates (from Reuters News, 30 January 2007)

Malaysia's free trade talks with the United States may be faltering, but they are already having an impact on the streets of Kuala Lumpur, where a vigorous crackdown on illegal music and movies has sent pirates scurrying.

Tourists know Malaysia as a haven for cheap copies of the latest films and songs, but the country is trying to shake off that reputation as it negotiates a free trade pact with the United States that will beef up intellectual property protection. Malaysia's trade minister has said she did not expect the talks to wrap up by a July deadline.

But U.S. trade officials were more optimistic, pointing to moves to hound illegal disk vendors off the streets of the Malaysian capital.

"Increasingly every country in the world is recognising that what they're facing in counterfeiting is real organized crime," Peter Fowler, a U.S. commerce department lawyer and one of the trade pact's negotiators, said during a visit to Malaysia.

From conventional moves such as more raids, powerful machines to scan cargo at ports, tougher laws and a dedicated court for piracy cases to unusual steps such as a plan to train dogs to sniff out DVDs, Malaysia is determined to clean up its act.

Last week, customs officials at the capital's Kuala Lumpur International Airport busted a scam that used PVC pipes to smuggle in pirated DVDs, after the images generated by X-ray scans of the packages aroused their suspicions.

Malaysian law enforcement officials have become more focused on piracy over the past year, entertainment industry officials say.

"There's been a drastic change, especially since last year," said Tan Ngiap Foo, chief executive of the Recording Industry Association of Malaysia, which groups more than 100 companies, and leads the industry's effort to battle copyright fraud.

SINGAPORE

New fund will encourage SMEs to manage intellectual property
(from *Today, Singapore*, 24 January 2007)

To draw more small businesses into managing their intellectual property, the Government is offering \$9 million of targeted funds for an estimated 200 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) over two years.

The Intellectual Property (IP) Management scheme will defray up to half of the costs for a company to embark on programmes to identify an IP deployment strategy and to use a diagnostic tool kit.

"IP is an essential enabler for companies that want to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage. However, we observe that there is still slow implementation on the ground," Minister of State for Trade and Industry Lee Yi Shyan said at the fund's launch.

He cited a 2006 survey commissioned by the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore, which showed that only three out of 10 local firms had strategic goals related to IP creation and performance, while just two out of 10 documented their IP plans.

Most associate IP with high-tech products, but this intangible asset is essentially any idea - such as an Old Chang Kee curry puff - that is protected by the law to facilitate commerce, said Mr Lee. Stikfas, a homegrown toy company, was one of the first SMEs to sign up for the IP management scheme administered by Ipos and Spring. "When we create a new product, we first put our money into protecting the IP before anything else, including manufacturing or marketing," said Stikfas' founder and chairman Banh Vinh Jeow.

PHILIPPINES

1. NBI seized P4-March worth of computers, pirated software
(from *Philippines Daily Inquirer*, 2 January 2007)

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has seized more than P4 million worth of computers and pirated software during a recent raid on a Mandaluyong City firm, according to one of its officials.

NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division chief Jose Justo Yap said his operatives raided the firm Decision Support Systems, at No. 197-B Epifanio Delos Santos Avenue (EDSA), Mandaluyong City in December 2006.

Yap said Microsoft Corporation and Symantec Corporation, through the Business Software Alliance (BSA), had filed a complaint against the owners of the Mandaluyong firm with the NBI. The NBI and the BSA have been cooperating and sharing information since last year to eliminate the proliferation of pirated computer software in the country.

By virtue of search warrants issued by Judge Felixberto Olalia of Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 8, agents of the NBI raided Decision and confiscated 47 desktop computers and nine compact discs containing unauthorized copied of Microsoft Corp. and Symantec Corp. software, Yap said.

Yap placed the approximate value of the seized items at P4.4 million. He said charges of violating Republic Act 8293 or the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines were being readied against the owners of the raided company.

2. Anti-counterfeit seminar

(from Business World, 12 January 2007)

Save lives by stopping the proliferation of fake medicines. This was the overall thrust of the recently concluded Anti-Counterfeiting Seminar organized by Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association of the Philippines and the Bureau of Food & Drugs at the Pangasinan Regency Hotel in Calasiao, Pangasinan.

A seminar for the members of the Region 1 Drugstores Association of the Philippines, the lecture noted the important responsibilities of medical retailers. The speakers and participants were united in stating that counterfeit drugs are dangerous and seriously threaten the health and safety of users, and urged the public to call the toll-free hotline number 1.800.10.FAKEMED to report any information on suspicious counterfeit drug sellers.

3. Existing Philippine intellectual property laws sufficient to protect startup technologies

(from Hechanova Bugay & Vilchez Law Office, 16 January 2007)

In an interview held during the Philippine Biotechnology Summit, Philippine Rice Research Institute (PHILRICE) Deputy Executive Director Ronilo A. Beronio stated that the Philippines has sufficient laws to support the commercialization of startup technologies, such that Congress may not need to pass a law similar to the Bayh Doyle Act of the United States.

Existing laws such as the Intellectual Property Code (R.A. 8293) and the Magna Carta for Scientists, Engineers, Researchers and other S & T Personnel in the Government (R.A. 8439) already protect the intellectual property rights of science and technology (S&T) personnel from both the private and public sectors.

Under R.A. 8439, S&T personnel from the public sector can in fact own the result of their R&D activities upon proper patent application. "We have sufficient legal framework that will protect intellectual property rights. That is a gold mine that science workers don't know of," said Beronio.

Beronio also emphasized that the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), an international agreement where the Philippines is a signatory, provides that technical solutions to man's agricultural problems are by their very nature patentable.

4. Govt widens dragnet against counterfeits

(from The Manila Times, 18 January 2007)

The Intellectual Property Office will hold building owners liable if vendors occupying their establishments are caught selling counterfeit goods.

"We have conducted raids in three areas in Quezon City and Manila and the Department of Justice will be filing cases against building owners who allow vendors in their establishments to sell fake goods," Adrian Cristobal Jr., IPO director general, said.

If the agency pushes through with its plan, then this would be the first time the government undertakes stronger measures against intellectual property infringement.

Cristobal said the move is based on President Arroyo's November memorandum ordering stricter implementation of the Intellectual Property Code.

The order directs government agencies to consider filing criminal, civil or administrative charges against owners of malls and other buildings that lease space to establishments selling counterfeit items.

The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) has conducted raids at Tutuban Center in Divisoria, Shoppesville Arcade and the University of the Philippines shopping center, and confiscated P11 million worth of counterfeit goods.

Noel de los Reyes, the head of the raiding team, said the department will file charges against the building owners and retailers.

A regional trial court issued the search warrants for the raids.

More than P10-million worth of fake Louis Vuitton items were seized in several stalls in Tutuban Center. In Shoppesville, 25 stalls were caught selling counterfeit Lacoste products with an estimated value of P750,000.

5. P1.3B in counterfeit goods seized in 2006
(from *Philippines Daily Inquirer*, 20 January 2007)

The National Committee on Intellectual Property Rights reported Friday that active participation of corporations and business groups in the campaign to uphold intellectual property rights helped to haul in P1.3 billion worth of counterfeit goods in 2006.

Concerted efforts of various agencies and private sector groups brought the total haul to P2.4 billion since the committee was created in 2005, said Adrian Cristobal Jr., director general of the Intellectual Property Office, which leads the committee.

“The numbers represent the hard work of all the agencies [and] the contributions of the IP owners' associations, business chambers, and industry associations in the advocacy,” Cristobal said. He also cited efforts in “education and monitoring work.”

He said that while the number of enforcement operations or raids was halved to 1,453, the value of goods seized increased because the concerned agencies went after “big-ticket IP violators.”

Cristobal said the Bureau of Customs accounted for P722 million, or 59 percent, of the total estimated value of seized goods in 2006 through 26 warrants of seizure and detentions.

Counterfeit branded shoes and clothes were among the seized goods by the customs bureau, he said.

The bureau's IP unit initiated more stringent border controls with its Automated Customs Operational System and established a risk assessment program and management system for data gathering, he added.

Cristobal said the National Bureau of Investigation turned in P291 million worth of seized goods from 419 operations; the Optical Media Board, P172 million worth from 706 inspections and 87 searches; and the Philippine National Police, P131 million worth of fake goods from 259 operations.

6. Bureau of Customs seize DVD and VCD replicating machines
(from *Hechanova Bugay & Vilchez Law Office*, 25 January 2007)

The Bureau of Customs-Intelligence and Enforcement Group (BOC-IEG) seized three container vans of replicating machines at the Port of Manila valued at US\$185,000. Each of the replicating machines is capable of mass-producing 100,000 fake copies of DVDs and VCDs per hour, translating to billions of dollars of annual loss for legitimate business.

BOI-IEG deputy Commissioner Celso P. Templo said that the replicating machines were mis-declared as machinery and parts from Hong Kong and the United States. All the shipments were consigned to FDD East Commercial with office address at Tabang, Bulacan, north of Manila. Investigation revealed that the address was fictitious and non-existent.

The persons and company involved in the failed smuggling attempt will be charged for violation of the revised Tariff and Customs Code in relation to Republic Act 9239 also known as the "Optical Media Act of 2003."

7. Digital IP cases database rolled out
(from *Manila Bulletin*, 28 January 2007)

The IP Case Database is a web-based application that provides real-time updating of IP violation cases filed with the Department of Justice (DoJ) by law enforcement agencies, and document tracking for the Philippine National Police (PNP), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Optical Media Board (OMB), Bureau of Customs (BoC), the DoJ, and IP Philippines.

"The IP Case Database is a central repository of data and information on intellectual property cases for strategic and tactical decisions of NCIPR members. We have embarked on this project in the interest of transparency in government operations," Atty. Adrian S. Cristobal Jr., Director General of IP Philippines, said.

The creation of the IP Case Database forms part of the nine-point directive of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in her November 17, 2006 memorandum to the NCIPR, "IP Philippines shall maintain a database and enforcement monitoring system, and consolidate information and reports from other agencies."

In the PNP and NBI module, authorized users can search for existing warrants, draft new files of cases, and access the case master list. The general information field in the module contains details of warrants of arrest, and status or report content that require data from the users.

Some of the information fields that are being accomplished include the complainant or plaintiff, the defendant or accused, search warrant number, enforcement area, seized items, estimated commercial value of the confiscated pieces, and the type of violated law and charged offense.

Similarly, the OMB and BoC module contains the same fields for the input of information with the inclusion of inspection details. Authorized users of the four agencies forward the new cases to the DoJ, which then completes the required fields and submits the accomplished form to the lower courts for appropriate action.

IP Philippines can likewise upload new cases to the database. It can also generate a master list of complainants and defendants, and the list of cases listed by the six agencies. After the completion of data uploading from the agencies scheduled late February, the Intellectual Property Case Database ([_ HYPERLINK " http://ipcdl.ipophil.gov. ph \[http://ipcdl.ipophil.gov.ph\]" _ http://ipcdl.ipophil.gov.ph \[http://ipcdl.ipophil.gov.ph\]_](http://ipcdl.ipophil.gov.ph)) can be accessed by IP owners.

The IP Case Database will be launched on February 22 during the first meeting of the Public-Private Partnership Council for Intellectual Property Rights (P3CIPR) in 2007. The council was established in 2005 to serve as a venue for consultation, coordination and cooperation between the government and private sector in strengthening the IP system.

8. Manila bullish on review of IP violators list
(from *Business World*, 30 January 2007)

Intellectual Property Philippines Director-General Adrian S. Cristobal, Jr. said the government is confident that the Philippines will not return to the United States government's priority watch list of intellectual property (IP) rights violators this year.

In its 2006 reports, the National Committee for Intellectual Property Rights (NCIPR) said it had seized P2.4 billion worth of counterfeit items since its creation in 2005. In 2006, it has confiscated P1.3 billion worth of items, an 11% jump from previous figures.

The NCIPR is an interagency body headed by the IPP and composed of enforcement agencies tasked to enforce laws protecting intellectual property.

"With our performance last year, we are hoping that the US government will recognize the gains," Mr. Cristobal said.

The US government moved the Philippines early last year from the special 301 Priority Watchlist to the ordinary Watchlist list, citing the increased the number of raids on establishments selling counterfeit products in 2005.

In its recommendations for improving trade and investments, the US Chamber of Commerce's 2006 report on Southeast Asia urged the Philippines to further "strengthen the protection of IP. The chamber also called for more US assistance to the Philippines on this matter.

Continuing optical media piracy in the Philippines cost US creative industries an estimated \$139 million in 2004, data from the US Patent and Trademark Office show.

INDONESIA

1. Intellectual property rights term in definition of franchise revised (from *Bisnis Indonesia*, 6 January 2007)

The government again revises the definition of franchise to be included in the Government Regulation (PP) on Franchise replacing PP No. 16/1997 by revising the Intellectual Property Right term into business system.

The revision was a result of the inter-department meeting between the Department of Trade and other relevant departments in December 2006.

PP No. 16/1997 defines franchise as a bind in which one party is given rights to use Intellectual Property Rights or innovations or distinctive characteristics of business controlled by the other party in exchange for requirements established by the other party in the procurement and/or sales of goods and services.

After that, in the Government Regulation Draft made by the Department of Trade defines franchise as a bind between franchisor and franchisee in which the franchisee is given rights to run business by using Intellectual Property Rights or innovations or distinctive characteristics of business controlled by the franchisor, which has an obligation to provide continuous operational and management assistance to the franchisee.

After the inter-department meeting in December 2006, the definition of franchise is again revised to a bind between franchisor and franchisee.

2. Microsoft projects to grow by 20% in Indonesia (from *Bisnis Indonesia*, 26 January 2007)

PT Microsoft Indonesia projects its business to grow by 20% this year following stronger efforts of the government to create legal certainty, uphold Intellectual Property Rights enforcement, and create conducive investment climate.

Tony Chen, President Director of PT Microsoft Indonesia said Although Intellectual Property Rights law enforcement in Indonesia had improved in the past two years, Tony hoped the Indonesian government could boost its efforts to lower software piracy rate in Indonesia from 87% in 2006.

Data by BSA (Business Software Alliance) showed that the software piracy in Indonesia could create up to US\$280 million in losses.

He predicted that the eradication of software piracy could increase government revenues from IT taxation five times from the current US\$20 million. The eradication, he inserted, would also be able to increase job creation 13 times.

He expected the government would be able to maintain the positive momentum to support the growth of IT industries in Indonesia.

3. Indonesia considers joining Geneva Act 1999 (from *Bisnis Indonesia*, 29 January 2007)

The government considers joining Geneva Act 1999 to give easier access for domestic industrial designs to register themselves in many countries.

According to Ansori Sinungan, Director of Copyrights and Industrial Design at the Directorate General of Intellectual Property Rights at the Department of Justice and Human Rights, the government was still reviewing the benefit and cost of joining the international agreement.

"Indonesia is not in a rush to join Geneva Act 1999, but we indeed have intention to join the Act," he said recently. He explained that one benefit of joining Geneva Act 1999 was it would be getting easier for the businesses to register their designs in many countries.

"An industrial design owner only has to make application in one country and the design will be registered in countries joining the Act," he informed.

He admitted to join Geneva Act 1999, the local industrial design law (the Law No 31/2000) should be harmonized with the international agreement first.

VIETNAM

1. Seminar takes aim at pirated products (from *Thai News Service*, 9 January 2007)

Domestic businesses will find it more difficult to cope with fake and imitation goods as Vietnam becomes an official member of the World Trade Organisation, according to a seminar held in Ho Chi Min City.

Lawyer Truong Thi Hoa said at the seminar that Vietnamese enterprises would have to cope with more competition from pirated goods as fake products from abroad would add to the problems already caused by domestically pirated products.

Some of the seminar's participants said they blamed the proliferation of fake products on domestic consumers' desire to purchase cheap goods. Spotting a fake was also problematic for many consumers, said seminar participants.

Director of intellectual property law consultancy Vo Tran Ltd, Co Vo Minh Tam, said that enterprises felt tired of struggling with counterfeit goods. The company, which was also a representative for Hewlett Packard (HP) on combating intellectual property rights violations, reported that it discovered 29 cases in which the intellectual property rights of HP were violated during 2005, and this figure rose to 49 cases last year.

All participants at last week's seminar agreed that production and trade of fraudulent goods would hurt both their business and the national economy. Participants also raised concerns over inadequate penalties for violations of intellectual property rights.

Hoa suggested that enterprises should protect themselves by supplying customers with information on how to best distinguish fake and genuine goods while also encouraging more consumers to boycott counterfeit goods.

2. Vietnam, Japan launch talks on economic partnership agreement (from *Thai News Service*, 17 January 2007)

Vietnam and Japan launched on Jan. 16 their first round of negotiations on an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), as agreed upon last year, by leaders of the two countries during a Japan visit by Vietnamese Prime Minister, Nguyen Tan Dung.

Opening the round, chief negotiator Jun Yokota, who is Ambassador for Economic and International Trade Affairs in the Japanese Foreign Ministry, spoke highly of the politic, diplomatic and socioeconomic cooperation between Vietnam and Japan.

The opening session was followed by meetings of negotiation groups on goods trading, services, competition, origin of goods, intellectual property, customs, and other cooperation fields.

3. Vietnam, Spain to boost bilateral cooperation in various fields (from *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific*, 21 January 2007)

A government official has described the acceleration of the exchange in culture, education, scientific research, youth activities and sports between Vietnam and Spain as a stable and long-term step forward to bilateral comprehensive cooperation.

The deputy minister of culture and information, Tran Chien Thang, made the remark on 18 January at a signing ceremony for a cooperation agreement in the above-mentioned areas.

Under the agreement, signed in Hanoi by Deputy Minister Thang and the Spanish secretary of state for international cooperation, Leire Pajin, Vietnam and Spain will increase cooperation in theatre, music, opera, ballet, film making, museum works, and protection of intellectual property and copyright.

Regarding education, both nations will boost the exchange of teaching programmes, particularly Spanish-language teaching programmes, and visits by experts between schools, universities and research institutes.

In the educational area, they agreed to increase the sharing of information on scientific and technological policies and to facilitate meetings of scientists of the two countries.

4. Vietnam accedes to UPOV Convention
(from *Vietnam News Brief Service*, 24 January 2007)

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development held meeting to declare Vietnam's entry to the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV).

Vietnam officially became 63rd member of UPOV on Dec 24, 2006 which is aimed to encourage the development of new varieties of plants by granting breeders an intellectual property right on the basis of a set of clearly defined principles

To date, Vietnam is the first ASEAN country to participate in the convention.

To be eligible for protection, varieties need to satisfy certain conditions, such as being distinct from existing commonly known varieties, and sufficiently uniform and stable.

At the meeting, the MARD for the first time granted intellectual property rights to four enterprises, including Viet Lai 20 Paddy Co. under Hai Phong High-tech Agri Service Joint Stock Co; TH3-3 hybrid paddy variety of Hanoi Agriculture University I; NK 54 hybrid maize variety of Vietnam Syngenta Co. Ltd; and DEKABL 414 hybrid maize of Thailand's Monsanto Co.

The International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) is an intergovernmental organization with headquarters in Geneva Switzerland.

UPOV was established by the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants. The Convention was adopted in Paris in 1961 and revised in 1972, 1978 and 1991.

5. Prime Minister okays Switzerland-aided intellectual property project
(from *Thai News Service*, 29 January 2007)

After considering the proposal from the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), PM Nguyen Tan Dung approved the 'Switzerland-Vietnam on Intellectual Property' project at a cost of CHF1.3 million (equivalent to US\$1 million) as a technical assistance grant from Switzerland. The corresponding capital is to be taken from the Ministry of Science and Technology (MST)'s budget.

The PM assigned the MST to complete, appraise, approve and implement the project in line with the current regulations based on the opinions of related agencies, particularly on budget management.

The MST is due to complete and submit a project agreement to the PM for signing with a representative from Switzerland pursuant to the current regulations on the signing and implementation of international treaties as well as the cooperation agreement between the two countries.

6. Lawyers discuss IP law
(from *The Saigon Times Daily*, 31 January 2007)

More than 200 lawyers joined a conference in HCMC yesterday to discuss new provisions in the intellectual property (IP) law as IP will become a hot issue following the country's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Speaking at the conference, Pham Dinh Chuong, director general of the National Office of Intellectual Property, catalogued what are protected by the WTO's agreement on trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPs).

Protected intellectual property rights (IPR) comprise copyright and related rights, trademarks, geographical indications, control of anti-competitive practices in contractual licenses, patent, layout design of integrated circuits and undisclosed information, he said.

Nguyen Van Bay, director of the Training Center of the National Office of Intellectual Property, said 70% to 80% of the trademarks protected by the office belonged to Vietnamese enterprises, indicating local companies are more aware of IP issues.

INDIA

1. IT majors come together to fight against piracy (from *Business Standard*, 5 January 2007)

In a bid to curb piracy, Microsoft India and industry players like Dell, HCL, HP, Lenovo, Sahara, Wipro and Zenith have launched a campaign 'Asli Widows ka Asli offer', aimed at making genuine software easily accessible.

Customers who purchase an original Windows PC will now have an opportunity to win exciting prizes everyday - including PCs, true flat monitors and world space receivers. In addition, customers will be entitled to gifts worth Rs 4,000 (two months off on a Broadband connection and discount on antivirus software). An enhanced three-year warranty on PCs running original Windows XP software will also be offered by some PC manufacturers.

Hitendra Chaturvedi, senior director, Microsoft India, said, "Piracy is an issue that plagues the entire software industry and it is important for the ecosystem to come together to address it. One of the key hurdles slowing India's sprint towards becoming a global economic juggernaut is rampant piracy threatening Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). Indicative of this is that approximately \$566 million were lost to software piracy in India in 2005 alone. This is a grim indication of the far reaching ramifications of this menace and necessitates efforts on all fronts - legal, education and enforcement."

If piracy rates in India drop by 10 per cent, local vendors will stand to gain about \$5.2 billion, while revenue gains to the government will be around \$386 million along with the generation of approximately 50,000 new high-tech, high-wage jobs.

However, any far reaching change will be possible only when the entire ecosystem works together to reiterate the benefits of genuine over the high risks of pirated software. The programme commenced across India on 18 December 2006, and will run for a period of one month.

2. US group plans Bollywood piracy probe (from *Agence France Presses*, 7 January 2007)

A top US business lobby group is to launch a probe into counterfeiting in India's film industry and hold a global summit in bootleg capital China to highlight intellectual property rights abuses.

The world's two most populous nations are already on the "priority watchlist" of the US Trade Representative office's annual report of measures taken by countries around the world to protect intellectual property rights.

The US Chamber of Commerce unveiled its 2007 business strategy last week with a multi-million dollar program to fight copyright piracy which it says costs the US economy up to 250 billion dollars and 750,000 American jobs every year.

Chamber chief Thomas Donohue said the three-pronged program of education, detection and enforcement would include "a study in India to measure the effects of piracy on Bollywood," the informal name given to the popular Mumbai-based, Hindi language film industry.

The Indian movie industry, which churns out about 1,000 films per year, is the largest by volume in the world but revenues are very small. A key problem facing Bollywood is copyright infringement through the illegal sale of VCD, DVD and videotape movie copies as well as online piracy, all of which are expected to be covered by the US business group's study in the first half of 2007.

US concerns over Bollywood piracy are understandable.

Movies from India are the top-grossing foreign film category in the United States, with annual revenue estimated at 1.5 billion dollars, said TitleMatch Entertainment Group, subsidiary of a US provider of DVD on-demand systems.

Turnover for Bollywood particularly is expected to grow 16 percent annually over the next five years -- bringing the market to over three billion dollars, it said.

3. Govt charts steps to protect India's patent rights (from *The Economic Times*, 13 January 2007)

Indian films, music and the pharma sector can look forward to better intellectual property rights (IPRs) protection as the government is planning to turn the country into an IPR hub. Setting up of a top notch think-tank for research & development in IPRs is on the cards to beef up India's position in negotiating global treaties on key aspects of protecting patents, trademarks, copyrights and geographical indications (GIs).

Examination of IPR applications is also being upgraded by getting Indian professionals share global expertise, especially from countries like the US. The government is also in the process of networking patents and trademarks offices in the four metros.

Initiatives to turn India into an IPR hub are being piloted by the department of industrial policy & promotion (DIPP). The government has already tied up with Max Plank Institute of Munich and the Australian Patent Institute for developing a IPR management institute.

With ground realities in IPR management for key segments like films, music and pharma in mind, the proposed institute would work as a R&D institution as well as policy think-tank. While the institution would also carry out sponsored R&D in specific areas for the industry, it will also provide critical inputs to the government for talks at global fora like the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Infrastructure is being beefed up to ensure a strong IPR regime, DIPP secretary Ajay Dua said. When contacted by ET, he said a Rs.130-crore project is now underway to network the patent offices in Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and Kolkata.

The current moves of the government would give India a totally different image from the days when multinationals used to express concern over IPR protection here. Having introduced product patents and exhibited that implementation is much better in India than many other major markets, the government now wants to develop a pro-IPR image for India. This would help Indian companies engaged in R&D, apart from encouraging multinationals to invest here.

The government has witnessed a five-fold increase in patent applications and human resources are being developed to meet the increasing demand for IPR protection. India has signed agreements with significant players like the US and the EU to share expertise.

4. Indian govt gives nod for changes in TRIPs agreement
(from *Asia Pulse*, 19 January 2007)

India approved crucial amendments in the WTO agreement on TRIPs permitting governments to break the monopoly of manufacturers of patented drugs by giving "compulsory licenses" in emergency situations.

The decision to approve amendment in Article 31 of the TRIPs agreement was taken by the Cabinet Committee on WTO, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee said after the meeting.

World Trade Organisation members had at its Doha Ministerial meeting in 2001 decided to amend Article 31 of TRIPs to provide compulsory licenses.

Mukherjee said most of the least developed countries, the main beneficiaries of the TRIPS amendment, have already approved the new patent regime. "India has also approved it," he added.

5. Indians protest Novartis challenge to Patent Law
(from *Dow Jones Asian Equities Report*, 29 January 2007)

Hundreds of Indian activists protested in New Delhi on Monday against a challenge to the country's patent law by Swiss pharmaceutical giant Novartis AG (NVS), saying the move could leave millions without access to affordable medicine.

Novartis, which makes the popular leukemia drug Gleevec - known in Europe and India as Glivec - is fighting the Indian government's rejection of its attempt to patent a new version of the medicine.

If Novartis wins the civil suit, Indian firms would be banned from making generic versions of the drug. Activists fear this could set a precedent for other pharmaceutical companies seeking patent protection for essential medicines - including antiretroviral AIDS drugs - currently made cheaply in places like India.

India's patent law, which came into effect Jan. 1, 2005, allows patents for products that represent new inventions after 1995 - the year India joined the World Trade Organization - or for an updated drug that shows greater efficacy.

Novartis insists that its improved drug is more easily absorbed by the body.

But Indian drug companies and aid groups say Gleevec is a new form of an old drug invented before 1995. Several Indian pharmaceutical companies already make generic copies of Gleevec, but sell it at a 10th of the \$2,600 price for a monthly dose charged by the Swiss company.

Indian companies also make a host of other generic drugs, available at a fraction of the price of branded medicine - and used throughout the developing world, where the need for affordable medicines is high.

Novartis has defended its position and said it will offer its leukemia drug for free to patients who cannot afford it even if it wins the case.

PAKISTAN

1. Two computer dealers held for loading pirated software
(from *The Baluchistan Times*, 23 January 2007)

The Lahore Police, under the nationwide drive against software piracy, here have arrested two computer dealers from Wahdat Road for loading unlicensed software on the hard disks of new computers and

seized all the 47 illegal CDs. “Whoever uses, sells or makes unauthorized CDs will have to face strict legal action in accordance with the copyright law,” said a Spokesman of Business Software Alliance (BSA), a group formed by world’s leading software companies to check piracy cross the globe.

Software piracy has become a worldwide problem and threatening the IT industry, so it needs to be addressed urgently, he stressed. During the year 2005, Pakistan suffered US \$48 million loss from piracy while the global software industry had to incur a whopping US \$34.297 billion loss. “No industry can tolerate such a high rate of theft,” the Spokesman said in a press statement issued here.

The BSA, which is also assisting the law enforcement authorities in checking this white-collar crime in Pakistan, has asked all the national and multinational companies to ensure the legality of the software installed on their computers’ hard disks.

The spokesman informed: “The surprise raids for ensuring legal software usage will continue all over the country till the piracy rate is drastically reduced from its current high level of 86 per cent.” He said the Pakistan government is taking a strong stance in fighting software piracy and fully supporting the BSA actions in cracking down on the pirates.

BSA has already assisted the police, FIA, and customs authorities in confiscating hundreds of thousands of illegal CDs throughout the country to help reduce the piracy rate, he said. The low piracy level would encourage the national and international software producers and generate jobs in the country’s growing IT industry, he added.

The spokesman cautioned that once the computers loaded with pirated software are seized by the law enforcers, the affected companies would lose all the precious data stored on the hard disks of their computers. During the latest crackdown in Lahore, he said, the two computers loaded with pirated software and all the fake CDs were impounded by the police as an evidence for the court.

The spokesman emphasised, “The end-users need to understand that the pirates are profiteering from stolen intellectual property and when computer users get software from these businesses, they are actually acquiring the stolen goods.”

He informed that two help-lines (021-4534396 and 021-4537497) have been established in Karachi for the persons seeking information on the legal implications to piracy, copyright laws and the availability of licensed software in Pakistan. These can be accessed free of cost on weekdays, he added.

2. Pakistan, Japan agree on 15-point agenda to boost bilateral trade *(from Asia Pulse, 25 January 2007)*

Pakistan and Japan on Tuesday agreed to move forward on a 15-point agenda under the proposed roadmap to enhance bilateral cooperation and trade between the two countries.

The two governments during the last couple of years identified these areas for removing hurdles and irritants ranged from the issuance of visas to technical assistance in various areas, particularly in the human resource development.

At the conclusion of the Pakistan Japan Joint Business dialogue here, the Japanese side has raised the issue of lack of infrastructure as one of the bottleneck for attracting Japanese foreign direct investment in Pakistan.

It was recommended that Pakistan should accelerate development of infrastructure by starting various projects such as road rehabilitation, public and goods transport, port facilities, water and power supply and industrial parks.

The Japanese side was of the opinion that controlling of prices eroded the profitability of the companies and made the business unsustainable in the long run. Pakistan has also been asked not to grant registration to any generic product for which a legal patent was applicable.

It was recommended that Pakistan should facilitate and finance Industrial Development Bank of Pakistan (IDBP) to make the re-scheduled payment to Japanese creditors as soon as possible. This is the last bad debt by Japanese private sector to Pakistan, which had created bad image for the country.

It was also proposed at the meeting that Pakistan should provide tax incentives to FDI, which should be tax free for a minimum of five to 10 years in the line with other countries like India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

TURKEY

Turkish parliament approves law amendments to combat pirate publications
(from *BBC Monitoring European*, 1 January 2007)

The bill proposing changes to the Law on Artistic and Intellectual Works and to the Travel Agencies Law has been passed by parliament. Accordingly, bonuses will be given to those who seize materials in the fight against pirated publications.

According to this law, in a bid to protect intellectual property and to enable this to be pursued effectively places other than regular publishing locations that engage in the copying of works, the production of materials, filling, copying and sales will be given certificates in exchange for a fee.

Fight against piracy

If pirated copies and publications are seized bonuses will be paid to the chairman and civil servant members of the inspections commission tasked with prevention, monitoring and investigation and that took direct part in the seizure of incriminating materials.

The total amount of bonuses to be paid to the inspections commission chairman and the members as a result of seizures made during the course of the inspection will be determined by a directive. The bonus will be shared out equally to all those concerned.

MIDDLE EAST

1. GCC to sign free trade agreement with EU soon
(from *Mist News*, 16 January 2007)

Officials at the European Commission said that the EU, the largest trade partner with the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council), expects to complete a Free Trade Agreement with Gulf nations soon, Gulf Daily News reported.

They said that the deal, which will be based on World Trade Organization agreements, will encourage trade in goods and services, increase investment, protect intellectual property rights and open up public procurement, cover human rights and illegal immigration. However, they said, the proposed agreement will not charge any Tariffs on the 27-nation EU imports from the GCC.

2. BSA, regional piracy drive
(from *Arabian Internet News*, 21 January 2007)

The Business Software Alliance has initiated a fresh awareness and educational campaign, alongside regional authorities, in order to reduce software piracy in the Middle East. The campaign involves holding a series of training programmes, seminars and conferences to influence consumer and business behaviour and to increase awareness about the advantages of using original software products. It is estimated governments in the Mena region lost \$1.6bn due to piracy in 2005.
