

Monthly Report of June 2006

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THAILAND

News in June 2006

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1. Thailand may broaden patent protection on extraction technology
(from Bangkok Post Newspaper, Business Section, Page B4, Thailand, 1 June 2006)

The Commerce Ministry is considering broadening patent protection to cover new technologies used for extracting materials from plants and animals, as well as the extracts themselves. But non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have criticised the idea, claiming that it favours the United States.

The US proposed that Thailand widen its scope of protection during free trade negotiations, which were suspended when the House was dissolved earlier this year. Intellectual Property Department officials, however, have denied this.

"We do not have any intention of amending this law to suit the FTA negotiations. But trade negotiators might take what we have done to the negotiations," said Banyong Limprayoonwong, the deputy director-general of the department.

The existing 1984 Patent Law does not grant patents for extracts from plants and animals because they are not regarded as innovations, he said. Under the revision of the patent law, he said, the department was considering the protection of new processes and technologies used to procure the extracts.

"Both new technology and extracts may be protected under the new patent law. But newcomers discovering new processes or technology for an extract that was discovered earlier would be able to obtain a patent for that, but not for the extract," Mr Banyong said.

"However, we have not reached a final conclusion yet. We will need further discussions with the working group and other stakeholders."

Buntoon Srethasirote, a biodiversity advocate who works for FTA Watch, a civic group campaigning against free trade pacts, said extracts were natural and should not be regarded as intellectual property.

Mr Banyong said the department wanted to amend other areas of the 1984 Patent Law to modernise and improve enforcement efficiency and reduce costs.

The new act would incorporate an agreement made during the multilateral trade talks in Doha, for instance, which meant that developed and developing countries could import or export medicines in an emergency case regardless of patents.

Regarding petty patents, he said there was a problem with the current system. They covered innovations that were no longer deemed "novel", and regulations had become too relaxed, which had led to clashes over alleged violations.

"In the new act, we will require 'novelty' from applicants. And if they want us to take legal action against a violator, we will re-examine whether such things had ever been in existence before," Mr Banyong said.

Under the revised act, the time taken to process an application would be shorter than the six to eight years at present, which would enable patents for product designs to be kept up to date. Furthermore, he anticipates that the revised law would help Thailand become a member of the Patent Cooperation Treaty, facilitate patent registration and ensure worldwide protection for Thai patents.

2. Commerce Ministry step up anti-piracy campaign

*(from Krung Thep Thurakit Newspaper, Economic-Industry Section, Page 6, Thailand, 2 June 2006
Organisation of Asia-Pacific News Agencies, 2 June 2006)*

Thailand's Ministry of Commerce has intensively stepped up its campaign against pirated products starting from June 1 to show that the country is cooperating with the international community to stop using counterfeit goods, Deputy Commerce Minister Preecha Laohapongchana said.

Mr. Preecha, together with singers and song intellectual property rights owners, launched the anti-piracy campaign at Pantip Plaza, a leading IT products shopping complex here, to raise public awareness regarding the responsibility of consumers and businesses alike to refrain from buying, selling and using pirated products.

He said the campaign is aimed at emphasizing the importance of using genuine products. During the past years, Mr. Preecha said, Thailand was successful in cracking down on pirated goods, but consumers play the most important part in the campaign.

The public should decide to do the right thing by purchasing only authentic products, he said. The deputy commerce minister said that the owner of Pantip Plaza was cooperating with the authorities very well by ordering the closure of shops found to have sold illegal products. He warned that if any businesses were found selling illegal or pirated products, they would be prosecuted. The minister revealed that more than 280 people were arrested during the first four months of this year for intellectual property violations and more than 62,000 pirated goods were seized.

3. Rusei Dutton trademark stirs up legal conflict between Thailand and Japan

(from The Nation Newspaper, Business Section, Page 4B, Thailand, 2 June 2006)

Tokyo is expected to decide by the end of the month whether to approve a Japanese firm's request to register the trademark "Rusie Dutton", following a request for cooperation from Thailand's Intellectual Property Department.

Caretaker Deputy Commerce Minister Preecha Laohapongchana said on June 1 that Maskai Furuya Co was seeking to register the name "Rusie Dutton", or "hermit body twists", referring to an ancient Thai exercise based on posture.

"The government is trying to be tough in negotiating with the Japanese Foreign Ministry in a bid to prevent the name of an ancient Thai exercise being registered as a company trademark by a Japanese businessman," Preecha said.

Emphasising the need to protect Thai goods, Preecha said the government was unable to guarantee no more cases like this in overseas countries.

Due to the fact that each country has its own patent law, Thailand is hardly likely to know if other countries allow the local registration of Thai names. However, if Thailand becomes a member of the International Patent Laws Committee, it will be easier for the country to protect its intellectual property, he said.

Thailand is currently developing an IP system in order to become a signatory to the Patent Corporation Treaty, a move which will ensure worldwide protection. But the Intellectual Property Department is unable to say when this might happen.

4. Customs Bureau cracks down on smuggled goods and IP infringement (from Thai News Service, 2 June 2006)

The Customs Bureau has conducted a large-scale operation involving the seizure of smuggled goods and goods which violate Intellectual Property rights, the net haul being valued at more than 30 million baht.

Mr. Satit Limpongpan, director-general of the Customs Bureau, stated that his agency has pushed forward in eradicating the smuggling of goods and violation of intellectual property rights, in order to protect key industries in the nation. Mr. Satit stated that the Customs Bureau has planned and coordinated missions with the office of investigations and suppression, and the Bangkok Port Bureau Office, to apprehend smugglers of goods which violate intellectual property and tariffs.

More than 30 million baht worth of DVDs, purses, clothes, liquor, watches, and cosmetics were seized in the raid.

5. DhosPaak clarifies World Cup IPRs issues (from Thai News Service, 7 June 2006)

DhosPaak, the sole authorised Thai broadcaster of the World Cup, and Domnern Somgiat & Boonma Law, the law firm authorised to protect Fifa's trademarks locally, have clarified their intellectual-property rights for the upcoming football tournament.

Vorawut Rojanapanich, managing director of DhosPaak Communication Agency, said on June 3 the company would not collect any fees from businesses and restaurants that broadcast football matches during the World Cup. But it will instead ask for cooperation in selling Chang beer.

Varawut said only restaurants that have asked permission from DhosPaak would be allowed to broadcast the football matches without a licensing fee.

DhoSpaak, an affiliate of Thai Beverage Plc, brewer of Chang beer, won the licence to broadcast the World Cup in Thailand with a US\$7.5-million (Bt331 million) bid. However, if any businesses or restaurants exploit the broadcasting of World Cup matches for their own commercial purposes, they could be hit with a lawsuit.

Meanwhile, the law firm Domnern Somgiat & Boonma warned businesses that using Fifa trademarks for commercial benefit would be grounds for legal action.

The World Cup's trademark, mascot, and wording - in the same font style as "Ball Lok" (World Cup) - are owned by the Federation Internationale de Football Association (Fifa). Any company abusing Fifa's intellectual property rights would be violating international property law, said Boonma Tejavanija, a partner in the firm.

The law office is trying to suppress illegal goods or advertising using Fifa's trademarks.

Boonma said it was also against intellectual property law for TV programmes, publishing companies or any other businesses to use Fifa's name to attract people to compete for prizes.

Rutorn Nopakun, another partner in the law firm, said businesses that conduct competitions for World Cup awards were, however, not breaking the law as long as they do not use the Fifa logo, slogan or mascot for advertising.

"The illegal use of Fifa's intellectual property is not fair to the official partners of Fifa, and that might lead to a conflict between the broadcasting company and Fifa," he said. Only 16 companies are Fifa's official partners.

The office has already asked for cooperation from some businesses to stop using the World Cup's trademark for marketing. Rutorn said the company did not want to take legal action against any company but if some firms continue unauthorised marketing, they might be charged under the law.

According to the Intellectual Property Department, any person or company using trademarks without permission is subject to a maximum four years' imprisonment or a fine of up to Bt400,000, or both.

6. Rainmaking patent issued to the King
(from *The Nation Newspaper, Thailand, 9 June 2006*)

The European Patent Office (EPO) has issued a patent in weather modification by royal rainmaking technology to His Majesty the King, the world's longest-reigning monarch.

His Majesty is the world's first and only holder of a patent in rainmaking.

The patent, issued by the EPO on October 12 last year, has been officially recognised in 30 countries including Austria, France, Switzerland, the UK and Germany.

Professor Anont Boonyarattanavej, secretary-general of the Thailand Research Fund (TRF), said his office has requested a royal audience during which it would present the patent to His Majesty.

The TRF processed the applications for the patents in foreign countries for the King after the Royal Household Bureau informed it of His Majesty's wish, Anont said. "We are processing the application in the United States," he said.

In Thailand, the Intellectual Property Department issued a patent in rainmaking technology to His Majesty on June 2, 2003.

7. OTOP produces compete for innovative prize
(from *Thai News Service, 14 June 2006*)

In its continuing efforts to raise awareness of intellectual property rights and boost its nationwide anti-piracy campaign, the Intellectual Property Department is launching a contest for the most innovative One Tambon One Product (OTOP) items.

A source from the department said many Thai and foreign producers were counterfeiting OTOP products. It is therefore trying to get genuine OTOP producers to ensure their items can be differentiated from imitation goods.

"Thai OTOP products, particularly handicrafts, are much admired by foreign buyers. However, since non-local producers are producing copies we need to create some strategies for adding value to our products," said the source.

The rewards for winning entries in the "A Promotion of OTOP Product Innovation" competition are more than Bt880,000. Two sections are open for the nationwide contest: patent and copyright.

The source said many fake OTOP products looked similar to the original, but have far less value than the premium items. The department would like to urge producers to find their own way to differentiate their items, so that Thai OTOP products will be better received in both domestic and international markets.

The contest begins on June 12 and runs until October 20.

In addition, the department will train local OTOP producers in awareness of intellectual property rights by organising a series of seminars around the country until August.

8. Thailand joins BIMSTEC members in promoting cultural related industries
(from Thai News Service, 16 June 2006)

Thailand will join six other member countries of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) in promoting culture-related industries as a way to tackle poverty in the region.

Culture permanent-secretary Khunying Thipawadee Meksawan said the first meeting of BIMSTEC culture ministers in Bhutan also agreed to set up joint regional and national-level committees and increase cooperation in developing marketing strategies, protection of intellectual property and cultural capitals and cultural tourism which are part of the promotion of culture-related industries.

Khunying Thipawadee said that initially, a team of experts will be appointed to work out plans for the setting up of a regional committee and an operation centre in Bhutan. India will host the first meeting of the experts in July.

BIMSTEC has Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand as its members.

9. Entertainment industry demands piracy crack down
(from Bangkok Post Newspaper, Business Section, Page B1, 21 June 2006
Thai News Service, 22 June 2006)

Nearly a dozen of famous Thai entertainment figures, including film makers, directors and stars, gathered Tuesday at Government House here, urging the government to step up its crack down on pirated CDs and related products.

The group said that piracy is currently on the rise and seriously affecting their business as their intellectual property rights are being violated by unscrupulous manufacturers and vendors. They say that the suppression measures currently taken by state agencies are insufficient. They petitioned the government to

appoint Royal Thai Police Inspector-General, Pol. Gen. Sereepisut Temeyavet to head the task since, they said, the leading police officer is keen on crime suppression

Deputy Prime Minister and Justice Minister Pol. Gen. Chidchai Vanasatidya and Deputy Commerce Minister Preecha Laohapongchana received the petition and said they would discuss the subject with other agencies concerned, but for the time being police are in charge.

The deputy prime minister said the police would investigate possible connections between rising piracy, well-connected influential figures and a ring of drug dealers and smugglers.

10. Silk worm patents in Thailand will lead to small industry development

(from Thai News Service, 22 June 2006)

Researchers at Khon Kaen University are working to develop commercial applications for a new kind of silkworm. Researchers at Khon Kaen University have patented a new kind of machine for spinning silk from Irri silkworm cocoons, as well as the methods for making six types of food from silkworms. Farmers in five villages in Khon Kaen have started raising the new type of silkworms.

Khon Kaen University officials are joining advisers from the Department of Intellectual Property and the Small to Medium-sized Enterprise Development Institute to work up a plan to set up a community business to produce and market silk and food products made from silkworms.

11. No-frills VCDs launched

(from Bangkok Post Newspaper, Business Section, Page B3, Thailand, 27 June 2006)

Mangpong Plc, a home entertainment retail chain, plans to create a new outlet called Grande this year to sell low-priced VCDs to fight piracy.

Some of the 370 existing Mangpong outlets will be transformed into the new format in the third quarter to offer cheap VCDs without attractive packaging to capture low-end consumers, while Mangpong would serve upper-income earners.

Kitti Kerati-thamkul, the company's senior investor relations officer, said the new concept would help to improve the company's poor financial performance in the first quarter of this year. It reported a loss of 91.82 million baht, compared with a profit of 338,598 baht in the same period last year.

He said, poor law enforcement for piracy had prompted people to buy copied products. In the first quarter, the firm lost 20 million baht per month to bootleggers. "Filmmakers today also suffer from rampant piracy as their films are on sale on copied VCDs even while they're being screened in the cinemas," he said.

Under an agreement with film producers, the company can release movies on VCD three months after they are screened at the cinema.

12. Benefit of GI cover explained

(from Bangkok Post Newspaper, Home News Section, Page 2, Thailand, 29 June 2006

The Nation Newspaper, Business Section, Page 3B, Thailand, 29 June 2006

Post Today Newspaper, Business Market Section, Page B3, Thailand, 29 June 2006

Krung Thep Thurakit Newspaper, Commerce Section, Page 7, Thailand, 29 June 2006)

Communities with famous Otop brands or other special local products were urged to apply for Geographical Indications (GI) registration, which would protect their products from the abuse by other producers. The benefits of GI were promoted at the opening of an EU-Asean regional seminar and exhibition on the Protection and Promotion of Geographical Indications, which was presided over by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Princess Sirindhorn said: "The promotion and the publicity of goods associated with geographical indications, which represent local wisdom for Thais and people all over the world, are admirable. They contribute not only to the development of community economies, but also to the preservation of cultural heritages."

Thailand has recently established a fully operative national system for GI protection with endorsement of the Thai Geographical Indications Protection Act which came into effect in April 2004. The country already has the largest number of registered GIs in Asean.

Kanissorn Navanugraha, chief of the Intellectual Property Department, said nine Thai products have registered for GI protection in Thailand - Phetchabun Sweet Tamarind, Nakhon Chaisri Pomelo, Trang Roast Pork, Doi Tung Coffee, Phurua Plateau Wine, Khao Tangkwa Pomelo (Chai Nat), Surat Thani Oyster, Sri Racha Pineapple, and Sangyod Rice (Phatthalung).

The first two European products registered in Thailand are Champagne (France) and Pisco (Peru).

Mr Kanissorn said there are a lot more local products qualified for GI protection, but many local communities have no idea of the system.

Friedrich Hamburger, head of the delegation of the European Commission to Thailand, said interest in enhanced GI protection has increased worldwide during the past decade. "Without GI protection, other producers or manufacturers may take a free ride on the reputation and recognition already established by those specific products," he said.

Pajchima Tanasanti, director of the Trademark Office, said violators of the Thai GI Protection Act were liable to a fine up to 200,000 baht. She said in some other countries the GI protection law has imposed both civil and criminal penalties, which include a fine and a jail term.

Mr Kanissorn added there will be a launch of the "EcapII GI Twinning Initiative," created by the EU funded EC-Asean Intellectual Property Rights Cooperation Programme (EcapII). This was aimed at creating a practical network of expertise and experience among producers from Europe and Asean, he said. One prospective collaboration was between Trang Roast Pork and Portugal sausages, for example.

MALAYSIA

News in June 2006

US talks push for more access to Malaysian markets

(from Financial Times, 13 June 2006)

Malaysia and the US began talks for a trade agreement yesterday, with Washington demanding greater access to Malaysia's financial, construction and car markets and a crackdown on intellectual property piracy.

The US's 10th largest trading partner could have problems in making concessions as Abdullah Badawi, the prime minister, faces criticism within the ruling party for his economic reforms. The market openings sought by the US are politically sensitive, since they would affect Malaysia's long-standing policy of affirmative action for ethnic Malays, who remain economically weak.

The US and Malaysia hope to reach an agreement on a trade pact by the end of the year, before the Bush administration's authority for fast-track legislative approval of international trade deals expires in mid-2007.

The US is also pursuing similar agreements with other Asian countries, including Thailand and South Korea. Officials predict that annual bilateral trade of Dollars 44bn (Euros 35bn, Pounds 24bn) could double by 2010 if a new trade deal is concluded

PHILIPPINES

News in June 2006

1. Senate set to deliberate on Bill allowing import of patented, lower cost drugs
2. 2 agencies to enforce piracy law
3. Gov't expects removal from US watch list
4. Philippines supreme court approves intellectual property program
5. P4.8 million in fake computer hardware seized in NBI raids

1. Senate set to deliberate on Bill allowing import of patented, lower cost drugs
(from *The Manila Times*, 10 June 2006)

The Senate has approved the committee report on a bill that will allow the importation and early development of patented drugs as well as the exceptions to the application of standard compulsory licensing requirements.

Sen. Mar Roxas, chairman of trade and commerce committee, filed Senate Bill 2139 in October last year, the basis for the committee report, and the substitute Senate Bill 2263, which contains the proposed amendments to Republic Act 8293, or the Intellectual Property Code (IPC) of the Philippines, which is the basis for laws on patents, trade names and trademarks.

"The completion of the report and its signing demonstrate that there is a favorable consensus in the Senate on meeting the health-care needs of ordinary Filipinos. Once this bill becomes a law, it will promote greater access to quality lower-priced medicines for all Filipinos," Roxas said.

The price of medicines in the Philippines is reportedly one of the highest in Asia and beyond the reach of at least 15 million Filipinos. But those who have access to affordable drugs and medicines could only set aside from their budget P2,000 per person a year for health-related expenses.

The P85-billion Philippine pharmaceutical market is at least 60 percent controlled by multinational companies, and locally owned pharmaceutical companies share the rest of the total market revenue.

The multinational companies contend that the medicines they produce are safe, efficient and of high quality; hence, expensive. The companies cite higher spending in research and development to justify further their prices on medicines.

On the other hand, Filipino pharmaceutical companies perceive that the Philippine intellectual property laws are designed to protect the patents of multinationals to the point that they can operate as a monopoly. This puts the local drug manufacturers at risk of potential lawsuits should they consider producing the generic equivalents of branded medicines.

The Roxas bill zeroes in on four major provisions of the IPC: an addition to non-patentable inventions, parallel importation, early working on certain drugs and government use of patented drugs. While several groups support the measure, multinational companies, under the umbrella organization of the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines, oppose the initiative.

2. 2 agencies to enforce piracy law
(from *Manila Standard*, 19 June 2006)

The Intellectual Property Office and the National Telecommunications Commission have signed a pact to jointly enforce and protect intellectual property rights in the broadcast media, particularly in cable television.

IP Philippines director general Adrian Cristobal Jr. and Telecommunications commissioner Ronald Solis signed the memorandum of agreement between the two agencies over the weekend in Makati City. The agreement puts into action the desire of the two agencies to work in addressing piracy in the pay television industry.

The Philippine Cable TV Association said the industry's foregone revenues due to piracy amounted to roughly P7 billion annually. Around 1.5 million cable subscribers are illegally connected. Both agencies recognize the need to come up with an administrative mechanism to effectively and expeditiously resolve cases involving piracy and copyright infringement.

Under the agreement, IP Philippines will adjudicate or resolve cases involving any intellectual property rights infringement that are endorsed by the NTC. The commission is required to forward any intellectual property violations to the IP Philippines within five working days.

The commission is also required to forward to its counterpart cases involving infringements that are pending within its office, five days upon the affectivity of the agreement.

On the other hand, the IP Philippines is obligated to inform the commission of any determination or resolution on a case that it receives from the telecommunications body so the NTC can implement the action.

Under the agreement, both offices also agreed to strengthen cooperation in promoting and protecting intellectual property rights by conducting seminars and workshops among their personnel on piracy, telecommunications and broadcasting issues.

3. Gov't expects removal from US watch list *(from Business World, 19 June 2006)*

The government expects the Philippines to be removed from a US watch list of intellectual property rights (IPRs) violators next year given recent gains against piracy.

The office of the US Trade Representative (USTR), pursuant to Section 182 of the US Trade Act of 1974, as amended by the US Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 and the 1994 Uruguay Round Agreements Act, regularly comes out with a list of countries deemed as providing little IPR protection.

The Philippines is currently listed by the USTR as under the "ordinary watch list," a slight improvement after having been placed in the "priority watch list" for the past four years.

Intellectual Property Office (IPO) Director-General Adrian S. Cristobal, Jr. said that the Philippines might be removed from the USTR watch list next year. "At the rate that we are doing, in terms of enforcement and adjudication, we can get out of the watch list entirely next year," Mr. Cristobal said.

He said that over the past five months, enforcement agencies such as the Philippine National Police (PNP), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), the Optical Media Board (OMB) and the Bureau of Customs seized half a billion pesos worth of counterfeit goods. Last year, he said the government seized "a little over a billion pesos" worth of fake items.

The Justice Department, meanwhile, reported that a total of 184 IPR related cases were filed from January to May, bringing the total number of pending cases to 1,159.

Meanwhile, the IP Office and the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) signed a memorandum of agreement (MoA) on joint cooperation for the enforcement and protection of IPR in the cable industry.

According to the agreement, the IP Office will adjudicate or resolve cases involving cable-related IPR infringement while there is no decision yet from the Court of Appeals on whether the NTC has the authority to look into such violations.

The NTC has been unable to act on cable piracy cases for almost a year now due to a suit at the Court of Appeals filed by provincial cable operator CableStar, which was sued by cable content provider CableBoss for an alleged IP rights violation.

There are 30 pending cable piracy complaints at the NTC. All 30 cases will be transferred to the IP Office five days upon signing of the agreement.

"This [MoA] is irrespective of the USTR comment. But it is also true that they [USTR] have expressed concern on this," Mr. Cristobal said.

4. Philippines supreme court approves intellectual property program
(from *Asia Pulse*, 27 June 2006)

The Supreme Court (SC) has approved the Intellectual Property (IP) Program that was proposed by the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA) and the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines, sealing its official partnership with the government in the campaign against IP violations.

IP Philippines Director General Adrian S. Cristobal Jr. said the SC approved the program in an en banc resolution.

The SC approved program include seminar and trainings for court personnel in the specialized field of intellectual property rights. Cristobal said the SC decision was relayed to him through a letter by SC Assistant Court Administrator and spokesman lawyer Ismael Khan Jr.

As a starter, the court approved a three-day training-seminar for judges on international covenants and the country's law on IP, copyright issues, IP issues on digitalization, laws on patents, trademarks and unfair competition, problems on jurisdiction and procedure, writ of search and seizure and other remedies and IP emerging issues.

Cristobal thanked the SC for acting on the proposal of PHILJA and the IP Philippines, noting that his office had been pushing for this initiative and a higher level of partnership with the court.

"Special IPR courts will make it easier to file charges against IPR violators and dramatically speed up trials for those who are charged with IPR crimes. IPR courts would, of course, also more quickly exonerate the innocent," it earlier said in a statement of support it sent to Cristobal.

5. P4.8 million in fake computer hardware seized in NBI raids
(from *Manila Bulletin*, 29 June 2006)

The NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division (IPRD) headed by lawyer Jose Justo Yap said the raids were conducted following the complaint made by CISCO Technology, Inc., represented by the Quisimbing Torres law firm.

Yap said NBI agents conducted a raid last month on the iGlobe Technology Marketing Corporation at U-K, Gilmore Commercial Plaza located at 10 Gilmore St., Valencia, New Manila, Quezon City; Columbia

Technologies Inc., 1136-1146 J. Nakpil St., Malate, Manila; and a successive raid at Leverage System Technologies Inc., located at Ortigas Center, Pasig City last Tuesday.

The IPRD chief said the NBI agents seized 56 units of counterfeit CISCO computer networking hardware from the Leverage System Technologies and 78 units of computer networking hardware from the two other companies. The computer networking hardware were composed mainly of routers, switch and cables and routers. Government agents also seized boxes and plastic packaging materials bearing the trademark of the complainant.

Yap said the raids were conducted after the NBI was able to establish through test buys using some R250,000 for a router and three Internet cables. Once they were able to establish that the establishments were involved in selling counterfeit CISCO hardware, they applied for several search warrants from Executive Judge Antonio Eugenio Jr. of the Manila Regional Trial Court.

“Although we found out that Leverage System Technologies, Inc. was a registered retailer of CISCO hardware, they were still involved in selling fake hardware,” Yap said. He explained that the company was also selling original CISCO products. The fake computer networking products, however, were sold at a cheaper price.

INDONESIA

News in June 2006

1. Team set up for rights piracy

(from The Jakarta Post Newspaper, Indonesia, 8 June 2006)

The government is establishing a national working group to find ways to enforce intellectual property rights in the country.

"The team will make recommendations how to overcome the problem of intellectual property rights violations because as you know, Indonesia ranks third in the world (for piracy)," Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs Widodo Adi Sucipto said.

The team would coordinate government agencies and business groups in the fight against piracy, he said.

2. President wants Japan trade deal by end-06

(from Dow Jones International News, 26 June 2006)

Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono wants an economic partnership agreement with Japan by the end of 2006. "The President hopes the EPA negotiations can be completed by the end of this year," the report quoted presidential spokesman Dino Patti Djalal as saying.

The two countries began talks last year toward a possible agreement that would cover trade in goods and services, intellectual property, investment and the movement of people. Japan is already Indonesia's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade totaling \$24.9 billion in 2005,

3. Police raid stores in crackdown on piracy

(from The Jakarta Post Newspaper, Indonesia, 27 June 2006)

As part of their commitment to eradicating piracy Jakarta Police have confiscated 418,000 pirated compact discs, video compact discs and digital video discs from stores and warehouses across Greater Jakarta in a 13-day operation beginning June 10.

"This is our biggest catch, in terms of the number of pirated disc producers arrested," the police's industry and trade unit chief, Comr. Suwondo Nainggolan said. One replicating machine -- comprising a DVD player and nine CD writers -- can make about 30,000 copies a day. Tracking pirated disc producers, he said, was more difficult than raiding vendors in markets and on the streets.

Jakarta has long been viewed as a haven for pirated disc makers and sellers. Vendors sell pirated discs at railway and bus stations and in markets and malls, and are seldom bothered by the authorities. The largest market for pirated discs is in Glodok market, while two other large centers are at Ratu Plaza and Mal Ambassador in South Jakarta.

About two million pirated discs circulate in the country every day, with an average sale price of Rp 5,000 to 8,000 each, compared to the price of an original disc, which ranges between Rp 45,000 and Rp 200,000.

The prevailing laws on movies and intellectual property rights, as well as the Criminal Code, stipulate that a person found guilty of piracy could face up to three years' jail. However, weak law enforcement has allowed the production and sales of pirated discs to flourish.

VIETNAM

News in June 2006

1. Inspectors help out with counterfeit raid
2. Software copyrights need enforcing
3. Vietnam fights against fake goods for international integration
4. Brand name registration ignored in Vietnam
5. Intellectual property

1. Inspectors help out with counterfeit raid
(from *Thai News Service*, 7 June 2006)

Inspectors of the Ministry of Science and Technology co-operated with police to raid the company Thanh Van Ltd in Pho Noi industrial zone in the northern province of Hung Yen.

The company was accused of producing "Koleki" sanitary napkins which are similar to the "Kotex" trademark of the US company Kimberly-Clark World Wide. The inspectors confiscated 27kg of products.

2. Software copyrights need enforcing
(from *Thai News Service*, 16 June 2006)

The government needs an action plan to encourage the use of copyrighted software in Vietnam, especially in light of the nation's imminent accession to the WTO, said Truong Gia Binh, chairman of the Vietnam Software Association (Vinaso).

Binh said the government could help software firms and the public have better access to copyrighted software by negotiating with domestic and international software makers and vendors for reductions in prices.

"This will gradually push software users to using copyrighted software," Binh said. "But if software firms and the public do not respect copyright laws, international IT firms will not want to invest in the industry," he warned.

The Law on Intellectual Property, scheduled to come into effect next month, will also help reduce the incidence of pirated software in Vietnam, according to the Vinaso chairman.

The world's largest international market research firm, International Data Corp, predicted Vietnam's IT sector could grow by 169 per cent over the next four years if piracy was reduced by just 10 per cent in the same period. If the incidence of piracy remains at existing levels of about 90 per cent, the industry would grow by about 108 per cent, it estimated.

Globally, the IT industry is set to grow by 33 per cent between now and 2010, according to the company. If the global piracy rate average of 35 per cent is reduced to 25 per cent, the industry would grow by 45 per cent during the same period, the study predicted.

Global losses from software piracy amounted to \$34 billion in 2005, an increase of \$1.6 billion over the previous year, said International Data Corp.

3. Vietnam fights against fake goods for international integration

(from Thai News Service, 19 June 2006)

Many foreign businesses with famous trademarks will invest in tapping the local market after Vietnam joins the World Trade Organisation. However, fake products tend to overwhelm imported goods with famous trademarks and many companies have consequently delayed the opening of their branches in the country.

Head of Market Management Department Nguyen Duc Thinh said Vietnam should be determined to fight against fake goods for international integration.

According to the Market Management Department, the violations of intellectual property rights of some famous trademarks has become a hot issue recently. Many products have been counterfeited including garment and textiles, handbags, footwear, perfume, cosmetics, foods, glutamate and paints. Recently, a series of fake goods with Adidas trademarks and shirts from the Garment Company 10 were confiscated.

General Director of the Garment Company 10 Dang Phuong Dung said the fake goods caused huge economic losses for her company. Besides, they have affected the prestige of the company's trademark. Ms Dung said her company, in co-ordination with relevant agencies, set up a team to fight against counterfeit goods. Although many campaigns to fight fake goods have been launched, these goods tend to spread rapidly. Notably, once a new product of a famous company is launched, the fake product appeared immediately in the market.

Mr Nam said most fake goods with brand name of Louis Vuitton are illegally imported to Vietnam through the northern borders, and then transferred to HCM City and distributed to Hanoi. Recently, the company has coordinated with relevant agencies to impose fines and destroy hundreds of counterfeit products with the Louis Vuitton brand name.

It is not effective to protect trademarks by taking drastic measures to disseminate information and prevent violating famous brand names. Although relevant agencies have seized a lot of fake goods, these kinds of goods still flood the market. Counterfeit goods can bring huge profits and harsher punishments are not imposed properly. A maximum fine of only VND100 million are imposed on violators of intellectual property rights.

Mr Thinh confirmed that we are determined to fight against fake goods after joining the WTO. It is important to strengthen the role of the courts to implement intellectual property rights and solve issues on violations. All violators of intellectual property rights will be brought to court.

4. Brand name registration ignored in Vietnam

(from Asia Pulse, 21 June 2006)

Only 25 per cent of Vietnam's 200,000 enterprises have registered their trademarks, despite a growing awareness of their value as an asset and an effective tool in the nations global economic integration, said Tran Viet Hung, deputy director of the Intellectual Property Department.

He said the country's best selling and most prestigious products are vulnerable to being imitated, citing the fact 90 per cent of music recordings and computer software in the Vietnamese market are counterfeit.

While the department has received 300 complaints related to trademark violations so far this year, statistics have shown Vietnam handles an average of more than 3,000 intellectual property violation cases each year, said Hung, adding this demonstrated a limited awareness of intellectual property rights in general, and brand name protection in particular.

In an effort to enhance enterprises awareness and encourage them to protect intellectual property, the Vietnam Intellectual Property Association and Intellectual Property Department recently launched a website, at www.nhanhieuviet.com.vn.

The site is focused on protecting the nation's top brand names and helping enterprises conduct research and register IP in foreign countries, said the associations chairman, An Khang. The website will also be a forum for company managers and consultants to exchange ideas on issues including legal framework and government policies, and provide support on building competitive brand names, agreed Hung.

During the economic integration process, the registration of trademarks in Vietnam and abroad is an essential step, especially for companies intending to take part in export activities, he said. Having established brand names make it easier for companies to penetrate international markets, resolve IP violations, and prevail in instances of unfair competition, Khang added.

Pham Thi Minh Vuong, deputy general director of the Vietnam Telephone Directory and Yellow Pages Joint-stock Company, said that awards presented to the nation's most prestigious brand names would help them establish international standing when they integrate into regional and global markets.

5. Intellectual property

(from The Saigon Times Daily, 23 June 2006)

As of 1 January 2006, the fundamental principles of intellectual property (IP) rights, i.e. the nature of IP rights, the basis of IP rights and the transfer thereof, have been governed under Part VI of the new Civil Code passed on 14 June 2005. As of 1 July 2006, IP rights will be regulated in detail under Law 50-2005-QH11 of the National Assembly dated 29 November 2005 on Intellectual Property.

This new IP regime replaces the IP provisions of the Civil Code 1995, implementing Decree 76-CP of the Government dated 29 December 1996 on Copyright, and Decree 63-CP of the Government dated 24 October 1996 on Industrial Property (as amended by Decree 06-2001-ND-CP of the Government dated 1 February 2001). The new regime now reflects international rules and practice - one of Vietnam's key commitments in its WTO accession package.

The Ministry of Science and Technology is the primary Government body responsible for administrating Vietnam's IP regime, and has jurisdiction over industrial property rights. The Ministry of Culture and Information has jurisdiction over copyright. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has jurisdiction over rights to plant varieties.

Protection is available for copyright in literary, artistic and scientific works (including architectural works) and in performances, sound recordings, visual recordings, broadcasts and satellite signals carrying coded programs. An author's moral rights are protected indefinitely.

The moral right to publish a copyright work and the economic rights of a copyright owner (e.g. to copy a copyright work) are protected for 50 years from the date of first publication (cinematographic works, photographic works, dramatic works, works of applied art and anonymous works) or for the life of the author plus 50 years (other works).

Works of foreign individuals and organizations are protected in prescribed cases. Registration at the Ministry of Culture's Copyright Office is not compulsory, but will constitute proof of copyright ownership in disputes (unless rebutted).

Protection is available for industrial property rights in inventions, industrial designs, designs of semi-conducting closed circuits, trade secrets, marks (trademarks & service marks), trade names, geographical indications, and rights to plant varieties. Registration of industrial property rights is the basis for ownership and protection in Vietnam.

The registration system is based on the first-to-file principle. Registration applications are processed by the Ministry of Science's National Office for Industrial Property.

Certificates of protection (e.g. patents in the case of inventions) are issued to recognize ownership of industrial property rights, and are valid for varying durations depending on the category of industrial property. Industrial property rights of foreign individuals and organizations are protected where a certificate of protection has been issued for such rights.

Assignment and licensing of copyright and industrial property rights are regulated in detail in the Law on IP. Contracts for transfer of industrial property rights must be registered with the National Office for Industrial Property.

To keep up-to-date with the latest legal developments in Vietnam and for access to English translations of close to 3,000 Vietnamese business and investment laws, go to www.vietnamlaws.com.

INDIA

News in June 2006

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1. Dare to be different with the new global norms on IPRs
(from *Business Standard*, 6 June 2006)

With the new global norms on intellectual property rights in place, it will no longer be possible for private industry to have free or unconditional access to the agricultural technology being generated by public sector research bodies. Gone are, therefore, the days when the new seeds or technology developed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) or the agricultural universities were readily available to public agencies or private companies for further multiplication and sale for commercial gains without making suitable investments on research.

However, since the technology ultimately needs to reach the end-users for whom it is meant (mostly farmers) and the research institutes cannot, for obvious reasons, do so entirely on their own, involvement of other public or private agencies is a must for this purpose. This is now sought to be facilitated by the ICAR

by evolving a new intellectual property management regime that will allow smooth transfer and commercialisation of its technology with provisions for benefit sharing.

The committee set up for this purpose under the chairmanship of Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), Additional Secretary Rita Sharma has released a draft containing detailed guidelines for intellectual property management besides transfer and commercialisation of technology.

Significantly, it envisages allowing the private, public and other agencies to multiply and sell seeds of the ICAR plant varieties under their own trademark or trade name, with certain conditions attached to it. Since the recently-enacted Plant Varieties Protection and Farmers Rights Act, 2001, requires compulsory registration of all new varieties, the commercialisation of these seeds will have to be done under the denomination registered under this law. For this, licences will be issued to the parties for commercialisation of the varieties, including the parent lines of the hybrids, in the domestic market or abroad.

The licence holders will, however, have to use, besides its own trademark, the ICAR's collective mark or the institution's trademark, along with the use of registered denomination on all packets of seed. The foreign clients in seed business, who are interested in commercialisation of the ICAR seeds in other countries, will have to secure protection of the ICAR varieties in their respective countries.

Indeed, till the late 1990s, the country did not have any specific intellectual property policy concerning agriculture technology though some general legal measures like the Patents Act, 1970, the Trade Marks Act, 1999, and some others applied loosely to the farm sector as well. Where agricultural research was concerned, the emphasis was mainly on the transfer of technology and not on commercialisation of technology. As such, the need for protection of the intellectual property was not felt.

But with the signing of several new global agreements and conventions on the intellectual property rights issues related to agricultural products and emergence of the multinational companies having strong agricultural research programmes, the ICAR also began conceiving measures to protect its technology.

However, this was sought to be done largely through guidelines, orders or instructions, besides mutual agreements. But that kind of an approach did not leave much scope for generation of revenue for the research institutes through the technologies developed by them. Such revenue generation is useful not only to partly cover the cost of technology generation but also to provide an incentive to the scientists to come out with more innovations.

The ICAR and its institutes will, therefore, charge royalty on seed sale of even a protected variety developed by another agency, company or breeder by using the institute's genetic material. Such a royalty is allowed under the PVP and FR Act. The net total income resulting from commercialisation of ICAR's seeds or technology will be shared by the ICAR headquarters, the developer institute and the innovator scientists.

A part of it will be utilized for strengthening research facilities and part for the welfare of ICAR employees. There will, of course, be exemption from royalty for the use of all registered varieties and genetic stocks of the ICAR by others for research purposes.

Another significant provision of the proposed policy concerns partnership between the ICAR and its institutions with the private sector for the purpose of agricultural research itself. For this, the industry will be allowed to use the ICAR's infrastructure for carrying out need-based research in important areas through contract research, contract services and by availing the core shared facilities at the ICAR institutions.

2. Tech Mahindra tool to check intellectual property leakage (from *The Hindu*, 6 June 2006)

Appraisal for SSE CMM Level 3, setting up an own campus at Hinjewadi and launch of the Inte-leak solution looks the roadmap for Tech Mahindra, providers of solutions to telecom companies.

Talking to presspersons, Dr Premchand Vice-President and Business Head Tech Mahindra said the company would be launching the Inte-leak (Intellectual Property Leakage Solution) in the market within four months. This is a digital rights management solution that would ensure that security remained the top priority and leakage of information at any point was halted. He said the company had already done the beta testing for a company and was looking at the segments of health pharma banking etc for its applications.

He said the company was looking at about three per cent of revenues from this segment in one year.

Dr Premchand said the company has developed solutions for the enterprise market and is also working on a media digital rights management solution. He said it has also developed an IPTV solution which would be helpful to the distribution network wherein the material could not be copied without making the payment. He noted that this would help in reducing piracy .

3. Patent scene in India gets rosy

(from Indian Business Insight, 10 June 2006)

Indian companies, which are looking to move up the value chain in the globalised environment, are beginning to realise the significance of intellectual property rights (IPR) and the resultant benefits. Post-liberalisation, IPR issues have gained significant momentum. An increasing number of companies based in the United States (US) are also filing for patents in India. In Chennai alone, there are at least 20 percent of the patents applications being filed by US companies.

In 2006, about 600 applications have been filed by such companies. During Jan-May 2006, about 3,000 applications were filed in Chennai, mainly by pharmaceuticals, information technology (IT), electronics and auto component companies. Out of 25,000 intellectual property applications filed across India in 2004-2005, Delhi topped the list with 9,000 applications and Chennai followed with 6,000.

Foreign companies filed 10,671 applications of which the US alone contributed 4,053.

A total of 1,911 patents were granted in 2004- 2005 and the patents office earned an income of Rs79.32 crore, with patents contributing Rs40.73 crore.

4. Nisiet plans IPR support to SSIs

(from The Hindu, 11 June 2006)

The National Institute of Small Industries Extension Training (NISIET) plans to diversify into providing intellectual property rights (IPR) support to SSIs and take up programmes on globalisation.

It will also consolidate its expertise in small industry cluster development and go more global with its consultancy projects, according to the Nisiet Principal Director, Mr Chukka Kondaiah.

Having trained over 6,000 executives from most of the developing countries over the years the Institute is confident that it can offer consultancy services in entrepreneurship and building small business enterprises and clusters to several countries.

Nisiet is in touch with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to pitch for projects, he told newsmen. Cluster development, training programmes and retraining of employees who took voluntary retirement from Government organisations have shored up revenues for Nisiet which earned a record Rs 8.35 crore in 2005-06 up from Rs 6.79 crore the previous fiscal.

5. Standards problem in India-GCC FTA

(from The Press Trust of India Limited, 12 June 2006)

Weak enforcement of Intellectual Property Right laws and cost of complying with standards imposed by Gulf Cooperation Council are affecting Indian exports to the Middle East, industry body FICCI has said.

As a result of weak enforcement of IPR laws by Gulf nations, a lot of low quality goods of other countries are being sold in GCC nations under known Indian brands, FICCI said in a release.

Indian exporters are also concerned by the cost of complying with the standards of GCC countries. This certification is required even when Indian exporters are in compliance with much higher global standards, it said.

FICCI said India must insist on strict IPR regime during negotiations of the Free Trade Agreement. A Mutual Recognition Agreement in these standards must also be included in the FTA to avoid cost escalation, the chamber said.

GCC is one of India's largest partners with bilateral trade crossing 17 billion dollars in 2004-05. India has signed the Framework Agreement on Economic Cooperation with the GCC and negotiations are one an FTA in goods and services.

6. Lack of awareness on patenting process

(from The Hindu, 22 June 2006)

In spite of the notable achievements of Indian scientists and technocrats, the country could not get patent in many cases, Health Minister P.K.Sreemathy has said.

Inaugurating the national workshop on 'Patent issues-its regulations, rights, limitations and applications,' organised by the National Institute of Personnel Management in association with the Kerala State Council for Science Technology and Environment, the Minister said that Indian environment has undergone a drastic change. It is not incremental, but a quantum leap. The nation has made remarkable strides in technology, but could not obtain patent in many cases.

The decision of the U.S. Patent Office to revoke the patent for turmeric was challenged by the New Delhi-based Council for Agricultural Research and it was granted in March 1995. This is only a first step in reversing bio-piracy and it could be achieved because documented evidence from ancient Indian texts citing the medicinal value of turmeric were produced as evidence, she said.

Patents on neem, amla, jar amla and such others should also be revoked. The country could not succeed in getting patents in many cases owing to lack of awareness about the process. Patent is not so popular in India. Hence such workshops would help to create a public awareness, she said.

NIPM chairman P. Sudeep presided. Chairman and managing director G.C.Gopala Pillai delivered the special address. K.R.S.Krishnan, member-secretary, KSCSTE, delivered the keynote address. NIPM secretary G.L. Muraleedharan welcomed and D.Padmanabhan Nair proposed a vote of thanks.

7. India, UK sign accords on IPR and science

(from Asia Pulse, 29 June 2006)

India and UK have signed a Joint Statement of Intent to create and implement an Intellectual Property Rights Programme between the two countries. The statement was signed by Commerce and Industry Minister Kamal Nath on behalf of India and UK Science Minister Lord Sainsbury during the India UK Business Leaders Forum Meeting here, a release said.

Delivering a keynote address at the meeting Nath said both India and the UK have become partners of choice in science, technology and innovation because both recognise their importance in prosperity and quality of life.

The Intellectual Property Rights is one of the key areas identified by UK-India Joint Economic and Trade Committee as providing potential for increased trade and investment in future. Both the countries have also set up a new Indo-UK Science and Technology Innovation Council to promote collaboration in innovation, Science and Technology Minister Kapil Sibal said.

He said that focus of the council would be on strategic areas of next generation communication technologies, biotechnology and stem cell research and advanced materials and nanotechnology.

8. Govt moves to check foreign patents threat
(from *The Times of India*, 30 June 2006)

After losing nearly 18,000 patents of medicinal plants to the West because of government's reluctance to share traditional knowledge, India has decided to allow International Patent Offices (IPOs) to access its Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) for examining patent claims.

The library, which would be ready by December 2007 at the cost of Rs 10 crore, has codified information of 75,000 ayurvedic, 50,000 unani and 15,000 siddha formulations and 1,500 yoga postures in patent application formats in five international languages - English, German, French Japanese and Spanish.

The cabinet authorised TKDL's co-developer, National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources, to sign a non-disclosure agreement with IPOs providing access to "TKDL database 24x7 on a secured portal."

The non-disclosure agreement with IPOs will be negotiated on the principle that the latter will not misuse TKDL for any other purpose except for examination of any patent application or to prevent misappropriation of traditional knowledge.

The agreement will also disallow IPOs and their examiners to make any third party disclosure of TKDL other than what is necessary and essential for the purposes of patent search and examination.

The library will prevent those living abroad from claiming patent for existing formulations. IPOs from 11 countries, including the US and UK, which have signed an agreement with India, will have access to the database."

JORDAN

Computer store in Amman raided for illegal software trade
(from *Middle East Company News*, 8 June 2006)

Reinforcing its commitment to protect Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), Jordanian authorities recently conducted a raid on a computer store in Amman that was involved in the trade of pirated software.

The raid resulted in the confiscation of several computers and CDs that were used to copy software illegally. The company has been charged with direct breach of copyright and IPR laws, and the case has been forwarded to the concerned authorities.

The raid was conducted by Jordanian authorities in cooperation with Business Software Alliance (BSA), the foremost organization dedicated to promoting a safe and legal digital world. BSA had tipped off the authorities about the breach of IPR laws by the computer store.

Aly Al Harakeh, official spokesperson of BSA in the Middle East said, 'The sustained anti-piracy campaign by the authorities demonstrates Jordan's commitment to safeguarding Intellectual Property Rights in the country. BSA will continue to work closely with the concerned authorities in Jordan to stop the practice of illegal software trade and prevent violations of the Jordanian IPR law, which was enacted in 1992.'

'BSA will strengthen its cooperation with the Department of National Library to widen the scope of awareness campaigns aimed at educating the public about the detrimental impact of software piracy. We are also coordinating with various local organizations and professional associations to limit the threat of piracy, which slows down the economic development of the Kingdom,' Al Harakeh added.

Mamoun Talhouni, Director General, Department of the National Library, said, 'The Department of National Library calls upon the various bodies in the country to combat piracy activities, which are hurting all Intellectual Property products. We urge individuals and organizations whose Intellectual Property Rights have been violated to lodge a complaint with the Department of National Library, so we can take the necessary legal measures to stop these illegal activities and bring the offenders to book.

'The cooperation between BSA and the Department is a an ideal example of collaborative effort against software piracy, and we are looking to enter into similar partnerships in other Intellectual Property spheres to protect the Jordanian society and the national economy from the threat of piracy.'

BAHRAIN

Bahrain Ministry of Cabinet Affairs & Information raids three companies trading in pirated software
(from *Middle East Company News*, 13 June 2006)

Bahrain's Ministry of Cabinet Affairs & Information raided three computer companies involved in illegal trading of pirated software recently.

The move is part of an intensified campaign launched by the authorities to enforce the copyright and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) laws in the country. Two computers and 192 CDs loaded with pirated copies of 'Microsoft Office', 'Windows XP', 'Mc Afee Anti Virus' and 'Adobe Photo Shop' were confiscated in the raid.

The Ministry's Publications & Press Department headed by Jamal Dawood strives to combat software piracy through continuous raids and vigilance in order to reduce the negative impact of the illegal trade on companies and businesses operating in the Kingdom.

'The Ministry fully supports the Arabian Anti-Piracy Association (AAA) and the various bodies concerned, in combating software piracy. We regularly receive complaints from companies and individuals who have fallen victim to piracy. We immediately take stringent action against the violators through strict implementation of IPR laws,' Dawood said.

Scott Butler, CEO, AAA said: 'The IT industry in the Kingdom of Bahrain is still suffering from piracy practices despite the Bahrain authorities' many efforts to protect intellectual property rights. We urge the various bodies and parties concerned to step up the anti-piracy drive so as to ensure best results in the long term.'

'The authorities are aware of the harm caused by software piracy to the national economy and the negative impact it has on facilitating investments in the Kingdom's IT sector. Drastic steps are necessary to limit this practice, failing which, the Kingdom may lose the trust of software developers and hinder their investing in the country,' he pointed out.

Butler stressed on the importance of conducting awareness campaigns that will highlight the legal and commercial repercussions of buying and trading in pirated software on various sections of society. 'End-users need to be informed about the benefit of using original software as this ensures high Return on IT Investment for original software can be updated and receives technical support, unlike pirated software,' he added.

'Technological advancements make it easy to copy software and harder to monitor the market. A successful anti-piracy campaign is the result of coordinated effort between government authorities and the affected parties.

The Bahrain Ministry of Cabinet Affairs & Information is exerting all efforts to support the cause of IPR by stepping up awareness campaigns, according priority to anti-piracy measures and taking legal action against violators of IPR laws,' Jamal Daoud, Director of Publications and Press, Bahrain Ministry of Information said. Bahrain's anti-piracy drive comes at a time when GCC governments are stepping up measures to protect their economies by educating people about intellectual property and the importance of combating piracy, especially in IT software.

The raid shows the government's seriousness in preventing the use or trade in illegal software and providing a secure IT environment for software developers and investors in the country.

UZBEKISTAN

Senate of Uzbekistan adopts copyright law

(from UzReport.com, 12 June 2006)

Senate of Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan (upper house of Uzbek parliament) adopted a law "On copyright and allied rights".

The new law was developed in accordance with requirements and standards of Agreement on trade aspects of intellectual property, which is part of WTO agreement.

The law aimed at bringing up it in accordance with Bern convention on protection of literature and art products and other international standards in this sphere.

Press service of Uzbek Senate said the law is important to speed up integration process of Uzbekistan to international community in protection of copyrights and intellectual property.

KUWAIT

Kuwait Ministry of Information steps up campaign against software piracy

(from Al-Bawaba News, 27 June 2006)

The Kuwait Government has stepped up efforts to protect Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in the country and has intensified its campaign against software piracy. The Kuwait Ministry of Information recently conducted raids on two computer companies in Kuwait City, resulting in the confiscation of three computers loaded with illegal software.

Tarek Al Ajmi, Assistant Under Secretary for Press and Journalism Affairs, Ministry of Information, Kuwait, said, "We have adopted a three-pronged strategy to tackle the threat of software piracy, which is yielding positive results. We provide support to anti-piracy initiatives and encourage government organizations to ensure that IPR laws are honoured.

We have also enacted laws that classify software piracy as a crime and impose penalties on those found to be in breach of these laws. In addition, we have been organizing awareness campaigns aimed at educating the public on the benefits of using original software, such as technical support, vital updates and superior performance.”

Scott Butler, CEO of Arabian Anti-Piracy Association (AAA), said: “We commend the Kuwait Government for its continuous support to campaigns aimed at raising public awareness about the importance of using original software. Arabian Anti-Piracy Association has been working closely with various regional governments to ensure the protection of Intellectual Property Rights, and has been employing various techniques to tackle the threat of software piracy. These efforts have met with considerable success, especially in Kuwait where the use and trade of illegal software have come down markedly.”

“AAA is coordinating with the Kuwait Ministry of Information as well as with software developers to intensify the anti-piracy campaign. We are also seeking to step up awareness campaigns highlighting how pirated software adversely affects PC performance,” Butler added. “It is important that all concerned parties, from software developers to end-users, exert efforts to limit the spread of piracy.”

LEBANON

Fadlallah calls for laws to protect intellectual property rights
(from *Daily Star*, 22 June 2006)

Sayyed Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah weighed in on copyright infringement during his weekly sermon entitled "The Islamic position regarding intellectual property." "We have to protect the innovative effort against stealing and exploitation through the activation of relevant laws which ensure intellectual property rights," the cleric said.

His speech comes just weeks after police raided numerous shops selling pirated software, games, CDs and DVDs in Beirut's southern suburbs.

"Islam confirms the protection of intellectual human rights as well as financial rights," he said, stressing the need to "create spaces for scientific and intellectual freedoms so creativity cannot be hampered," and called for providing inventors and artists with "respectful life conditions" to avoid causing educated Lebanese to migrate.

Fadlallah went on to urge Lebanese politicians Wednesday to make Israel "a top priority" and deal with it as a "strategic enemy," adding: "Priorities should not be set according to personal interests." He cautioned politicians against attacking Palestinian arms "randomly," while Israel and the US are drawing a plan to impose a Palestinian settlement by promising to make Lebanon the land of "milk and honey."

He also criticized some parties he accused of waging a media campaign to convince the public that disarming the resistance would lead to a "positive political climate, which will pave the way for economic prosperity."
