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THAILAND

1. Cable-TV firms shut for illegal broadcasts
(from *The Nation Newspaper, Thailand, 3 November 2006*)

Three major local cable-television operators in Bangkok were shut down on charges that they illegally broadcast copyrighted films of the members of the Motion Picture Association (MPA).

The operation took place in the areas of Bang Sue, Yan Nawa and Samray. The MPA was accompanied by a police task force. They arrested one man, seized broadcasting equipment and shut down unauthorized channels belonging to Thai Soon Cable TV, Golden Channel Cable TV and Sunshine Entertainment Cable TV. The three pirate cable companies' entire operations were shut down yesterday.

"The association and our member companies greatly appreciate the efforts of the police in this investigation and are firmly committed to supporting them in every way in their fight to protect intellectual property rights in Thailand," said Mike Ellis, the MPA's senior vice president and regional director for the Asia-Pacific.

2. Doraemon infringement
(from *Krung Thep Thurakit Newspaper, Regional Economic Section, Page 32, Thailand, 3 November 2006*)

Doraemon Copyright holder from Japan is strengthening in raiding the pirated products. Latest, Lalida KetLam, representative from Animation International Thailand Company, that is the Doraemon Copyright holder in Thailand, together with the region investigators of Lampang province raided three vendors. They found copyright infringement products, such as watches and bags.

3. Thai police form taskforce to crack down on pirated products
(from *Asia Pulse, 3 November 2006*)

The Royal Thai Police are setting up a special task force to crack down on pirated products to show that the police are seriously addressing trademark and intellectual property violations, according to Royal Thai Police spokesman Pol. Gen. Achirawit Suphanphesat.

Gen. Achirawit, who is also Deputy Commissioner General, said he met with representatives of 57 trademark owners stating that the police are not 'dead in the water' but is responding to instances of copyright infringement.

Representatives of the 57 trademark owners, comprising music companies, film production firms, software companies and cable TV operators, met Gen. Achirawit to discuss measures aimed at curbing intellectual property rights violations.

He admitted that intellectual property rights violations have damaged the country's image and affected Thailand's international trade. Therefore, he said, the Royal Thai Police would set up a special task force to crack down on pirated goods and will continue to cooperate with the intellectual property rights owners.

The operation would not be 'just a flash in the pan,' he said, adding that he was confident that the problem of pirated products would be considerably reduced within three months. Progress will be periodically reported to the Police Commissioner and the Chairman of the Council for National Security, he said.

4. MoC try to push music to be control commodity

(from Krung Thep Thurakit Newspaper, Economic Section, Page 3, Thailand, 20 November 2006)

Mr. Banyong Limprayoonwong, Deputy Director-General of Intellectual Property Department, prepared to discuss with Internal Trade Department about taking Music, Movie and Education Media business to be control commodity. As those businesses have many copyright piracy problem. And one of the reason that people said was about the price.

Therefore, if DIP put them in the control commodity, the price can be controlled. However, it depends on the Internal Trade Department's consideration.

5. Thai King honoured as "Father of Thai Invention"

(from Organisation of Asia-Pacific News Agencies, 22 November 2006)

The Cabinet agreed to designate His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej as the "Father of Thai Invention". The cabinet agreed to the proposal by the Inventors' Association of Thailand with the approval of the National Research Council of Thailand, the Chaipattana Foundation, the Royal Development Projects Board and the Yacht Racing Association of Thailand.

The title would honour and recognise outstanding inventions and works of His Majesty the King as well as inspire Thais to follow his footsteps and instil creative thinking and innovative minds in Thai youths to help develop the nation to prosperity.

One of King Bhumibol's outstanding inventions is his artificial rain-making method which the European Patent Office (EPO) last year issued a patent -- No.1491088, on Oct. 12, 2005 -- to protect His Majesty the King's intellectual property.

Thailand's monarch is the first and only person ever granted such the patent, formally named the "Weather Modification by Royal Rainmaking Technology."

6. Minister to reduce police influence

(from Bangkok Post Newspaper, Thailand, 23 November 2006)

Justice Minister Charnchai Likhitjitta is set to reduce police domination of the Department of Special Investigation (DSI) after removing a senior police officer from its top slot earlier this month.

Mr Charnchai intends to empower the head of the DSI to select important cases rather than have the department wait to be assigned cases as it does now.

A Justice Ministry source noted that under the new plan, the DSI should be less involved in cases related to piracy of intellectual property such as illegal music and video compact discs and DVDs or counterfeit bags and watches.

7. Thailand to break HIV drug patent

*(from The Nation Newspaper, Prime News Section, Page 1A & 2A, Thailand, 30 November 2006
Organisation of Asia-Pacific News Agencies, 30 November 2006)*

Thailand's Ministry of Public Health announced on Wednesday that it would invoke the compulsory licensing clause in the Patent Act to allow for lower-cost local production of the life-saving anti-viral drug, Efavirenz, which is needed by thousands of people living with HIV/AIDs. So far, most people with AIDS have been priced out of the market.

The move is expected to save thousands of lives in Thailand, and to raise the quality of life for families who have been forced to use up limited family income for medications.

The decision, with immediate effect, will pave the way for the Government Pharmaceutical Organisation (GPO) to mass-produce a cheaper version of the drug for local use. Production is expected to start in June next year.

The compulsory licensing would be valid for only five years but Public Health Minister Mongkol Na Songkhla told reporters that the move was necessary given the growing number of people with HIV/Aids and the government limited budget.

Under the agreement, the patent owner would be paid 0.5 per cent of sales from the GPO as compensation. Thai patent law allows state enforced compulsory licensing in the case of drugs being critically needed to save people's lives, providing that the state is unable to afford to subsidise them.

MALAYSIA

1. New Plant Varieties Act to be implemented in January 2007

(from Bernama Daily Malaysian News, 6 November 2006)

The rights of breeders of new plant varieties will be protected when the Protection of New Plant Variety Act 2004 is implemented in January next year. Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said the act could play an important role in the transformation of Malaysian agriculture.

With the implementation of the act, plant breeders in the country would be encouraged to produce more superior varieties while local farming communities could have greater access to more superior varieties from abroad.

"The act will also provide the recognition and protection of contribution made by farmers, local communities and indigenous people towards the creation of new plant varieties and to encourage investment in the development of the breeding of new plant varieties in both public and private sectors," he said in his speech at the six-day Asian Regional Technical Meeting for Plant Variety Protection here.

Muhyiddin said the main provisions of the act were based largely on the International Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties (UPOV) model law with reference to the Convention of Biological Diversity and existing intellectual property rights systems in countries like Japan, Australia, India and Thailand.

2. Malaysia & India to initiate regional IPR institute
(from *Bernama Daily Malaysian News*, 9 November 2006)

Malaysia and India will initiate the establishment of an India-Asean Institute for Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) to build human resource capacities and training to serve the region.

The regional institute would also help protect IPR of products produced by both regions, Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology (Mosti), Datuk Seri Dr Jamaludin Jarjis, said.

He said this was agreed to at the bilateral meeting between Malaysia and India on Science & Technology (S&T) Cooperation held in conjunction with the 12th Technology Summit and Technology Platform in New Delhi.

SINGAPORE

Reward of \$10,000 given out for tip-off
(from *The Straits Times Newspaper, Singapore*, 3 November 2006)

A whistle-blower whose tip-off led to the conviction of an interior design firm for using unauthorized software is now \$10,000 richer. This is the largest single bounty paid by the Business Software Alliance (BSA) since the software industry watchdog launched its tip-off hotline in February last year.

Information provided by the whistle-blower helped the courts convict and impose a \$30,000 fine in April on PDM International, a 10-man interior design firm which used illegal Microsoft, Adobe and Autodesk software. PDM was the first company to face criminal charges for breaking copyright laws. Previously, software companies could only file civil suits against firms suspected of using illegal software.

Last week, PDM also paid an undisclosed amount to BSA as part of a confidential settlement.

A third of the people who contact the BSA do so in the hopes of collecting a reward, said its anti-piracy director, Mr Tarun Sawney. Another third do it as they are told to install or use illegal software at work and are worried about the legal consequences. The rest do so as they genuinely believe that using illegal software is wrong.

The BSA says the size of a whistle-blower's reward depends on the accuracy of the information received, the scale of the infringement, the amount recovered via enforcement action, and the helpfulness of the whistle-blower – for example, whether he is willing to testify in court.

PHILIPPINES

1. 7 stores raided for selling fake drugs
(from *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 1 November 2006)

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) raided seven drugstores in Metro Manila for allegedly selling fake medicine.

Agents of the NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division (IPRD) seized at least P60,000 worth of counterfeit Viagra, a popular anti-impotence drug, from Emerson Drugs, located at 1402 Masangkay St. in Sta. Cruz, Manila and Imperial Drug House at 103 E. Rodriguez Avenue in Quezon City.

Also raided were ITG Drug Haus at 1829 Dian St. in Palanan, Makati City; Kimry Pharma which has two branches in Makati City—at 5342 Diesel corner Dian streets and 1845-C Dian St.; Pascual Drug at 240 Libertad St. in Pasay City; and Barney's Pharmacy at 780 M. Naval St., Navotas.

NBI IPRD chief Jose Justo Yap said the owners of the stores face charges for selling unregistered drugs and violating Republic Act 8203 or the Special Law on Counterfeit Drugs. The raids were conducted simultaneously on Oct. 26 after Judge Reynaldo Ros of the Manila Regional Trial Court issued seven search warrants.

The manufacturer and distributor of the drug, Pfizer, had filed a complaint after learning about the proliferation of fake Viagra in the metropolis.

2. IPR standard book out soon
(from *Manila Bulletin*, 11 November 2006)

Issues on intellectual property rights (IPR) have long been a source of discussions among artists and creative people. Further confusion arises because of the fact that no popular standards on IPR are made available to the public. But not anymore, or at least that's what fiery IPR promoter John Lesaca says as a standard book is set to be written for the benefit of IPR stakeholders in the country.

At the launch of the Intellectual Property Institute of the Philippines at the DAP (Development Academy of the Philippines) building in Pasig, Lesaca said the creation of such book is one of the major initiatives of the new institute, a big leap towards the goal to improve the local IPR situation.

Set for release next year, the book is keen on providing the public beneficial information on human capital, intangible assets, and intellectual property rights, with emphasis on the intellectual capital process such as the creation, protection, management, and utilization of an individual's work. A reliable group of IPR experts called "fellows" of the Institute are working on the book.

The Intellectual Property Institute of the Philippines, IP Squared for short, is a partnership between IP Coalition and DAP which aims to champion intellectual integrity and zero in on the value and practical components of intellectual creations.

3. CHED requested to address unauthorized reproduction of books in Cebu City
(from *Hechanova Bugay & Vilchez Law Office*, 13 November 2006)

The City Council of Cebu recently passed a resolution requesting the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to coordinate with the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) and law enforcement agencies in curtailing the unauthorized reproduction of books and other reading materials.

Unauthorized reproduction of books and reading materials is a profitable business in Cebu City. Photocopies are made available especially near schools and universities, which provide a cheap alternative to expensive, hard to find or locally unavailable textbooks.

The resolution recognizes that while unauthorized reproduction offers an inexpensive way for students to have access to reading materials, this illegal trade results to a decrease in tax revenues for the government, denies the author royalty income and decreases profits in the legal book trade. Copyright infringement may have been wittingly or unwittingly committed by students and those who are engaged in unauthorized reproduction.

The resolution was authored by Councilor Eugenio Faelnar, who heads the Association of Barangay Councils (ABC) and represents the group as an ex-officio member to the City Council.

4. Senate majority leader urges fellow lawmakers to focus on legislation
(from *Hechanova Bugay & Vilchez Law Office, 14 November 2006*)

As the senate resumed its session, Senate Majority Leader Kiko Pangilinan urged his fellow lawmakers to put Charter Change to rest and focus on legislation instead. According to Pangilinan “(t)he Senate is ready to hit the ground running and focus on pertinent legislation that addresses the real needs of our people.”

Included in the bills for discussion is Senate Bill 2263 which seeks to lower the prices of medicines for the Filipino people. The bill seeks to amend Republic Act 8293 or the Intellectual Property Code to make possible greater competition among drug companies and to provide the government with better policy tools to significantly influence the supply and demand of medicines.

Among the amendments introduced are: the early working doctrine that would allow experimentation, production and registration of patented drugs or medicines prior to the expiration of the patents; the express recognition of the doctrine of international exhaustion as provided in Article 6 of the TRIPS Agreement; and the liberalization of compulsory licensing requirements, in the importation, manufacturing, sale or distribution by the government of medicines to protect the public.

“Our people expect results from the Senate in terms of life enhancing legislation. The Senate intends to respond to this public clamor resolutely and pursue its goals of providing relevant legislation relentlessly,” Pangilinan said.

5. RP not among Southeast Asian markets favoured in JETRO study
(from *Business World, 17 November 2006*)

As Japan continues to expand manufacturing and processing operations throughout East Asia, its firms are becoming more inclined to invest in Southeast Asia than in China. The Philippines, however, is the odd man out in this regard, the study showed.

A recent study by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) noted that in light of the growing investment risks in China, Japanese firms are exploring more options in Southeast Asia, particularly Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. Even Vietnam was considered more attractive than the Philippines.

JETRO, the Japanese government's arm in charge of promoting trade and investments in other economies, studied global trade and FDI trends of major economies for 2005 and the first half of 2006.

The positive outlook, however, does not favor the Philippines as Japanese firms regard the country's investment climate inferior to that of China, with political stability, infrastructure, research and engineering skills among its many weaknesses. The country also scored negatively in foreign exchange risks and intellectual property protection, making it the second least favored country just ahead of Indonesia.

Vietnam scored higher than the Philippines in the survey, which highlighted the socialist state's competitiveness in labor costs. It noted Vietnamese workers cost \$110 a month, compared with the Chinese at \$190/ month.

The study said Japanese firms prefer to locate in countries with which Japan has economic partnership agreements, like Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines. The Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement, signed last Sept. 9 in Finland, now awaits Senate ratification even as it has been questioned on its actual benefits to Philippine industries.

6. Gloria gets tough on piracy
(from *Manila Standard*, 20 November 2006)

Owners of shopping malls and other commercial buildings will face criminal prosecution if there are stalls or establishments there that are caught selling pirated video products and other counterfeited goods in violation of the Intellectual Property Rights Law.

This was part of a set of tougher directives issued by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to curb the unabated piracy and counterfeiting problem that has defrauded foreign and local film and recording companies of billions of pesos of earnings, and the government of tax revenues.

In a memo issued to a number of government agencies led by the Department of Trade and Industry, the President ordered the intensification of regular and effective:

1. Raids and spot inspections on factories that produce illegal optical discs, trademarked and copyrighted goods; 2. Seizure and destruction of pirated and counterfeited goods and equipment used to produce them; and 3. Arrests and prosecution leading to deterrent level sentences served.

The President said that through improved inter-agency coordination and intensified enforcement operations, the country's determination to eradicate piracy and counterfeiting has been appropriately recognized by the international community, especially its major trading partners led by the United States.

The President directed the agencies concerned to allocate sufficient resources for the conduct of raids and inspections leading to effective prosecution of pirates and counterfeiters of trademarked goods, especially of products affecting public health and safety, such as medicine, cosmetics, food products and auto parts at the retail, distribution, production and importation points.

She likewise ordered these agencies to maintain appropriate coordination with the judiciary in ensuring that the courts are adequately skilled in intellectual property cases and consultation with the judiciary and Congress, explore the designation or creation of special intellectual property and international trade courts.

The directives were also addressed to the heads of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Finance, Department of Justice, Department of Education, Office of Press Secretary and director general of the Intellectual Property Office.

The directives are for implementation by the OMB, National Police, Bureau of Customs, National Bureau of investigation and National Library.

7. IPRs body cites improved RP status

(from Business World, 24 November 2006)

The Intellectual Property Philippines (IPP) cited the results of the European Commission's assignment of the Philippines as a low priority country, noting that the agency's enforcement efforts are paying off. IPP Director-General Adrian S. Cristobal, Jr. said the National Committee for Intellectual Property Rights (NCIPR) has seized more than P1 billion worth of counterfeit goods since the start of the year.

"The survey results recognized the united effort in the campaign against piracy. This has strengthened the concerned parties' resolve to be more aggressive in the overall conduct to protect and promote IPR," Mr. Cristobal said.

The NCIPR, which is led by the IPP, is composed of the Optical Media Board, National Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, Department of Interior and Local Government, National Telecommunications Commission and Bureau of Customs.

The survey also noted that the Philippines has strengthened its intellectual property laws. It cited the passage of the Optical Media Act in 2004 and the country's accession to the World Intellectual Property Organization's Internet treaties as the main turning points.

It also noted the seizure of \$8 million worth of pirated discs in 2004, the biggest haul to date, and the Senate proposals to amend and strengthen intellectual property laws. Aside from the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam were ranked low priority countries. China was classified as main priority.

8. NBI seize fake Vuitton, DKNY items

(from Manila Bulletin, 27 November 2006)

The confiscation of R15 million worth of fake Louis Vuitton and Donna Karan New York (DKNY) bags came after the NBI agents zeroed in on counterfeit Lacoste apparel worth R1.1 million in Sampaloc, Manila. Lawyer Jose Justo Yap, chief of NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division (IPRD), said that the raids were conducted after the local distributors of DKNY and Louis Vuitton sought help from the NBI.

The operations resulted in the seizure of 1032 pieces of counterfeit DKNY bags and wallets, and 13,802 pieces of fake Louis Vuitton items.

Probers said that alleged owners Angelica Yao, Kevin Tan, Tong Hua Lu, Lai Chong Lato Sy, Susan Tang, Andrew Castro, Andrew Reyes, Cristina delos Santos, and Alicia Perez face charges of trademark infringement and unfair competition.

"The local distributors of DKNY and Louis Vuitton complained that they may have lost a total of R15 million in profits because of the counterfeit items," Yap explained.

9. War against piracy

(from Manila Bulletin, 29 November 2006)

The problem of piracy and counterfeiting is increasingly becoming more prevalent in the Philippines. The widespread Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) violations are worldwide in scope; thus strategies

for promoting and protecting IPR need constant strengthening and modification. Investing in intellectual property protection has not been made more important.

The IP Coalition (IPC) has taken a proactive stance against IPR infringements. And, with the deliberations and stratagems of the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPO), the coalition is a voice of the private sector with a strong strategic action plan despite the odds.

IPC Chair and PRO John J. Lesaca has taken the responsibility of heading and organizing the IP Coalition, a grand effort from the business sector and entertainment industry including AMP, OPM, FISCAP, KAPP, and other concerned organizations. When the Inter-Agency Committee on IPR was dissolved last 2003, the private sector had to find an effective way of communicating with the government. With the IPC, the industry is able to deal directly with the government agency that handles its IP concerns.

10. Computer firm officials say piracy rampant
(from *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 29 November 2006)

The ongoing battle between software developers and pirates in the country has continued to escalate, with no foreseeable victory for the government in the near future, an official of software firm Microsoft Philippines said here.

Jojo Ayson, Microsoft Philippines senior product manager, said software piracy in the Philippines is still rampant despite the government's efforts to stop it.

"It's still rampant [because] a lot of people still don't see the value of intellectual property and it's so easy to [buy] pirated software," said Ayson during the local launch of the Windows Vista and Office 2007 last week.

He blamed the people's mentality of settling for copied versions of software products than buying the original. "It's hard to change the mentality of people. If it's available, why should I buy the original?" Ayson said. He said Microsoft has teamed up with other agencies, such as the Business Software Alliance (BSA), to educate people on the benefits of buying original software products.

Ayson said Microsoft continues to make its products more secure to make it difficult for pirates to copy. "We know that piracy exists and there are people who will try to do what they can to pirate the software," Ayson said.

INDONESIA

1. Indonesian police nab software copiers
(from *Xinhua News Agency*, 2 November 2006)

The Indonesian Police have arrested two alleged illegal software copiers in Jakarta and confiscated evidence in the latest crackdown on the illicit trade.

Under Indonesian law, copyright offenders face up to five years in prison and a fine of as much as 500 million rupiah (54,932 U.S. dollars).

Authorities said both companies used original digital software as master copies and then installed copies on computers before distributing them in Jakarta's busiest markets such as Mangga Dua and Senen, said.

The software copied included products from Microsoft, Symantec, Borland, Adobe, Cisco Systems, Macromedia and Autodesk. They are all registered members of Washington-based Business Software Alliance (BSA), which protects their copyrights.

2. RI's fight against piracy pays off

(from The Jakarta Post Newspaper, 7 November 2006)

Indonesia's efforts to protect intellectual property rights have finally borne fruit, as the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) announced an upgrade of the country's status in the fight against piracy.

The Special 301 review, an annual process conducted by the U.S. government that assesses the state of protection of intellectual property rights in countries around the world, states that Indonesia has demonstrated solid progress in strengthening its intellectual property regime.

"In recognition of these steps forward, the U.S. government has raised Indonesia from the Priority Watch List to the Watch list," USTR assistant Barbara Weisel said in Jakarta. Weisel explained that the upgrade to the Watch list would have positive implications for Indonesia's economy in the form of an enhancement of confidence and competitiveness.

"By improving its level of intellectual property protection, Indonesia has also improved its attractiveness as a foreign investment destination," Weisel said.

According to a 2005 World Economic Forum survey, Indonesia ranked 74th worldwide in terms of competitiveness, a drop of five places from 2004's ranking. That placing was a far cry from 1997, when the country was the world's 15th-most competitive nation.

Among the advances recorded, the review noted that Indonesia has enacted seven laws in the field of intellectual property rights, namely the Trade Secrets Law, Industrial Design Law, Patents Law, Trademarks Law, Copyright Law, the Plant Variety Protection Law, and the Integrated Circuits Law - plus the necessary ancillary regulations. It had also increased the number of police raids being staged.

During the period between January and August 2006, the police had conducted a significant number of raids, and had inspected 6 factories and 29 home industries, dozens of malls and hundreds of retailers and vendors.

A total of seven million illegal CDs/VCDs/DVDs had been seized, as well as 37 optical disc reproduction machines, hundreds of kilograms of plastic ores, and a number of vehicles used in the illicit business. In addition, some 400 suspects had been arrested.

This year, 1,228 intellectual property infringement cases had been reported to police headquarters, out of which 1,219 cases were cases of illegal reproduction and selling of optical discs.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono had also shown clear support by issuing Decree No. 4 of 2006 in March, which established a national team for combating the infringement of intellectual property rights. Members of the national team included the National Police chief and the Attorney General.

Director General of Intellectual Property Rights Abdul Bari Azed, who was also present at the announcement, explained that the team was responsible for formulating policies, evaluating resolutions, issuing guidance and directions, providing education to the public, and enhancing bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation.

3. Govt revising law on intellectual property rights
(from *The Jakarta Post Newspaper, Indonesia, 23 November 2006*)

The government is revising a 2002 law aimed at protecting the intellectual property rights of artists from rampant piracy, a senior official said.

Ansori Sinungan, the intellectual property rights director-general at the Justice and Human Rights Ministry, said a draft law is being prepared to revise the current regulation. It will include an additional chapter establishing a collective management society to protect art, he said.

"The collective management society will include artists, publishers and producers to collect royalties from users of registered artworks and distribute them to intellectual property rights owners," Ansori said at a seminar on intellectual property in Jakarta.

He added that the government would function as a facilitator and regulator. Actors, singers, recording firms and law practitioners at the event supported the moves.

Arts workers said the anti-piracy operations launched by police were ineffective. They said this was partly due to vagueness in the existing law. They complained piracy and the duplication of their works took place under the noses of law enforcers.

The Indonesian Recording Companies Association (Asiri) along with composers, singers and music arrangers has said it frequently files complaints with police about piracy and the illegal use of artworks in public performances.

VIETNAM

1. 4 Vietnam's IP Law meets WTO requirements
(from *Vietnam News Agency Bulletin, 1 November 2006*)

Viet Nam has attached great importance to protecting intellectual property in conforming to the international rules over recent years in a bid to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Viet Nam's Law on Intellectual Property, a clear demonstration of the country's efforts in protecting intellectual property, is considered the most important basis governing the intellectual property-related relations in areas that WTO members are interested in like investment, trade, commerce and science and technology.

Viet Nam's Law on Intellectual Property is considered a decisive factor in concluding Viet Nam's negotiation on intellectual property due to its conformity with the WTO's requirements. It was compiled in 2005 when the negotiation's process for Viet Nam's entry into the WTO underwent ten multilateral negotiation sessions and tens of bilateral ones, including those on intellectual property.

Accordingly, Viet Nam's Law on Intellectual Property and concerned governmental regulations topped the agenda of the next three multilateral negotiation sessions and bilateral negotiations held in 2005 and 2006.

Viet Nam has adopted a reasonable solution, which helps not only to protect the community's interests but also to avoid disagreements with other countries, and meets requirements of the trade-related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) - WTO.

According to Pham Dinh Chuong, Head of the Intellectual Property Office, Vietnamese producers should pay more attention to building and registering their trademarks since a variety of Vietnamese farm produce are traded in overseas markets under international brands.

2. Two big IT firms raided for pirated software use
(from *Vietnam News Brief Service*, 3 November 2006)

Copyright and intellectual property authorities have raided two large IT firms in Hanoi on the suspicion of using pirated software. All commercial software installed on Informatics Development Co. (IDC) and SingPC Informatics Co. is pirated, it said.

The pirated software includes Microsoft Windows, Microsoft Office, Microsoft FrontPage, Lac Viet dictionary, Vietkey, Symantec Norton Antivirus and WinRAR.

These are serious cases, an inspector said, explaining that these pirated software are installed on computers sold to their clients. He said the total value of illegal software installed on PCs of those companies is more than VND400 million (\$25,000).

Worse still, foreign brands like Acer were also installed with illegal software before selling to end-users, he added. The raid into these IT firms is part of a new campaign attacking software copyright infringement in Vietnam, he confirmed.

Vietnamese authorities will tighten the control over the intellectual property issue in the future to create a healthy environment and encourage the development of software industry.

3. Culture ministry steps up software
(from *Vietnam News Agency Bulletin*, 8 November 2006)

The Ministry of Culture and Information and the Business Software Alliance yesterday jointly announced the formation of a partnership in a bid to promote enforcement of intellectual property (IP) rights related to software.

The partnership includes the ministry's Copyright Office and inspectors and is the first international partnership in Vietnam working in IP rights protection.

"The Vietnamese Government and relevant agencies will continue to further enforce IP rights, not only in computer-trading companies but also in businesses that use illegal and unlicensed software," said the ministry's chief inspector, Vu Xuan Thanh.

Thanh said protection of IP was even more essential as Vietnam joins the WTO, by which software piracy is strictly prohibited.

"One of the biggest challenges for major software companies to overcome in Vietnam is piracy," said Tarun Sawney, anti-piracy director of the Business Software Alliance (BSA) Asia.

BSA, which earlier this year held a series of seminars on software asset management (SAM) for domestic and foreign enterprises in Vietnam, is an organisation dedicated to promoting a safe and legal digital world, Sawney said.

According to the Ministry of Culture and Information, the Government in recent years has accelerated the enforcement of copyright law in the software sector in an effort to promote a healthier business climate for foreign investors and help develop the fledgling domestic software industry.

4. WHO backs Vietnam in fighting fake drugs
(from *Vietnam News Brief Service*, 10 November 2006)

The World Health Organization (WHO) has provided VND1 billion (\$625,000) for the Vietnamese Ministry of Health (MoH) to carry out a two-year project on cracking down the burgeoning incidence of fake drugs.

The movement aims to help the WTO's newly admitted member to realize its commitments on intellectual property protection to the global trade club.

The project will set up a national working group on anti-fake drug with representatives from MoH and other Ministries of Police, Defense and Finance with a view to rooting out fake drug production and trading activities.

According to the MoH, copycat medicines are overwhelming the market, even being bought up by major hospitals in Hanoi and Haiphong cities, posing a potential hazard to patient health. Most of the fake drugs were reportedly tablets prescribed for post-surgery patients to prevent inflammation.

Since early 2006, the ministry has uncovered 15 cases of producing and trading copycat medicines, doubling the figure in the same period of last year. Most of which were expensive and highly specialized medicinal treatments manufactured across the border in Cambodia, Laos, and China.

5. Vietnam to protect foreign pharmaceutical businesses
(from *Thai News Service*, 20 November 2006)

The Government of Vietnam will protect intellectual property rights of foreign pharmaceutical businesses operating in the country, said a senior official.

Health Minister Tran Thi Trung Chien made the commitment during a meeting in Hanoi on Nov. 18 between the Ministry of Health and foreign businesses engaging in pharmaceutical production and trading in Vietnam.

During the process of World Trade Organisation entry, Vietnam will implement a roadmap on tax reduction for pharmaceutical products and cosmetics, and allow foreign companies to open branches in Vietnam, and foreigninvested enterprises to directly import and export pharmaceutical products.

The Government of Vietnam pledged to protect intellectual property rights of these businesses, the Minister said.

By September this year, 312 foreign businesses had been licensed to be involved in pharmaceutical products, and materials for making pharmaceutical products in Vietnam. These businesses are supplying 60 percent of the demand for pharmaceutical products in the country.

6. 2 IPRs protection beneficial to both Vietnam
(from *Vietnam News Agency Bulletin*, 21 November 2006)

Intellectual property rights protection is beneficial to the governments of both Viet Nam and the US, stressed an official from the US Embassy in Viet Nam at an international conference on intellectual property rights opened in Ha Noi on Nov. 20.

The conference, which brought together government and industries, would make significant contribution to fostering dialogues, as well as supplying critical information and raising awareness of

representatives of both industries and government, noted Deputy Chief of Mission of the US Embassy Jonathan Aloisi.

The US official spoke highly of Viet Nam's efforts in intensifying the intellectual property rights protection through legislation and information dissemination. However, he said, all sides recognised that much more must be done. The US was willing to help Viet Nam succeed in this effort, he added.

The workshop was co-hosted by the Viet Nam Intellectual Property Association (VIPA) and the Viet Nam Intellectual Property Institute (VIPI).

INDIA

1. Workshop on IPRs protection (from *The Hindu*, 1 November 2006)

The Department of Biotechnology and Microbiology, Kannur University, is organising a workshop on 'Awareness generation on intellectual property rights (IPRs) protection' at Thalassery on November 2. Head of the Department M. Haridas said at a press conference here on Tuesday that former Kerala University Vice-Chancellor B. Ekbal would inaugurate the workshop at Hotel Pearlview Regency.

University Vice-Chancellor P. Chandramohan would preside over the function. Dr. Haridas said the IPR protection assumed importance for the State as the biodiversity-rich Western Ghats formed part of it. The workshop was being organised in association with the Kerala State Council for Science Technology and Environment with the objective of creating awareness among scientists, students and the public on the IPR protection, he added.

Technical session in the technical session, there would be lectures on biodiversity-related legislations and IPR issues, the role of copyright and trademark in market economy and also the role of patent information centre.

2. Lack of patent rights worrying MNCs (from *The Hindu*, 4 November 2006)

The lack of adequate intellectual property (IP) protection in India, China and other South-East Asian nations has become a cause for concern for multi-national companies, who have made huge investments in research and development (R&D) in these countries, Additional Director-General of Police (Economic Offences) Susant Mahapatra has said.

He was delivering the keynote address at a workshop on IP Law Enforcement and Protection jointly organised by the US India Business Council, the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) and NASSCOM here.

Mr. Mahapatra said IP laws were not being strictly enforced in the country, as the law enforcement agencies tended to concentrate mainly on containing terrorism and Naxalism and on maintaining law and order.

"There is hardly any national consensus among political parties with regard to a serious enforcement of the IP rights regime," he said.

He added that there was a need to sensitise prosecutors, judges and investigators to the IP laws and establishing fast track courts for conducting speedy trials of such cases.

Director of Cyber Security and Compliance, NASSCOM Nandakumar Saravade said poor enforcement was mainly responsible for the high rate of IP law violations and cyber crimes.

Mr. Mahapatra, however, said that the hue and cry made about IP law violations did not make much sense to a person from the East, as it opposed the whole idea of globalisation.

3. Understanding IPR need of the hour
(from *Hindustan Times*, 6 November 2006)

Vice-Chancellor of the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) Prof Panjab Singh said people should understand the implications of trade- related Intellectual Property Rights, Document and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Speaking as chief guest at a national seminar on 'Patenting Biotechnology' organised, jointly by the National Research Development Corporation (NRDC) and the department of Bio-technology, Govt of India, the Vice Chancellor gave a historical account of intellectual property rights, including patent, both globally and in India.

Inventions are based on basic research, and it should be done after raising awareness of Intellectual Property Right (IPR) on the subjects concerned by the researcher, he said.

He added: "We should, first of all, search for other rights in the areas, which are already existing so that our efforts may not be wasted and duplicity is avoided. "Area of bio-technology in patenting is especially important because it is a multi- disciplinary area including health, agriculture," he said. "The diseases like AIDS are a challenge before us and intellectual property management is a very important factor in this area," he further said.

If a farmer was well conversant with IPR, then only, he could save his interest in today's complex global IP scenario, he said.

4. City-based org demands bigger intellectual property office
(from *The Press Trust of India Limited*, 7 November 2006)

In order to help industries in Gujarat get easier access to intellectual property rights, a city-based organisation demanded a full-fledged office, which could also handle cases of patents, designs and geographical indication.

Representatives from Intellectual Property Practitioners' Association (IIPA) met the members of a Parliamentary Standing Committee headed by Gujarat MP Kanshiram Rana.

The panel members were in the city and held discussions on various aspects of intellectual property (IP).

"At present we have only a trademark office which is operating out of a small premises here," said Yagnesh Trivedi, president of the association.

"With Ahmedabad handling about 6,326 applications for trademark during 2005-06, which is more than 6,175 received by Kolkata, a full-fledged IP office will help industries in Gujarat," he noted.

Industries in Gujarat at present approach the Mumbai office for filing patents, Trivedi added. Although the trademark applications are handled by the city branch, the office is not equipped with the authority to handle cases for patents, designs and also geographical indication, the IIPA chief maintained.

Ahmedabad has the jurisdiction of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Diu, Daman and Dadra Nagar Haveli for trademark registration.

5. Trade may fall if proper IPR system not adopted
(from *The Press Trust of India Limited*, 9 November 2006)

The bilateral trade target between India and the US may fall short if strong and effective intellectual property rights (IPR) system is not adopted in the country, US Coordinator for International Intellectual Property Enforcement Crish S Israel said.

India and the US has set a goal to double its bilateral trade in the next three years and announcement to this effect was made by President George W Bush when he visited India in March. It may face difficulty in achieving the target but for proper IP enforcement, he said here.

"To achieve our goals our leaders recognises that we need to reduce certain barriers. In particular, weak intellectual property enforcement is a major barrier to increased trade," he said.

Israel also said, having a strong and effective IPR system will help make India a first choice for foreign trade and investment.

Speaking about copyright protection, the expert said India should be encouraged to sign and implement WIPO Internet Treaties which would strengthen protection for digital works and modernise India's copyright laws.

Additionally, industry's effort will be critical in encouraging the Indian government to adopt an optical disc law to address optical piracy, he said.

"We look forward to continue working cooperatively with the Indian government as they carry on in their efforts to modernise and improve India's IPR system," he said. This can be achieved through communication, sharing information, engaging private sector and enforcement, he said.

6. 28 Indian products in Geographical Indications registry
(from *Asia Pulse*, 10 November 2006)

As many as 28 Indian products, including Darjeeling Tea, has been registered with the Geographical Indications (GI) Registry. A GI registration gives the proprietor the legal right to exclusive use and relief in case of any infringement.

"Exclusion of the unauthorised persons from misusing GI would ensure that genuine products of the rightful producers are marketed," an official release said.

The registry operates in Chennai under the Geographical Indication of Goods (registration and Protection) Act, 1999. Apart from Darjeeling tea, products like Kancheepuram Silk, Mysore Agarbatti, Sandal soap and Oil and Silk, Kullu Shawl, Kangra Tea and Chanderi saree have been registered.

Pochampally Ikat, Kotpad Handloom, Bhavana Jamakkalam, Aranmula Kannadi, Salem fabric, Solapur terry towel, Madurai Sangudi, Nanjanagud banana, channapatna toys and dolls, Coimbatore wet grinder, Mysore rosewood inlay, Kasuti embroidery and Orissa ikkat are other products that have found a place in the registry.

7. US to take active steps to check Bollywood piracy
(from *The Press Trust of India Limited*, 12 November 2006)

According to US Intellectual Property Rights Coordinator Chris Israel, America is concerned about intellectual property enforcement and the Justice Department is taking active steps to stop the piracy of films and music including those produced in Bollywood.

"But to accomplish our end goals and help everyone it is important for the Indian copyright industry to partner with organizations like the Motion Picture Association (MPA) and the Recording Industry Association to share information and resources to stop the piracy of their products," he said at a seminar on intellectual property rights here.

The profits generated from an effective anti-piracy campaign, can be used to expand local businesses and further creative endeavors in India, said Israel.

On copyright protection in the digital era, Israel said "we need to encourage India to sign and implement the WIPO Internet Treaties, which will strengthen protection for digital works and modernize India's copyright laws."

Additionally, industry's efforts will be critical in encouraging the Indian government to adopt an optical disc law to address optical media piracy, Israel adding "I understand that draft legislation is currently being studied."

"This is an area of concern for both U.S. and Indian industry. An optical disc regime would regulate the production of optical media, which in turn would decrease counterfeiting and piracy and facilitate enforcement efforts," he said.

Agreed Hugh Stevens, Sr Vice President, Asia Pacific, Time Warner, "India does not have an optical disc law, which is very important to regulate the production of pirated optical discs, a big loss to the entertainment industry." "If there is a law, and the problem can be regulated upstream, it will lower the cost of handling piracy besides making the system very effective," Stevens said noting countries like Malaysia, Hong Kong, Thailand and Singapore have such a law in place India too deserves the same."

The Indian Information and Broadcasting Ministry and the Ministry of Commerce are working on it but "it seems to be taking lot more time," Stevens said.

On how it affects them, Stevens said "we are content providers and produce DVDs and videos. It directly affects us. Also the Indian Diaspora abroad is very much affected, especially those in the middle-east."

However, Vivek Bharti, advisor, FICCI, said "the laws on protecting intellectual property and checking piracy are very much in place. What is needed is their implementation." "The implementing bodies need to be sensitised. What we lack is the capacity of the system to implement the law, which needs to be corrected," he said.

8. Farmers to soon get rights over their innovations
(from *The Press Trust of India Limited*, 12 November 2006)

"The government will soon allow registration for some specific crops. Farmers' varieties for those crops should have to be registered within three years once registration is allowed," Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority Chairman S Nagarajan said here.

"We are now ready for registration. It is for the government to issue the direction," he told PTI on the sidelines of a two-day conference 'Farmers-led innovations towards plant variety improvement and

conservation: protecting farmers' rights, geographic indication, appellation of origin etc. in the national context'.

The government does not favour registration by individual farmer who would get a monopoly over a product like the seed company does, he said.

Initially the registration would be for 12 crops in cereals and pulses, Natarajan said, adding the government would move gradually to include horticulture crops as well. The farmers' will have a right for 15 years over the varieties like in property once they register those plants or seeds, he said.

Anybody wants to cross breed a registered variety with another to develop a new variety will have to pay royalty to those having rights over those varieties, he said.

The Protection of Plant Variety and Farmers' Rights Act has two components -- registering the varieties for protection and farmers' rights.

9. India's efforts to check bio-piracy suffer setback
(from *The Economic Times*, 15 November 2006)

India's attempt to frame multilateral rules to check bio-piracy has been rejected by a group of developed countries including the US, EU, Japan, Switzerland and Australia. At a recent meeting of the World Trade Organisation's TRIPs Council, the developed countries said that use of national legislation was the best way to deal with bio-piracy cases.

A group of eight developing countries including India, Brazil, China and Pakistan had earlier submitted a proposal to the TRIPs council demanding that the TRIPs agreement should incorporate provisions making it mandatory for patent applicants to disclose the origin of the biological resource being patented. The patent applicant should also share benefits arising out of the patent with the origin country, they contended.

India is keen to frame multilateral laws on bio-piracy, as developed countries, especially the US, have made several efforts to patent properties of products like neem and turmeric, which Indians have been using for centuries. The US government revoked patents on certain uses of neem and turmeric when India challenged the decision.

However, developing countries are constantly worried over the prospects of their traditional products being used in products patented by the developed world without royalty.

The developing country submission had stated that there was a need to bring about parity between TRIPs and the provisions of the convention on bio-diversity (CBD) which provides for disclosure of origin and sharing of benefit.

According to sources at the WTO, at a recent TRIPs council meeting, the developed countries claimed that there was no conflict between provisions of the CBD and TRIPs.

They said that there was no need to amend the TRIPs agreement as demanded by the developing countries and national legislation was the best way to deal with bio-piracy cases. Most of them supported the use of a traditional knowledge database for use by patent examiners.

10. Patents become key clinchers in India Inc's merger deals
(from *The Economic Times*, 17 November 2006)

Indian software services companies are realising the importance of acquiring products and intellectual property. Local companies have spent over \$500m in buyouts and are willing to pay a higher price for companies having both products and services.

This means the size of deals is set to get bigger as more companies look for acquisitions. The spreads between a pure services and product combined with services play is increasing. Wipro Technologies chief strategy officer Sudeep Nandy says: "The importance is even more if it's a product company with a successful IP and if it's a branded successful IP then valuations soar even higher."

The valuation of IP is an art form, though there are some basic fundamentals which drive it. A patent just because its guaranteed does not become valuable, it has to have a market for it. Mr Nandy says,

"Having a unique product eases the accessibility to customers. Attracting new clients becomes easier and you enter on a higher pedestal than competitors".

11. Govt may seek amendment to TRIPs accord to help drug cost
(from *The Economic Times*, 21 November 2006)

The government is likely to take a view on an amendment to the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) agreement to make life easier for drug companies looking at exporting copies of MNC drugs to countries incapable of legitimately making them during a health emergency.

The Cabinet committee on WTO is expected to consider a proposal to demand an amendment to the TRIPs agreement that would allow an Indian company which has been authorised by the importing country to legally dishonour the MNC patent and supply the medicine to sell the remaining quantity in the Indian market.

According to industry sources, an importing country may some times require only a small quantity of the drug and the company may not be able to supply the rest to any other part of the world. In such circumstances, the generic company could be allowed to sell that in the local market.

The proposal before the Cabinet panel is to allow Indian companies that secure such contracts from abroad to sell the remaining medicines in the local market. This could be achieved by amending Article 31 (F) of the TRIPs agreement.

Another amendment to article 31 (H) seeks to exempt these companies from the requirement of reasonable royalty payable to the patent holding company.

The Patent Amendment Act of '05 already allows Indian companies to export to other countries which have insufficient capability to produce copies of patented drugs during a national emergency by issuing a compulsory licence to a generic drug company.

12. IPRs of agri scientists to be preserved
(from *Business Standard*, 23 November 2006)

India and China have agreed to respect and preserve intellectual property rights (IPRs) of each other's agricultural scientists.

This is part of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) on co-operation in agricultural research, which also provides for exchange of agricultural scientists and germplasm, including the plant breeding material, between the two countries.

The MoU has been arrived at between the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS). It was formally signed by Chinese Ambassador Sun Yuxi and ICAR Director-General Mangala Rai.

Under this, both the ICAR and the CAAS would be equal owners of the jointly received IPRs resulting from the outcome of cooperation. Transfer of achievements from the co-operative research would be on the basis of mutually agreed arrangement and with the permission of the other side. Rai said biennial work plans would be developed jointly by the ICAR and the CAAS, outlining specific activities to be carried out under this cooperative programme.

13. Meet to sensitise police to IPR
(from *The Hindu*, 25 November 2006)

A programme to sensitise police personnel to the issues concerning Intellectual Property Rights, especially those related to their enforcement, will be organised here on Monday under a programme funded by the European Union and India.

The conference is one of the components of the Euro 14-million EU-India Trade and Investment Development Programme (TIDP).

S.K. Verma, Team Leader, IPR Component of TIDP, said on Friday that similar programmes were being conducted for officials of other enforcement bodies and judges. Speaking at a training programme on IP management practices organised here by the TIDP and the Confederation of Indian Industry, she said though the country had good laws pertaining to protection of IPR, their enforcement was lacking. A background paper for the conference said the objective of the IPR component of the TIDP was to support India's efforts at bringing enforcement efficiency of its IPR system in line with international standards.

14. Expert underlines importance of IPRs
(from *The Hindu*, 28 November 2006)

European Union's expert on intellectual property rights (IPRs) Fano Edoardo has said the importance of IPRs in business is insufficiently understood by companies in many countries, and there should be better coordination among various departments for exploiting it.

At a one-day training on 'Intellectual Property Management Practices' organised by EU-India Trade and Investment Development Programme (TIDP) here, he said IPR had become vital for the economic growth of companies and it became the key objective in mergers and acquisitions.

Aditya Nagarsheth, deputy team leader EU-TIDP, said the bilateral programme had five components including agriculture that had huge potential for exports. He said investment facilitation desks were being created in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai.

There was need to tap potential for Indian products in more European countries, including Poland and Czechoslovakia, he said.

15. Microsoft to roll out IPR scholarship
(from *The Economic Times*, 29 November 2006)

Microsoft Corporation India has rolled out of its intellectual property scholarship programme, which was announced in September '05.

The company offered this programme to students of Hyderabad-based National Academy of Legal Studies and Research University. It will extend the programme to 10 other law schools at an investment of \$100,000 over the next two years. Going forward, the it will cover 25 law colleges and schools. The aim is to build capacity & a pool of IP lawyers in India.

The programme will cover the National Law Institute University, Bhopal; National Law School of India, Bangalore; Gujarat National Law University; ILS Law College, Pune; Maharishi Dayanand University, Rohtak; Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla; Symbiosis International University, Pune; Panjab University, Chandigarh; University of Delhi & Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.

As per the programme, three students will be selected on the basis of their research papers on certain given IPR topics. "The papers are evaluated by the faculty, Microsoft and an outside counsel," Microsoft Indian director (legal and corporate affairs) Rakesh Bakshi told ET.

The company will then pay Rs 80,000 or the college fee of the final year; whichever may be higher, to each student. The company received 30 papers from a class of 40 at NALSAR, of which the top three were felicitated at a function.

16. Indian Patent office sees 23 per cent growth
(from *The Economic Times*, 30 November 2006)

In view of the product patent regime, the Indian Patent Office expects to receive some 30,000 patent applications in 2006-07, a growth of nearly 23% over last year.

The four patent offices across Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata and Mumbai received around 15,000 patent applications in the first six months of this fiscal.

While the pharma and chemical industry accounted for nearly 50% of total applications, next in line is the IT and electronics industry at 20%. The balance 30% is contributed by various sectors such as mechanical engineering, food and agro-based.

The Indian Patent Office had received some 24,500 patent applications in the last fiscal. "Of this year's anticipated applications, the Delhi office is expected to lead with 12,000 filings followed by Chennai at 7000 filings.

The Kolkata Patent Office is at third with 6000 applications and then Mumbai with 5000 applications," said Amitava Chakraborty, assistant controller of patents and design, Kolkata Patent Office.

A senior officer of the Indian Patent Office further said the Centre has already invested close to Rs 130 crore towards modernisation of the four patent offices. The Indian Patent Office is also creating an updated online database from the calender 1911 till now.

"This will include some 2 lakh documents with detailed information on technologies which have already received patent," the officer said.

A move is also made to reduce the time period for examination of the huge pile of pending patent applications. "The time from filing an application to starting its examination has dropped from some three years to six months," said the officer.

17. Intellectual property rights environment has changed in India
(from *The Hindu*, 30 November 2006)

The business world may no longer be worrying over intellectual property rights violations in India. The intellectual property right environment has changed considerably says the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

"My first impression this year was that no foreign businessman raised any concern over IPR issues," says Mr Phillippe Petit, Deputy Director General, WIPO.

The India patents filed by Indian companies between 1995 and 2005 through Patent Co-operation Treaty (PCT) have grown 365 per cent. The base was indeed small, yet this has got India into the top 21 countries, rated by the sheer number of patents. Of a million patents filed through the PCT, the share of India as of other developing countries has been growing fast, says Mr Petit.

WIPO is also working very hard to finalise one or several treaties to protect traditional knowledge and general resources of traditional communities.

This is an area of great interest to India, along with other cultural knowledge and traditional medicine holders such as tribes, aborigines and other traditional communities in developing countries, Asia, South America and Africa. The WIPO funds the associations representing these traditional communities to put forward their cases.

PAKISTAN

Counterfeit, piracy costs billions to national exchequer

(from Pakistan Press International Information Services, 30 November 2006)

The menace of counterfeiting and piracy continues to ruin the local economy, inflicting heavy loss of over Rs. 10 billion annually to the national kitty, and damage to legitimate businesses.

Brands and Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) are the principal assets of business enterprises. Violation of these rights negatively impact legal business halting the overall growth of national economy, Legal Advisor and Company Secretary, Unilever Pakistan Amar Naseer, said this while addressing a workshop on Role of Media in Projecting Legal Business Practices & IPRs in Pakistan.

The workshop was jointly organized by Unilever Pakistan and ACIF (Anti-Counterfeit & Infringement Forum).

ACIF is a non-profit alliance of business organizations working to eradicate the menace of counterfeiting, infringement and piracy of IPRs. It creates awareness on these issues and strives to protect the consumer rights by supporting government efforts and actions for strengthening the IP regime in the country.

Besides Amar Naseer, Asmat Saleem-Vice Chairman, ACIF, Mohammad Saleem Lali, Unilever Pakistan, renowned literary figure Atta ul Haq Qasmi and columnist Javed Chaudhry spoke on the occasion highlighting the state of enforcement of IP laws in Pakistan and the significant role of media in creating awareness about this critical issue.

Amar Naseer said that the national media is the main player in highlighting the issues, including the menace of IPRs violations, which is hampering the development of national industry.

There is an urgent need to widen the scope of public awareness about the IP laws and their continued violations so that consumers are convinced not to purchase counterfeited brands and pirated products.

The national media can guide as well as refine the opinions at both social and official level through its suggestive role, he maintained.

He also appreciated the establishment of Intellectual Property Organization and stressed the need for more concerted efforts to ensure strict implementation of IP laws so that the curses of counterfeiting and piracy are countered effectively.

KUWAIT

Series of anti-piracy raids conducted in Kuwait
(from *Middle East Company News*, 23 November 2006)

In line with its commitment to ensure strict adherence to Intellectual Property Rights, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information conducted a series of raids on three computer resellers involved in the use and trade of illegal software.

The raids resulted in the confiscation of two computers, one hard disc and 97 CDs loaded with pirated software. The successful raids were the result of the continuous cooperation between Microsoft, as a Business Software Alliance (BSA) member, and the concerned authorities in the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information.

Qannas Al Adwani, Director of Publications, Ministry of Information, Kuwait said, 'The Ministry is continuously organising awareness campaigns aimed at educating the public about the negative impact of using pirated software. We are committed to further our cooperation with the various parties to train our staff to recognise and confiscate illegal software, and this will make them better equipped to implement the IPR laws in the country.'

'The ministry is also exerting efforts to raise awareness among end-users about the importance of using original software and its role in raising return on IT investment. We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Microsoft and BSA for their continuous support to the various campaigns aimed at reducing piracy rates in Kuwait.'

Microsoft as a BSA member is continuously coordinating with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information and the other international software development companies to step up efforts to curb piracy. In addition, BSA is continuously conducting campaigns aimed at raising public awareness about the detrimental effects of using pirated software, not only on their systems but also on the national economy in general.

'Anti-piracy campaigns can only be successful with the continuous efforts and coordination between various authorities concerned. Software development companies and end-users should come together to protect the intellectual property rights and curb the use and trade of illegal software. We call upon all individuals to report piracy incidents on our hotlines and make a conscious effort not to use pirated software,' Jawad Al Redha, Chairman, BSA.

BAHRAIN

Bahrain Ministry of Information cracks down on software piracy
(from *Asia Pulse*, 13 November 2006)

The Ministry of Information (MOI) in the Kingdom of Bahrain has strengthened its efforts to protect intellectual property rights and raise the level of public awareness about intellectual piracy.

The MOI has also begun a crackdown on companies using pirated software as Bahrain seeks to establish its credentials as a responsible information technology hub in the Middle East. Microsoft as one of BSA's members has been working closely with the Bahrain authorities to ensure the success of this raid.

During a recent raid on three computer companies, Bahraini authorities confiscated two computers and 156-pirated software products including programs such as Office XP, Windows XP, MacAfee Anti-virus and Microsoft Adobe Photoshop.

The Department of Press and Publication, under the leadership of Jamal Daoud, is acting according to a strategic plan aimed at alerting the businesses and citizens of Bahrain to the disadvantages of software piracy. The plan includes raising awareness about the role of genuine software in increasing returns on IT investment and the positive impact of reducing piracy rates on the national economy.

The Bahraini Ministry of Information is committed to ensure protection of the IPR laws and is exerting efforts to implements legal mechanisms aimed at ensuring their enforcement. The Ministry has been launching many initiatives and campaigns in collaboration with various concerned parties in Bahrain to promote the use of original software, said Hasan Aun, Director of the Department of Press and Publication Acting.

These public awareness campaigns highlight the benefits of using original software, especially at the corporate level, as pirated software can reduce the performance of computers and cause errors leading to loss of important data. This campaign reflects a clear message that Bahrain is committed to providing the necessary support to curb these illegal practices, Aun added.

The Co-Chairman of an innovative software company, Business Software Alliance (BSA), Jawad Al Redha, stressed the importance of strengthening legal and commercial awareness of the problem among all economic sectors.

Bahraini authorities realize the threat posed by software piracy operations on the economy and the investment atmosphere in the Kingdom. Countries with low piracy rates tend to attract foreign investments in the field of IT and software development, therefore, it has become crucial for authorities to take active measures to combat the issue of piracy, said Al Redha.

The Bahraini move comes in line with the efforts that the Bahraini government is exerting to protect its national economy through raising awareness about the importance of protecting intellectual property rights and reducing software piracy rates. This also is a clear message that the Bahraini government will step-up its anti-piracy campaign and will not tolerate the acts of piracy.

An annual study prepared by the global market intelligence firm International Data Corporation (IDC) and issued by BSA, indicated that the Kingdom of Bahrain's efforts at stamping out intellectual property rights violations have recorded a reduction in the piracy rate, which fell to 60 per cent in 2005 compared to 62 per cent in 2004.
