

Monthly Report of October 2002

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THAILAND

News in October 2002

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4. Agency to make cheap AIDS drug
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1. Thai AIDS activists win patent battle

(from FT.Com, 1 October 2002

Dow Jones International News, 2 October 2002

Financial Times, 2 October 2002

The Nation Newspaper, Local News Section, Page 4A, Thailand, 3 October 2002

The Nation Newspaper, Local News Section, Page 4A, Thailand, 4 October 2002

Marketletter, 21 October 2002)

AIDS activists in Thailand won a legal victory in a case against a US pharmaceutical company that they said could lay the foundation for a broader attack on its patent on an anti-retroviral drug. In a suit brought by two Thais with HIV/AIDS and an activist group, the Central IP and IT Court ruled that Bristol-Myers Squibb's exclusive right to produce didanosine tablets in Thailand was restricted to certain dosage levels.

While the company can still appeal to the Supreme Court within 30 days, the decision potentially allows Thai state agencies or other manufacturers to make the drug more affordable.

2. Setback in anti-piracy fight

(from Bangkok Post Newspaper, Business Section, Page 8, Thailand, 12 October 2002

The Nation Newspaper, Business Section, Page 2B, Thailand, 12 October 2002)

A new regulation requiring police to obtain court approval for search warrants could curb the drive against copyright violations, according to G Patent Co, an affiliate of GMM Grammy Plc. The law

took effect yesterday and the company said it would now be much more difficult for the country's largest entertainment company to tackle piracy, especially by small shops.

The firm announced the appointment of eight "advisors", mainly military officers in active service, to help strengthen its anti-piracy campaign. MGA, the copyright collection and distribution unit of Grammy, is responsible for collecting music copyright fees from 30,000 karaoke operators.

3. Gem-burners agree to patent their craft

(from Bangkok Post Newspaper, Business Section, Page 1, Thailand, 14 October 2002

The Straits Times Newspaper, South-East Asia News Section, Page A6, Singapore, 15 October 2002)

Thai gem-burners have agreed to patent traditional methods of heating stones, in a move intended to protect their long-term interests and head off attempts by outsiders to claim the techniques as their own. Patent applications were submitted to the Intellectual Property Department a few months ago by Sanphol Co Ltd, a company registered in Bangkok, and the Thai Gems and Jewelry Traders' Association.

The move sparked concern among gem-burners, particularly those in Chanthaburi province where local traders specialize in improving gem quality through heating. Representatives of several groups in the gem and jewelry industry raised their concerns with Yanyong Phuangraj, the department's director-general.

They finally agreed that the two applicants could proceed with their applications but the patent rights must be transferred to an independent organization, to be appointed later, to oversee the way patents were enforced, in order to prevent unfairness.

However, a gem trader, who declined to be named, said that patent protection risked the disclosure of traditional knowledge to burners in other countries.

4. Agency to make cheap AIDS drug

(from The Nation Newspaper, Prime News Section, Page 1A, Thailand, 16 October 2002)

The state drugs agency will produce an AIDS drug patented by the US-based drug company Bristol-Myers Squibb at half the drug-company price, according to the agency. Dr Thongchai Thawichachart, director of the Government Pharmaceutical Organization (GPO), said operation would begin on Friday and the first 5,000 tablets of didanosine (ddI) would be marketed next week.

DdI's patent-holder Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS) was ordered by the intellectual property court on October 1 to amend its patent and produce the drug at dosages specified by its original patent.

5. Men in uniform step down from anti-piracy squad

(from Bangkok Post Newspaper, Business Section, Page 1, Thailand, 17 October 2002)

Six active military and police officers resigned as "advisors" to GMM Grammy Plc's piracy-busting unit following heavy public criticism over the appropriateness of their involvement. The resignation came less than one week after they were named advisers to G-Patent, which had asked them to help beef up its force in cracking down on copyright violations.

At a press conference, Kulthon Prachuabmoh, vice-president of G-Patent, said the resignations would not have any impact on the company's operations and the firm had no plan to replace the officers.

The company is attempting to improve its efficiency in collecting copyright fees and cracking down on piracy by pooling its staff with those of MGA Co, the collection arm of Grammy.

6. Senate urged to put bill on hold, seen as inadequate

(from Bangkok Post Newspaper, Home News Section, Page 3, Thailand, 23 October 2002)

Biodiversity advocates have urged the Senate to put the Geographical Indication Protection Bill on hold because it does not adequately protect Thai products. Property rights to Thai rice varieties, foods, silk and traditional massage were not protected under the bill, said Witoon Lianchamroon, director of Biothai, a non-government organization working on biodiversity issues.

The bill was drafted by the Ministry of Commerce's Intellectual Property Department to meet an obligation under WTO TRIPs. The bill aims to prevent the designation or presentation of products in a way which misleads the public as to the geographical origin of the goods.

Mr Witoon said the Thai rice varieties, food, silk and traditional massage should be protected under the bill. The bill was passed by the House in September and is now being considered by the Senate.

7. Americans to be fed jasmine rice truth

(from Bangkok Post Newspaper, Home News Section, Page 2, Thailand, 26 October 2002

The Nation Newspaper, Local News Section, Page 3A, Thailand, 26 October 2002)

A campaign on Thai jasmine rice will be launched in the United States next month to protest against a US Federal Trade Commission policy threatening the livelihood of Thai rice farmers. The campaign also wants to eliminate US companies' marketing practices claiming that jasmati rice is fragrant Hom Mali rice from Thailand.

The protest has been initiated by the Educational Network for Global and Grassroots Exchange, a US-based network of American students at Khon Kaen University, along with Thailand's Alternative Agriculture Network.

David Streckfuss, of Khon Kaen University's International Educational Exchange and adviser to the project, said the two-year campaign would establish a direct fair-trade market connection between American consumers and Thai rice farmers.

8. Ministry to keep tabs on 80,000 jukeboxes

(from Bangkok Post Newspaper, Business Section, Page 3, Thailand, 29 October 2002)

Some 80,000 jukeboxes nationwide will be registered under a new Commerce Ministry initiative to resolve disputes over music copyright fee collection between record firms and karaoke operators. The plan would enable the authorities to tax jukebox operators, as well as keep the karaoke business in good order, Deputy Commerce Minister Wattana Muangsook said.

He vowed to push ahead with the anti-piracy campaign and resolve the copyright fee collection disputes. He said he would not interfere with the setting of collection rates, but would help set a fair collection standard acceptable to both karaoke operators and recording firms.

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

News in October 2002

1. Chinese firms paying DVD patent fees to 7 makers
2. Beijing to host summit on intellectual property
3. Charging IPR fees a right move
4. Japan urges China to crack down on piracy
5. Register registered trademark as domain name is a tort
6. Pirates face run in fresh crackdown

1. Chinese firms paying DVD patent fees to 7 makers
(from *Organization of Asia-Pacific News Agencies*, 6 October 2002
Dow Jones International News, 8 October 2002
China Online, 10 October 2002)

About 50 Chinese makers have begun paying a total of 1.5 billion yen in patent royalties for DVD players to Toshiba Corp., Hitachi Ltd. And five other companies, sources close to the matter said. The payment apparently represents a change in Beijing's trade policy following its entry into the WTO last year.

The five others are three Japanese firms – Victor Co. of Japan, Mitsubishi Electric Corp. and Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. – and two US firms – AOL Time-Warner Inc. and International Business Machines Corp. The seven DVD makers are expected to continue talks with the Chinese firms over their payments for the second half of this year and beyond.

2. Beijing to host summit on intellectual property
(from *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific-Political*, 10 October 2002)

China and the WIPO have agreed that the World Summit on Intellectual Property to be held in Beijing in April 2003. The summit would attract more international attention to intellectual property protection, deepen cooperation, and promote international understanding on China's efforts in protecting intellectual property.

3. Charging IPR fees a right move
(from *China Daily*, 11 October 2002)

It has been reported that public places in Beijing that provide background music will pay royalties to the Music Copyright Society of China, which will distribute them to the performers, writers and composers involved. Not all public venues will be charged. Only establishments such as restaurants, hotels and airlines that play background music during business operations will be required to pay. Fee calculations will vary based on the industry. Royalties on foreign , musical

works will be transferred to original writers, composers and performers through international performing rights organizations.

4. Japan urges China to crack down on piracy
(from JIJI Press Newswire, 13,15,18 October 2002)

Japan urged China to step up crack down on infringements of intellectual property rights at the first sub cabinet-level talks on the bilateral economic partnership. Tokyo complained that Japanese companies are increasingly suffering damage from counterfeit products in China.

Chinese officials, in reply, stressed that China is making efforts to introduce necessary legislation for protection of intellectual property rights and to raise people's awareness. Such efforts have been bearing fruit although there are still some cases of piracy. They also said Beijing will be able to entirely solve the problem of its tardy screening process on patent applications by 2005.

Although Japan and China failed to make major progress on each of the pending bilateral issues, a Japanese official expressed satisfaction, saying that the two sides brought all unsettled issues into the open in order to forestall a trade friction between them.

5. Register registered trademark as domain name is a tort
(from Asiainfo Services, 20 October 2002)

The Supreme People's Court of PRC publicized the Explanation of Supreme People's Court upon Several Legal Issues of Law Applicability of Trademark Civil Dispute Cases. This explanation explains and interprets various issues related to trademarks, such as the definition of the patent right tort of registered trademark, the types of permission of trademark utilization, litigation jurisdiction, and the identification of identical or similar trademarks.

Since October 16th, 2002, people's courts of all levels should enforce the new judicial explanation in the hearing of the trademark civil dispute cases. The explanation defies a confused conception, the behavior of damaging other's patent right of registered trademark.

The following behaviors are all belong to this conception and compose a lawbreaking behavior:

1. using the words which being the same or similar to other's registered trade marks as its own name of enterprise or designing on an outstanding position of the same or similar commodities which will cause misread to the public;
2. copying, modeling, or translating the noted trademarks of other's to misguide the public and cause the possible benefits damage on the register of this noted trade mark;
3. registering the words of the same or similar to other's registered trademark as domain name and using this domain name to do the e-businesses of the relative commodities which may misguide the public.

6. Pirates face run in fresh crackdown
(from China Daily, 28 October 2002)

The first nationwide Anti-Copyright-Piracy Committee was launched yesterday in Beijing. Among the measures to be adopted to smash the racket will be the payment of cash rewards to informers. Top officials from the National Copyright Administration (NCA) said the new committee would

play a vital role in bringing together the country's anti-piracy forces in the fight against all kinds of copyright piracy.

Through the functions of the newly-established committee, publishing companies and copyright bearers can have closer ties with related law enforcement departments in cracking down on pirates and securing compensation.

HONG KONG

News in October 2002

Hi-tech dream could backfire, Microsoft says after piracy payout
(from South China Morning Post, 12 October 2002)

Microsoft warned that Hong Kong's dream of developing a knowledge-based economy could backfire if piracy remains as rampant as it is now. The warning came from the managing director of Microsoft Hong Kong Mark Phibbs after his company was awarded \$35,832,570 in damages against one of its registered retailers in Hong Kong, which illegally sold computers pre-installed with Microsoft Window 95 and Office 95 software without licence.

On Thursday, the High Court ruled against Able System Development Limited in the case brought by Microsoft. The court heard that Able System sold about 2,000 computers between April 1994 and October 1998 with the offending software pre-installed. The level of compensation was the biggest in a civil lawsuit in Hong Kong over copyright infringement.

Phibbs said 53 per cent of all software used was pirated and the percentage was "far too high" when compared with cities such as New York and London, where piracy rates were at 27 per cent or less. The software industry incurred a US\$164 million loss as a result of piracy in Hong Kong last year, an increase from US\$86 million a year before, industry sources estimate.

MALAYSIA

News in October 2002

1. Govt decides to join patent treaty to simplify applications
2. 30,000 pirated VCDs seized in raid on house in Bukit Mertajam
3. CD pirates take to sea
4. Factories found with pirated discs
5. Pirated music equipment at PJ golf club seized
6. Lounge raided for music piracy
7. Three men detained in ops against copyright piracy
8. Enforcement vigilance at hotspots to curb pirated VCDs

1. Govt decides to join patent treaty to simplify applications
(from *Bernama Daily Malaysian News*, 1 October 2002)

The government has decided to join the WIPO Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) to further facilitate and simplify patent applications in Malaysia, Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said.

He said that the current Act has to be changed to enable Malaysia to be part of the PCT. He said that by joining PCT, patent registration process and other relevant matters could be expedited. Moreover, industries and other related sectors would have speedy access to technical information on the latest invention.

2. 30,000 pirated VCDs seized in raid on house in Bukit Mertajam
(from *Malay Mail*, 3 October 2002)

The Penang State Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Department raided the terrace house in Taman Impian in Bukit Mertajam and seized 30,235 pirated VCDs with a street value of RM151,175. The case is being investigated as a violation under the Copyright Act 1987 which provides for a fine of RM10,000 per VCD upon conviction of the offence.

3. CD pirates take to sea
(from *The Australian*, 8 October 2002
Bangkok Post Newspaper, Database Section, Page 2, Thailand, 9 October 2002)

Crime syndicates are taking to the high seas to manufacture pirated music and movies CDs and VCDs for distribution in Malaysia, a top police official says. The new tactic is aimed at escaping police operations to smash pirate activities, says Mazlan Ayob, the Balik Pulau district police chief in the northern state of Penang.

Police in Penang launched, Operation Green Ribbon to nab peddlers of illegal CDs and VCDs. Mazlan said they have already arrested four retailers and seized more than 1000 pirated copies.

4. Factories found with pirated discs
(from *Malay Mail*, 9 October 2002)

Two legitimate factories which were given the licence to produce original VCDs and CDs, were found in possession of pirated optical disks. Head of Anti-Piracy and Copyright task force, Roslan Mahayuddin, said both factories are in the Klang Valley and one of them was found machines for pirating optical discs while the other had three machines. He said the operators might be charged under the Copyright Act 1987 and Optical Disk Act 2000 if investigations proved they were involved in piracy.

5. Pirated music equipment at PJ golf club seized
(from *Malay Mail*, 14 October 2002)

The music stopped at a golf club in Petaling Jaya when police seized audio-visual equipment and 150 pirated recordable compact discs (CD-Rs) containing 1,000 karaoke songs. The songs in the CD-Rs were those produced by BMG, EMI, Universal Music, Rock Records, Sony Music and Warner Music. A mobile deejay was also detained when police found 100 copies of pirated CDs in his possession.

6. Lounge raided for music piracy

(from New Straits Times Newspaper, Malaysia, 22 October 2002)

A popular karaoke lounge in Plaza Lien Hoe was raided by Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs enforcement officers for playing music without the consent of music composers and publishers. The raid was made after a complaint by Music Authors' Copyright Protection Berhad, which represent composer and publishers of music. It was the first raid ever conducted for such an offence.

7. Three men detained in ops against copyright piracy

(from Bernama Daily Malaysian News, 24 October 2002)

Three men were detained in an operation against copyrights piracy by a police team from the Commercial Crime Division of the Kuala Lumpur Police Headquarters and representatives of the TVBO production company from Hong Kong.

The team also seized 127 pirated VCDs, 5,000 VCDs which had not obtained approval from the Filem Negara Censorship Board and 40 pornographic VCDs. TVBO has appointed Mohd Fairuz to look after the copyrights sale of its recordings in Malaysia.

8. Enforcement vigilance at hotspots to curb pirated VCDs

(from New Straits Times Newspaper, Malaysia, 24 October 2002)

Enforcement officers of the State Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Department will be based in "hotspot" vicinities where sales of pirated VCDs are reported to be rampant. The move, codenamed Ops Statik, has to be made in view of the increasing number of errant VCD peddlers.

Between January and last month, the department had taken 168 VCD traders to court for committing various related offences while pirated VCDs, valued over RM380,000, were seized. The legal action would be taken against traders found to have hiked prices of goods, especially essential items.

THE PHILIPPINES

News in October 2002

1. Local firms unaware of software asset management
2. 90% PCT of Philippines patent applications from foreigners
3. Dealer of fake Microsoft software convicted
4. A Filipino soldier inspect pirated VCD in Manila
5. Confiscated VCDs, CDs

1. Local firms unaware of software asset management

(from Manila Standard, 14 October 2002)

Only 48 per cent of local companies are aware of software asset management (SAM), an important tool in strengthening the use of legal software and winning the battle against piracy. The relatively low rate has pushed the BSA to intensify its campaign to promote SAM.

A BSA-commissioned survey conducted by market research firm NFO Worldwide in August found that eight countries in Asia-Pacific, including the Philippines, have no specific programs to promote licensed software and curb piracy.

The eight countries-Philippines, Thailand, India, Singapore, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia and Taiwan-posted an average of 46 per cent awareness rate on SAM adoption. Around 200 companies were surveyed in each country.

BSA has relaunched its Assistance in Software Program that seeks to help companies realize the full potentials of SAM. BSA will give a “clean bill of software health” to companies that are recognized to possess licensed software. These firms will enjoy a one-year grace period, during which it will not be subjected to any BSA-initiated raid or legal action.

2. 90% PCT of Philippines patent applications from foreigners
(from Asia Pulse, 23 October 2002)

An executive of the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) said foreigners still make up a bulk of the applications filed for patents in the country’s innovations and inventions. Emma Francisco, IPO director general, said that 90 per cent of the patent applications are from foreigners and the remaining 10 per cent are filed by Filipino inventors.

The IPO will meet with the Patent Bureau division heads in order to map out strategies for increasing the percentage of patents filed by Filipino inventors later this year after the celebration of the IPR week on October 21-25.

However, she said it would definitely involve a massive information dissemination campaign since the basic problem for Filipino inventors really is the lack of access to correct information.

3. Dealer of fake Microsoft software convicted
(from Business World, Philippines, 24 October 2002)

Branch 24 of the Regional Trial Court of Manila recently sentenced a Chinese-Filipino businessman to a one-year imprisonment and a fine of P50,000 for copyright infringement. In a statement released by Microsoft Philippines, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) raided Triac Marketing in 1998 and seized two copies of counterfeit Window 95.

4. A Filipino soldier inspect pirated VCD in Manila
(from Reuters News Service, 24 October 2002)

A Filipino soldier inspect a pirated VCD confiscated during a raid at the video stalls in Manila. Thousands of pirated CDs, VCDs and DVDs were confiscated by members of the video regulatory board in its campaign against film piracy in the country.

5. Confiscated VCDs, CDs
(from Business World, Philippines, 31 October 2002)

The Department of Interior and Local Government’s Special Operation Group Jericho confiscated 50,000 copies of pirated VCDs and CDs with a street value of P1.5 million during a raid conducted over the weekend in Pasay City. The raid was conducted by virtue of a search warrant issued by the

Quezon City Regional Trial Court and support the government's campaign against film and music piracy.

INDONESIA

News in October 2002

RI lost billions of dollars because inventions not patented

(from Antara, 31 October 2002)

Research and Technology Minister Hatta Rajasa said Indonesia had lost billions of US dollars because many of its inventions had not been patented. To enable people to patent their inventions, the government had formed centers of intellectual property rights in 26 of the country's 30 provinces, he said.

Moreover, he said the government had so far provided incentives totaling Rp5 million for each small or medium enterprise to complete their inventions. The minister further underscored the importance of law on intellectual property rights to give protection and legal certainty to inventors.

VIETNAM

News in October 2002

1. Ministry urges protection of new seeds, seedlings
2. Vietnam pomelo registered for trademark protection
3. Vinataba sees success in trademark spat
4. Trademark and domain names seminar
5. Vietnam, US to hold seminar on intellectual property this month
6. Further intellectual property protection urged
7. More companies register trademarks abroad
8. Get serious on intellectual property rights, Hanoi warned

1. Ministry urges protection of new seeds, seedlings

(from Saigon Times Daily, 2 October 2002)

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is calling for individuals, research institutes and companies to register their new seeds and seedlings with the intellectual property authorities for protection.

Registered seeds and seedlings cannot be used for production or export without the permission of patent holders, said Do Thi Xuan Huong of the ministry's science, technology and product quality department. She noted, "Seeds and seedlings must be different from those already known at the time of registration applications being submitted."

2. Vietnam pomelo registered for trademark protection
(from *Bernama Daily Malaysian News*, 2 October 2002)

Vietnam's most favourite "Nam Roi" pomelo is the first local fruit to be registered for trademark protection, ensuring that this product's trademark will not be lost to world rivals as many of the country's trademarks have been in the past.

The trademark was first launched on the Internet at the website address www.5roi.com by the Hoang Gia Fruit and Vegetables Processing and Exporting Company based in the Mekong delta province of Vinh Long, home to the fruit.

3. Vinataba sees success in trademark spat
(from *Saigon Times Daily*, 4 October 2002)

Vietnam Tobacco Corp. (Vinataba) is confident of retrieving the right to the Vinataba name in Laos following last month's success in the struggle for trademark possession in Cambodia. Vinataba Deputy General Director Nguyen Thi Loan said that they had forwarded an announcement from Cambodia's Trade Ministry voiding the registration of Vinataba by PT Putra Staba Industri to the Department of Industrial Property, Standardization and Metrology of Laos.

They also determined to proceed with litigation against the usurpers of the Vinataba trademark in Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Indonesia. Vinataba intends to register its name in 30 more countries to avoid becoming the victim of a trademark heist again.

4. Trademark and domain names seminar
(from *Saigon Times Daily*, 11 October 2002)

The Investment and Trade Promotion Center in collaboration with law firm Baker & McKenzie will hold a morning seminar in HCMC to present, analyze and discuss American regulations on the registration of trademark and domain names. The topics to be covered include common principles, ways to prevent copyright heist, and trademark protection.

5. Vietnam, US to hold seminar on intellectual property this month
(from *Vietnam News Brief Service*, 18 October 2002
BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific-Political, 18 October 2002)

Experts from Vietnam and the US held a two-day seminar called "Intellectual Property: Law, Policy and Management" in Hanoi on October 21-22, aiming to give technical assistance and improve Vietnam's capability in implementing commitments in the bilateral trade agreement signed between the two countries.

The seminar is co-organized by the Vietnamese Industrial Property Department (Intellectual Property Department) and US-sponsored Coordinating Board for STAR-a project for trade promotion.

Participant would discuss a wide range of related issues, including the court's role in, and the practice of, intellectual property rights in conformity with TRIPs Pact and the BTA, inventions, commercial secrets, technology transfer and e-commerce.

6. Further intellectual property protection urged

(from Saigon Times Daily, 22 October 2002)

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) has urged to Vietnam to further enforce intellectual property protection if it is to join the WIPO treaties on copyright, and performances and programs.

Peter N Fowler, attorney-advisor of the USPTO office of enforcement, said copyrights, if registered in many countries, would be of far higher economic value than those unregistered or pirated. Good protection of intellectual property rights is also one of the requirements for Vietnam to join the WTO, he said.

7. More companies register trademarks abroad

(from Saigon Times Daily, 23 October 2002

Xinhua News Agency Bulletin, 23 October 2002)

Some 20 Vietnamese companies have registered for industrial property protection outside Vietnam, which is equivalent to the combined number for the last three years, Sai Gon Giai Phong reports. On the local scene, 6,200 Vietnamese companies have applied for trademark protection in Vietnam in the year to date, up 37% on the first 10 months of 2001.

8. Get serious on intellectual property rights, Hanoi warned

(from The Straits Times Newspaper, South-East Asia News Section, Page A7, Singapore, 23 October 2002)

Vietnam could face US trade sanctions and have its long-term economic growth plans derailed unless it takes measures to enforce protection of intellectual property rights, an expert has warned. "Vietnam is very far behind most other countries, even other countries in this region," said Mr Bruce Lehman, president of the International Intellectual Property Institute, a US-based non-governmental group.

Without adequate protection, foreign direct investment would suffer and, more importantly, "there may well be the sanctions of closing off access to the US market and other developed countries' markets for Vietnamese products", he said.

Hanoi, he added, was obligated under the US-Vietnam trade pact to provide protection for US products susceptible to Vietnam's flourishing trade in piracy.
