

A NEW YEAR BRINGS NEW HEADLINES IN IP

by Wiramrudee Mokkhavesa and Sukontip Jitmongkolthong

January 2009 was full of events in the intellectual property field in Thailand due to the policies and actions supported by the newly formed government of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva.

On January 16, 2009, the Deputy Minister of Commerce, Mr. Alongkorn Pollabut, presided over a ceremony at Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok (bottom picture, left). He announced that the Cabinet has now accepted his policy to set up a National Committee on Preventing and Suppressing the Infringement of Intellectual Property Rights in Thailand. The Prime Minister and Deputy Minister of Commerce will serve as the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of this Committee respectively.

The Deputy Minister of Commerce also announced new collaboration between the Department of Intellectual Property and Airports of Thailand Public Co., Ltd. in order to post signage at the airports warning both Thais and tourists that importing, exporting, and carrying counterfeit goods

to some European countries is a crime. Leaflets promoting this campaign are also being distributed to passengers.

The active policies of the government did not end there. On January 26, the Deputy Minister of Commerce informed the public about the results of raid actions that had been carried out in the main problem areas in Bangkok, such as Klongthom, Baanmoh, Tawanna, and Jatujak, during January 1-25, 2009 (bottom



Left: Wiramrudee Mokkhavesa, Attorney-at-Law
Right: Sukontip Jitmongkolthong, Attorney-at-Law
Intellectual Property

picture, right). Raid actions also took place outside of Bangkok, such as in Nakornrajsima Province. It was reported that the police successfully conducted 74 raids resulting in the seizure of 128,000 items of copyright-infringing music and films (CDs, DVDs, and VCDs) with a total value of about THB 12.8 million. In terms of trademark infringement, 113 raid actions were carried out, resulting in the seizure of 26,037 items of clothes, wristwatches, bags, etc. amounting to a value of about THB 13 million.

The attention being paid to intellectual property issues by the new government should provide a reason for optimism with regard to additional positive developments that may be on the horizon in 2009. ♦

