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## First Virtual Broadcast of a Counterfeit-Goods Destruction Ceremony in Thailand

Thailand's Department of Intellectual Property (DIP) periodically holds public ceremonies for the destruction of counterfeit products in order to raise awareness of intellectual property rights infringement and deter the public from violating these rights by buying or selling counterfeit goods. Normally these events are open-air, community events, open to the general public. However, this year, as a precautionary measure against the risk of COVID-19, the DIP held its first destruction ceremony via real-time video stream, with the DIP in Greater Bangkok coordinating with destruction sites in Saraburi and Chon Buri Provinces.

The destruction ceremony was held on September 9, 2020, with the DIP convening a press conference at the Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, located in Nonthaburi (part of the Bangkok Metropolitan Area). While only a limited number of people were permitted to attend in person, the DIP allowed people to join the ceremony via online videoconferencing.

At the event, Mr. Thosapone Dangsuputra, director-general of the DIP, announced that a total of 785,376 pirated and counterfeit items, worth around THB 354 million (USD 11.7 million), had been seized through the persistent efforts of the government—in particular the Royal Thai Police, the Customs Department, and the Department of Special Investigations. These infringing goods, all of which were destroyed in the event, related to concluded cases in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area and surrounding provinces.

Deputy minister of commerce Mr. Weerasak Wangsuphakitkosol presided over the destruction ceremony and delivered an opening speech, followed by a demonstration of the destruction process for both in-person attendees and those joining the ceremony virtually.

The infringing products were sent for destruction using one of two methods. Pirated and counterfeit goods such as clothes, bags, and other combustible items were incinerated at the facility in Saraburi Province, while products that could not be burned or recycled, including car parts, bearings, and so on, were destroyed using an industrial crusher at the facility in Chon Buri Province.

Destruction ceremonies such as this one are important tools in raising awareness and deterring bad-faith actors from becoming players in the counterfeit goods trade. This event was the first time that a destruction ceremony in Thailand featured a press conference with a real-time streaming broadcast from destruction sites in other provinces, and despite the new format, the anti-counterfeiting message came through as strongly as ever. In fact, making the ceremony available to watch online allowed people to attend who would otherwise not have been able to see the ceremony in person—a great advantage for an event intended to raise awareness, and one which could continue to be of benefit when social distancing is no longer necessary. 🏹

