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SAUDI ARABIA
Launch of a New Digital Portal to Accelerate Legal Research

UAE
Accession to the Madrid Protocol

PAKISTAN
Country Insights
IP and SMEs: Taking your ideas to market

World Intellectual Property Day 2021
SAUDI ARABIA | LAUNCH OF A NEW DIGITAL PORTAL TO ACCELERATE LEGAL RESEARCH

The Ministry of Justice in Saudi Arabia has recently launched its first digital judicial data portal. The web platform is an interactive database that will list judicial and legal data. The purpose is to provide a single entry point through which lawyers, judges, and other researchers to access final commercial rulings issued by Courts of the First Instance, Courts of Appeal, the Supreme Court, and other relevant legal documents.

The portal is expected to promote transparency, provide a unified electronic platform for judicial information, and improve judicial and academic knowledge via one single digital gateway.
The Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) welcomed the deposit of the instrument of accession of United Arab Emirates (UAE) to the Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks on September 28, 2021. The agreement is expected to enter into force on December 28, 2021.

UAE AFFILIATIONS

Bodies
World Intellectual Property Organization, World Trade Organization, Gulf Cooperation Council

Conventions
Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances, Berne Union, Budapest Union, Marrakesh VIP Treaty, Paris Union, PCT Union, IPC Union, WIPO Copyright Treaty, WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty
With its significant geopolitical position in South Asia that provides the country with convenient access to the international market, Pakistan is nestled in the cradle of the historical Indus Valley civilization, which dates back at least 5,000 years. Local industries include textiles and apparel, food processing, pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments, construction materials, paper products, fertilizer, and shrimp. Pakistan’s GDP growth has gradually increased since 2012, and was 5.3 percent in 2017. The GDP composition by sector of origin is 24.4 percent for agriculture, 19.1 percent for industry, and 56.5 percent for services.

Pakistan maintains a relatively comprehensive regulatory and legislative system for the protection of trademarks, patents, designs, and copyright. In order to have an effective protection strategy, intellectual property rights, such as trademark and patents, must be registered and enforced in Pakistan under local laws. While Pakistan is a Contracting Party to the Madrid Protocol, the country is not a Contracting Party to the Patent Cooperation Treaty.

On the trademarks front, Pakistan follows the 11th edition of the Nice classification and a single application may not include several classes. Trademark examination is performed on formal, absolute, and relative grounds and oppositions may be filed after two months from publication date. The protection term for a trademark is 10 years from filing date and is renewable for like periods. As for use, trademarks are vulnerable to a cancellation action by any interested party if there has been no effective use of the mark for a period of five consecutive years after registration. An extension of time is possible for filing oppositions, counter oppositions, and responding to office actions. It is worth noting that priority can be claimed if the application is filed within six months of the application in the Paris Convention country.

As for patents, priority rights may be claimed from states that are a party to the Paris Convention for the Protection of
Industrial Property, and a claim for priority is required to be filed within twelve months of the first filing. The examination results for the filed patents in Pakistan are subject to the Patents Ordinance (2000) and Patents Rules (2003). The Examiners will consider equivalent filings as well when evaluating patentability. Once approved, the notification is published upon grant in the Official Gazette and oppositions may be filed within four months from publication date. Patents are protected for a period of 20 years from the filing date, or from the priority date. Annuities are due annually on the anniversary of the filing date, or the priority date, and payable after the granting of the patent. A six month grace period is observed for late payment along with a surcharge.

Given that Pakistan is not a member of the PCT, nationals do not have the option of filing with the PCT Receiving Office for international protection or for international publication of their patents within the 153 PCT contracting states.

Pakistan remains a country with high aspirations that welcomes foreign investments. A healthy balance between the latter and local development is bound to be beneficial for the country’s own growth. The proper application and enforcement of IP laws should help Pakistan become more of an innovative hub in South Asia and lead to this required healthy financial balance.
THE BIGGER YOU GROW, THE STRONGER WE GET

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SABA INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
sabaip.com
THE SABA NETWORK

Head Office
Saba House
Said Frehia Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 888
F. +961 5 454 844
P.O. Box 11-9421
headoffice@sabaip.com

Algeria
Cabinet Boukrami
(In cooperation with Saba & Co. IP)
Centre Commercial et d’Affaires El Qods
10th floor, BU 10-04 B, Cheraga 16002
Algeria, Algeria
T. +213 22 34 11 61
F. +213 22 34 11 62
P.O. Box 86 Centre Commercial et d’Affaires El Qods, Cheraga 16002
info@boukrami.com

Bahrain
Bahrain Tower, Al-Khalifa Road
Manama, Bahrain
T. +973 17 224 699
F. +973 17 224 699
P.O. Box 21013
bahrain@sabaip.com

Cyprus
Mitsis Building #2, 14, Makarios Avenue
2065 Nicosia, Cyprus
T. +357 22 755 434
F. +357 22 754 037
P.O. Box 21143
1507 Nicosia
cyprus@sabaip.com

Djibouti
Saba House
Said Frehia Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 888
F. +961 5 454 844
P.O. Box 11-9421
djibouti@sabaip.com

Egypt
10 Asfa El Taymoulihah Street
Garden City, CP 11421
Cairo, Egypt
T. + 20 2 729 59686
F. + 20 2 729 52514
P.O. Box 129, Mohamed Farid
info@sabaip-eg.com

Ethiopia
Saba House
Said Frehia Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 888
F. +961 5 454 844
P.O. Box 11-9421
ethiopia@sabaip.com

Gaza
Saba House
Said Frehia Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 888
F. +961 5 454 844
P.O. Box 11-9421
gaza@sabaip.com

Iraq
Saba House
Said Frehia Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 888
F. +961 5 454 844
P.O. Box 11-9421
iraq@sabaip.com

Jordan
56 Princess Shaker Bin Zaid Street
Al Shmejani
Amman, Jordan
T. +962 6 464 2145
F. +962 6 464 2159
P.O. Box 80053, Amman 11184
jordan@sabaip.com

Kuwait
Jassim Ahmed Alshehri
(In cooperation with Saba & Co. IP)
Al Hafit Building,
Al-Shuhaideh Street Kuwait, Kuwait
T. +965 2 242 3428
F. +965 2 742 7243
P.O. Box 1245, 13013 Safat
kuwait@sabaip.com

Lebanon
Saba House,
Said Frehia Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 840
F. +961 5 454 842
P.O. Box 11-9420
lebanon@sabaip.com

Libya
Saba House,
Said Frehia Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 888
F. +961 5 454 844
P.O. Box 11-9421
libya@sabaip.com

Morocco
185 Boulevard Zerkoumi
Residence Zerkoumi
Casablanca 20330
Casablanca, Morocco
T. +212 522 251 530
F. +212 522 251 603
P.O. Box 13 921
Casablanca 20032
morocco@sabaip.com

Oman
Muscat International Centre
Belt Al Fajaz Street
Muscat, Oman
T. +968 248 111 26
F. +968 248 111 28
P.O. Box 2027 Ruwi
Postal Code 112, Sultanate of Oman
oman@sabaip.com

Qatar
Groidco Building
C Ring Road
Doha, Qatar
T. +974 44 42 3992
F. +974 44 32 4106
P.O. Box 14035
qatar@sabaip.com

Saudi Arabia
Al Hadaf Marks Services LLC
(In Cooperation with Saba & Co. IP)
Office 21, 2nd Floor, Tower B QOSI Olaya
Towers Olaya Street, Riyadh 12213,
Saudi Arabia
T. +966 11 2079596
F. +966 11 2079598
P.O. Box 61145 Riyadh 11565
saudi@sabaip.com

Sudan
Saba House
Said Frehia Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 888
F. +961 5 454 844
P.O. Box 11-9421
sudan@sabaip.com

Tunisia
Saba House
Said Frehia Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 888
F. +961 5 454 844
P.O. Box 11-9421
tunisia@sabaip.com

United Arab Emirates
Tomas Art Tower - 18th Floor
Al Arsayel Street, Business Bay
Dubai, UAE
T. +971 4 553 9911
F. +971 4 566 8470
P.O. Box 42259
uae@sabaip.com

West Bank
Saba House
Said Frehia Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 888
F. +961 5 454 844
P.O. Box 11-9421
westbank@sabaip.com

Yemen
Hadda Towers, Building #7
Hadda Street
San'a, Yemen
T. +967 1 420 595
F. +967 1 420 596
P.O. Box 1693
yemen@sabaip.com