



**5** Customs seizes 40-foot container with fake goods



**24** Masses surge to Dakar for mega-mosque inauguration



**27** Chepngetich takes marathon gold as heat decimates rivals



## Kuwait among top 20 improvers in Ease of Doing Business Index

Amir congratulates PM • Saleh: Ranking due to relentless reforms



**KUWAIT:** The Doing Business Team at the World Bank Group (WBG) announced on its website that Kuwait for the first time joined the group of top 20 improvers in the Ease of Doing Business Index 2020 out of 190 economies included in the Doing Business report to be published officially by the end of October. This global index covers 10 key components that represent various dimensions of business regulatory environment for domestic enterprises.

This initial announcement ahead of the release of the report showed that Kuwait has enhanced business reforms in accordance with its 2035 national vision and goals. The announced improvement reflected reforms in six components covering: Starting a business, getting electricity, registering property, getting credit, protecting minority investors and trading across borders.

In this context, Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) announced, as head of the Permanent Committee for Streamlining Business Environment And Enhancing Competitiveness in the State of Kuwait (PCK), that the underlying significance

of improving Kuwait's position in the Ease of Doing Business Index 2020 is that it directly and indirectly contributes to making Kuwait's investment climate more attractive and supports the attainment of the national vision 2035 and its developmental goals, which will eventually boost the expansion of the economic cycle, availing the creation of more real job opportunities for the local workforce.

This improvement capped the dedicated efforts exerted by the PCK since it was established by a Council of Ministers' decision at the end of 2013, headed by KDIPA, with membership extended to include 11 competent government authorities, in addition to representatives of the private sector and the civil society organizations. The PCK was initiated with full support by HH the Prime Minister to serve as an active platform for coordinating national efforts, documenting reforms, raising awareness on reforms undertaken and following up their progress, as well as placing improving business environment and national competitiveness at the top priority of the government work program.

On this occasion, the PCK conveys the utmost appreciation and esteemed gratitude to HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and to HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for the leadership's foresight and calls to mobilize national efforts to attain this improvement, that will support fostering Kuwait competitiveness in international indices, enabling it to assume its role as a leading financial and commercial center, augmented by the leadership's ongoing focus on this issue, in a way that motivated all relevant parties to endorse, with competence and efficiency, their mandated responsibilities to realize this strategic goal.

HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah yesterday sent a cable of congratulations to HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. In the cable, the Amir expressed his sincere congratulations on the classification of Kuwait among the list of the 20 most improved countries in the ease of doing business index issued by the World Bank Group, noting that this rating is a worthy government achievement on

Continued on Page 24



Wife of Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikha Rima Al-Sabah (left) is seen with US First Lady Melania Trump. — KUNA

### Sheikha Rima among DC's most powerful women

**WASHINGTON:** The wife of Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikha Rima Al-Sabah was named by a prominent US magazine as one of only two Arab women in the US capital's 2019 Most Powerful Women. Sheikha Rima Al-Sabah, Goodwill Ambassador to UNHCR, was named among the Washingtonian's 150 Most Powerful Women, being the only Arab woman to be honored along with Saudi Ambassador to the US Princess Reema bint Bandar Al-Saud.

Sheikha Rima was among 150 of "the area's most influential women in governance, business, law, education, media, nonprofits and the arts".

Continued on Page 24

### Saudi enforces 'decency' amid tourism push

**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia said yesterday it would issue fines for 19 offences related to public decency, such as immodest dress and public displays of affection, as the Muslim kingdom opens up to foreign tourists. The interior ministry decision accompanies the launch of a visa regime allowing holidaymakers from 49 states to visit one of the world's most closed-off countries. Till now, most visitors have been Muslim pilgrims and businesspeople.

Violations listed on the new visa website also include littering, spitting, queue jumping, taking photographs and videos

of people without permission and playing music at prayer times. Fines range from 50 riyals (\$13) to 6,000 riyals (\$1,600). "The regulations are meant to ensure that visitors and tourists in the kingdom are aware of the law relating to public behavior so that they comply with it," a government media statement said.

It said Saudi police had the sole responsibility for monitoring offences and imposing fines, a comment that appeared to marginalize the kingdom's religious anti-vice squads whose authority to pursue suspects or make arrests was curbed in 2016. The religious force, known as the mutawa, used to ensure people prayed five times a day in line with Muslim teachings and that women covered their heads. They also enforced bans on music, alcohol, gender-mixing and women driving cars.

Continued on Page 24



DIRIYAH, Saudi Arabia: Participants attend the launch of a new tourism visa at this UNESCO-listed heritage site outside Riyadh on Friday. — AFP

### Khan warns of nuke war over Kashmir at UN; Modi silent

**UNITED NATIONS:** Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan warned the United Nations Friday that his country's dispute with India over Kashmir could escalate into an all-out nuclear war that would have consequences for the world. In a fiery speech lasting 50 minutes, Khan said India could unleash a "bloodbath" in the Muslim-majority territory, as the nuclear-armed rivals took center stage at the UN General Assembly. His heated rhetoric stood in stark contrast to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address an hour earlier, when the Hindu nationalist leader touted domestic successes but made only an oblique reference to terrorism.

Continued on Page 24



NEW YORK: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (left) and Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan (right) address the 74th Session of the General Assembly at UN headquarters on Friday. — AFP



### Democrats press Trump impeachment

**WASHINGTON:** Democrats charged aggressively into an impeachment investigation of US President Donald Trump on Friday, ordering Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to turn over Ukraine-related documents and scheduling testimony for witnesses to alleged abuse of power by the US leader. Three House committees gave Pompeo one week to produce the documents, saying multiple State Department officials have direct knowledge of Trump's efforts to enlist the Ukraine government's help in his US campaign for reelection.

Continued on Page 24

### British tanker in Dubai after Iran release

**DUBAI:** The British-flagged oil tanker Stena Impero arrived in Dubai yesterday, after being detained with its crew in Iran for more than two months in an incident that inflamed tensions in the region. Iran's Revolutionary Guards seized the vessel in the Strait of Hormuz on July 19 after surrounding it with attack boats and rapping onto its deck. It was then impounded off the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas for allegedly failing to respond to distress calls and turning off its transponder after hitting a fishing boat.

But the seizure was widely seen as a

tit-for-tat move after authorities in the British overseas territory of Gibraltar detained an Iranian tanker on suspicion it was shipping oil to Syria in breach of EU sanctions. Tehran repeatedly denied the cases were related. British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said however that the tanker was "unlawfully seized by Iran" as part of attempts to "disrupt freedom of navigation".

On Friday, the Stena Impero was finally cleared to sail from Iran and into international waters of the Gulf. "Despite the vessel's clearance, its legal case is still open in Iran's courts," Hormozgan province's maritime organization in southern Iran said on its website. The tanker's captain and crew have "given a written, official statement that they have no claims", it added.

The ship docked at Port Rashid in Dubai yesterday after halting off the coast

Continued on Page 24



DUBAI: The British-flagged oil tanker Stena Impero is docked in Dubai yesterday after sailing from the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas where it was held for over two months. — AFP