The Latest on Korea’s Investment Environment

S. Korea’s biz environment ranking climbs to 4th place: World Bank

South Korea moved up to fourth place in this year's business environment survey, thanks to high scores in legal settlements and electricity supply.

According to the World Bank’s “Doing Business 2018” report, which is based on an annual survey, the country’s ranking represents a one-notch gain from its standing a year earlier.

For this year, the World Bank analyzed 190 countries' business environments by breaking them down into 10 broad categories in accordance with the business life cycle from start to closure.

The report checked legal and administrative rules and practices, as well as feedback from experts and businessmen in related fields, and is designed to provide best practice benchmarks for developing countries.

Meanwhile, New Zealand was top for providing the best overall business environment, followed by Singapore and Denmark.

Foreign investment area designated in Gwangyang’s Sepung General Industrial Complex

On Nov. 3, the Gwangyang Bay Area Free Economic Zone (GFEZ) in South Jeolla Province announced that part of Sepung General Industrial Complex has been designated as a Foreign Investment Area.

A total of KRW 24.6 billion (USD 22.58 million) in provincial and municipal funding will be injected into creating the Foreign Investment Area on 82,641 square meters of land within the complex.

Foreign-invested companies that move into the area will benefit from corporate and acquisition tax exemptions for up to five years.

Meanwhile, a total of KRW 545.8 billion (USD 504.32 million) is being injected into constructing the General Industrial Complex for specialty chemicals, precision machinery parts, and other future materials by 2020, on a site of 2.42 square kilometers.

China’s SICO to open Northeast Asia Center at Pyeongtaek Port

The Silk Road International Cultural & Economic Cooperation Communication Organization (SICO), an international non-governmental organization established to carry out the Chinese government’s One Belt One Road (OBOR) Initiative, will be opening its Northeast Asia Center near Pyeongtaek Port in Gyeonggi-do.

Pyeongtaek Port, once a key trade port of the ancient Silk Road, will become a gateway to the new OBOR network when the center opens, and function as a Northeast Asian hub for trade and cultural exchange with China, as well as between other OBOR participant countries.

SICO plans to build the new center on about 991 square meters of land inside the Hyeondeok District near Pyeongtaek Port. The period of construction will be decided on a later date.

An international non-governmental organization and United Nations cooperation agency registered in Geneva, SICO is in charge of matters of cultural and economic exchange between China and the 65 countries along the newly envisioned OBOR Silk Road.

According to the ‘2016 R&D Activity Survey’ released by the Ministry of Science, Future Planning and ICT, the total amount of R&D investment in South Korea recorded at KRW 69.41 trillion (USD 62.08 billion) last year, ranking fifth among OECD member countries. United States topped the chart while China and Japan followed second and third, respectively.

Travel authorities step up PyeongChang Olympics promotional shows across continents

Tourism authorities are cranking up promotions to attract foreign visitors to the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics by engaging actively in international travel events across all continents.

The Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) led a large delegation to the China International Travel Mart, one of the largest professional travel exhibitions in Asia, held in Kunming from Nov. 17-19. Representatives from 15 local governments and institutions operated a 198-square-meter booth at the event to promote the Winter Games.

“We used the warming South Korea-China relations to market high-quality travel packages and individual tours, and revive the slump in the number of Chinese travelers coming to South Korea,” a KTO official said.

To attract Japanese visitors, the KTO worked with the government of Gangwon-do, the host region of the Winter Olympics, and the games organizing committees to jointly operate a booth at Haneda Airport in Tokyo. The booth, in operation from Nov. 1-Dec. 21, is a follow-up to a similar event held from May to July at the same airport to advertise travel opportunities to South Korea. That event drew some 12,400 Japanese and foreign visitors.

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism took on Europe, participating in the World Travel Market, rated as one of the three top international exhibits for tourism industries worldwide, in London from Nov. 6-8. This year’s event drew 186 countries.

The ministry introduced PyeongChang’s tourism infrastructure and Visi East Asia products that link South Korea with other Asian nations during its invitational briefing to Britain’s travel officials and media.