



What are the ranking trends?

- **Bhutan**, in 73rd place in the *Doing Business* rankings, is the highest ranked economy in South Asia, followed by **Nepal** (at 107) and **Sri Lanka** (110).
- The region's lowest ranked economies are **Afghanistan** (183) and **Bangladesh** (176).
- Other economies in the region and their rankings are **India** (130), **Pakistan** (144), and the **Maldives** (135).
- The region's economies perform best in the *Doing Business* areas of Protecting Minority Investors (with an average rank of 80) and Starting a Business (100). Except for the **Maldives**, no economy in the South Asia region has a minimum capital requirement for starting a business.
- The areas where the region's economies underperform are Enforcing Contracts (with an average rank of 146), Registering Property (141) and Paying Taxes (137). For example, resolving a commercial dispute through the courts in South Asia takes 1,099 days on average, compared to the global average of 637 days.

What are the reform trends?

- A total of 11 reforms, making it easier to do business, were implemented by five of eight economies in South Asia in the past year. This is significantly higher than the region's annual average of nine reforms over the past five years.
- **Pakistan** is among the top 10 global improvers. Over the past 12 months, it implemented a total of three reforms and saw its ranking progress from 148 to 144. **India** and **Sri Lanka** also implemented reforms across multiple areas. Examples of reforms in these economies include:
 - **Pakistan** improved the quality of land administration by digitizing ownership and land records. The economy also improved access to credit information, thus guaranteeing by law borrowers' rights to inspect their own data.
 - **India** made paying taxes easier by introducing an electronic system for paying employee state insurance contributions. It also made enforcing contracts easier by creating dedicated divisions to resolve commercial cases.
 - **Sri Lanka** made starting a business easier by removing the stamp duty on newly issued shares.
- Half of all economies in South Asia reformed in Trading Across Borders in the past year. The reforms facilitating trade in **Afghanistan**, **India**, **Nepal** and **Pakistan** all focused on introducing, or upgrading, electronic data interchange systems for customs.
- In the past five years, **Sri Lanka** has implemented the highest number of *Doing Business* reforms in the region, with 12 reforms in total, followed by **India** with 10.

New inclusions in *Doing Business 2017*

- This year's report covers 190 economies, with the inclusion of Somalia.
- For the first time, *Doing Business 2017* includes a gender dimension in three indicators: Starting a Business, Registering Property and Enforcing Contracts. The report finds that gender barriers exist in **Afghanistan** and **Pakistan** for women entrepreneurs. For instance, married women in **Afghanistan** are required to undertake an additional step when starting a business.
- The Paying Taxes indicator has been expanded to cover post-filing processes, such as tax audits and VAT refund. The report finds that audit compliance time is considerably high in **Afghanistan** and **India**.
- The report includes an annex with a pilot indicator set on public procurement regulations. The 'selling to the government' procurement process is studied in 78 economies and is not included in the overall rankings. The indicator set analyzes five main areas: accessibility and transparency, bid security, payment delays, incentives for small and medium-size enterprises and complaint mechanisms.

Rankings Data for South Asia

Economy	Rank (1–190)		Distance to frontier score (0–100)		# of Reforms	
	DB2016	DB2017	DB2016	DB2017	DB2016	DB2017
Afghanistan	182	183	38.42	38.10	1	1
Bangladesh	178	176	40.68	40.84	1	0
Bhutan	71	73	65.35	65.37	2	0
India	131	130	53.93	55.27	2	4
Maldives	129	135	53.99	53.94	1	0
Nepal	100	107	59.36	58.88	0	1
Pakistan	148	144	49.48	51.77	0	3
Sri Lanka	109	110	58.14	58.79	2	2

Source: Doing Business database.

Note: The rankings are based on the average of each economy's distance to frontier scores for the 10 topics included in this year's aggregate ranking. This measure shows how close each economy is to global best practices in business regulation. A higher score indicates a more efficient business environment and stronger legal institutions.