



### What are the ranking trends?

- **Bhutan**, in 75th place in the *Doing Business* rankings, is the highest ranked economy in South Asia, followed by **India** (100) and **Nepal** (105).
- The region's lowest ranked economies are **Afghanistan** (183) and **Bangladesh** (177).
- Other economies in the region and their rankings are **Sri Lanka** (111), the **Maldives** (136), and **Pakistan** (147).
- The region's economies perform best in the *Doing Business* areas of Protecting Minority Investors (with an average rank of 81) and Getting Credit (103).
- The areas where the region's economies underperform are Registering Property (with an average rank of 146), Enforcing Contracts (142) and Paying Taxes (132). For example, resolving a commercial dispute through a local first-instance court in South Asia takes 1,102 days on average, compared to the global average of 645 days.

### What are the reform trends?

- A total of 20 reforms, making it easier to do business, were implemented by six of eight economies in South Asia in the past year. This is more than double the region's annual average of less than nine reforms over the past five years.
- **India**, with eight reforms, was one of this year's top-ten improvers worldwide and the leading regional reformer. This is the first year that India is in the top 100 economies globally.
- Examples of regional reforms include:
  - **India** made paying taxes easier by requiring that payments be made electronically to the Employees Provident Fund and introducing a set of administrative measures easing compliance with corporate income tax.
  - **Bhutan** improved the quality of credit information by beginning to distribute payment data from two utility companies.
  - **Pakistan** increased minority investor protections by making it easier to sue directors in case of prejudicial transactions with interested parties.
- Half of all regional economies improved their protection of minority investors. The reforms in **Bhutan**, **India**, **Nepal**, and **Pakistan** clarified ownership and allowed shareholders to seek recovery from transactions with conflicts of interest.

### What are the highlights of the past 15 years?

- Since the start of *Doing Business*, the region carried out a total of 127 reforms.
- India, with 37 reforms, carried out the highest number of reforms, followed by Sri Lanka (22) and Pakistan (19).
- Starting a Business, with 25 reforms, was the leading indicator for regional reforms, followed by Getting Credit and Trading across Borders with 22 and 19 reforms respectively.
  - Fifteen years ago, it took over 50 days on average to start a business in the region; now it takes 17 days, which is nearly a working week faster than the global average of 20 days.

**Rankings Data for South Asia**

<b>Economy</b>	<b>Rank (1–190)</b>	<b>Distance to frontier score (0–100)</b>		<b># of Reforms</b>	
	<b>DB2018</b>	<b>DB2017</b>	<b>DB2018</b>	<b>DB2017</b>	<b>DB2018</b>
Afghanistan	183	37.99	36.19	1	0
Bangladesh	177	40.84	40.99	0	0
Bhutan	75	65.21	66.27	0	4
India	100	56.05	60.76	4	8
Maldives	136	53.78	54.42	0	1
Nepal	105	57.60	59.95	1	2
Pakistan	147	50.94	51.65	3	4
Sri Lanka	111	58.73	58.86	2	1

*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.