

### What are the ranking trends?

- **India**, in 77th place in the *Doing Business* rankings, is the highest ranked economy in South Asia, followed by **Bhutan** (81) and **Sri Lanka** (100).
- The region's lowest ranked economies are **Afghanistan** (167) and **Bangladesh** (176).
- Other economies in the region and their rankings are **Nepal** (110), the **Maldives** (139), and **Pakistan** (136).
- The region's economies perform best in the *Doing Business* areas of Protecting Minority Investors (with an average rank of 64) and Starting Business (101). Starting a business in South Asia takes 14 days on average, compared to 20 days globally.
- India is in the top 10 of Protecting Minority Investors (rank 7).
- The areas where the region's economies underperform are Registering Property (with an average rank of 144), Enforcing Contracts (145) and Paying Taxes (132). For example, registering a property in South Asia takes 114 days on average, compared to the global average of 47 days.

### What are the reform trends?

- With a total of 19 reforms, the region actively reformed its business environment for the second year in a row, making Doing Business 2019 the second-best year in the last 16 years. (Doing Business 2018 recorded 21 reforms) with an average of more than 2 reforms per economy, the region has the highest average number of reforms per reforming economy: a total of 19 reforms were implemented by 5 of 8 economies in the region.
- **India**, with six reforms, is among the top-ten improvers for the second consecutive year. **Afghanistan**, with five reforms, is the economy that improved the most this year worldwide. This is also the record number of reform in a year for Afghanistan.
- Examples of regional reforms include:
  - **Afghanistan** strengthened minority investor protections by requiring greater disclosure of transactions with interested parties, easing shareholder suits by extending access to documents and evidence during trial. It also increased shareholders' rights and role in major corporate decisions, clarifying ownership and control structures and requiring greater corporate transparency.
  - **India** reduced the time and cost to export and import through various initiatives, including the implementation of electronic sealing of containers, the upgrading of port infrastructure and allowing electronic submission of supporting documents with digital signatures
  - **Pakistan** made starting a business easier by enhancing the online one-stop registration system, replacing several forms for incorporation with a single application and establishing information exchange between the registry and the tax authority.
  - **Sri Lanka** made dealing with construction permits more streamlined and less time-consuming by launching a single window counter and improving the efficiency of obtaining certificates required to undertake a construction project
- Half of all regional economies, **Afghanistan, Bhutan, India and Sri Lanka** streamlined the process of paying taxes.

### Noteworthy items:

- Changes in this year's report include renaming of the distance-to-frontier measurement to ease of doing business score, to better reflect its main purpose of measuring absolute progress towards best practices (without any change in the actual calculation).

- There are no changes to the methodology this year or to the calculation of the Doing Business Score, which underpins the Doing Business rankings.
- This year, Doing Business includes four case studies that focus on the benefits of:
  - mandatory and annual training of both public officials and users of business and land registries;
  - training for customs clearance officials and brokers;
  - robust regulatory framework governing the electricity sector and accrediting the electrician profession;
  - training and specialization of judges.

### Rankings Data for South Asia

Economy	Rank (1–190)	Ease of doing business score (0–100)		# of Reforms	
	DB2019	DB2018	DB2019	DB2018	DB2019
Afghanistan	167	37.13	47.77	0	5
Bangladesh	176	41.06	41.97	0	0
Bhutan	81	65.88	66.08	4	1
India	77	60.60	67.23	8	6
Maldives	139	54.33	54.43	2	0
Nepal	110	59.95	59.63	2	0
Pakistan	136	52.78	55.31	4	3
Sri Lanka	100	59.42	61.22	1	4

Source: *Doing Business* database.

Note: The rankings are based on the average of each economy's ease of doing business 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.