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***Women, Business and the Law***

Half of the eight economies *Women, Business and the Law* monitors in South Asia had at least one reform, making it the region with the highest percentage of reforming economies. Every economy in South Asia now has laws prohibiting sexual harassment in employment. South Asia has the highest percentage of economies where women cannot work the same night hours as men (63%). While the global average score in getting a job is 67, South Asia has an average a score of 39, the lowest across all regions. South Asia has the lowest score in building credit with a regional average score of 9.

Over the past two years, the following reforms have occurred:

**Afghanistan** now prohibits sexual harassment in employment and education. Afghanistan also established criminal penalties and civil remedies for sexual harassment in employment.

**Bangladesh** introduced new job restrictions on women by prohibiting women from carrying, lifting or removing weighty goods and instruments. Bangladesh now also establishes different weight-bearing thresholds for men and women.

**Bhutan** increased the maximum amount of educational expenses that can be deducted from income taxes. The economy also improved access to credit information by distributing positive and negative payment data from utility companies.

**India** increased the length of paid maternity leave from 84 to 182 days. However, as employers pay the full cost of maternity leave, the cost of hiring women of childbearing age has increased from the employer's perspective.

**Maldives** prohibited discrimination based on gender and marital status when accessing financial services.

*Women, Business and the Law* measures how laws, regulations and institutions differentiate between women and men in ways that may affect women's incentives or capacity to work or to set up and operate a business. It analyzes legal differences on the basis of gender in 189 economies, covering seven areas: accessing institutions, using property, getting a job, providing incentives to work, building credit, going to court and protecting women from violence. The report is published every two years.

The full report and accompanying datasets are available at [wbl.worldbank.org](http://wbl.worldbank.org).

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