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Ease of Doing Business Reforms in India

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Ease of Doing Business Reforms in India

India once ran up a world ranking from 142nd to 63rd. That ranking no longer exists. This lesson explains who leads India’s reform push and how the old World Bank rank worked. It then covers the compliance cuts, the Jan Vishwas Act and the 2026 Parliament reports. It also fixes a few claims that older versions of this page left loose.

Must know: who leads the reform and the old rank

1 Who leads India's ease of doing business reform?

“Ease of doing business” means how simple it is to start and run a firm. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, or DPIIT, leads India’s push to make it simpler. DPIIT sits in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.



The Bandra-Kurla Complex in Mumbai, a hub for the firms these reforms target. (Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 4.0)

Why do firms care about this?

A new firm must get many approvals before it earns a rupee. Each approval costs time and money. Fewer and faster approvals let a small firm grow sooner.

What did the old World Bank index measure?

The World Bank’s Doing Business index looked at ten steps in a firm’s life. They were starting a business, construction permits, getting electricity and registering property. The rest were getting credit, protecting minority investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, enforcing contracts and resolving insolvency. Maintenance of law and order was never one of them.

Quick check 1. Maintenance of law and order was one of the ten topics in the World Bank's Doing Business index. *(True or False?)*

See answer ↓

Sources: pib.gov.in; archive.doingbusiness.org

2 What does BRAP do?

DPIIT began the Business Reforms Action Plan, or BRAP, in 2014. It is a yearly report card for States and Union Territories. Each one is scored on the reforms it has carried out.

Why is it called competitive federalism?

States compete with each other for a better score. A State that cuts approval time looks good next to its neighbours. That pressure pushes every State to improve.

How many editions are there?

Seven editions are complete: 2015, 2016, 2017-18, 2019, 2020, 2022 and 2024. The 2020 edition was published in 2022. It covered 301 reform points across 15 areas. These included access to information, single window, labour and land administration.

The eighth edition, BRAP 2026, was rolled out on 11 November 2025.

Quick check 2. BRAP scores States and Union Territories on the reforms they have carried out. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: pib.gov.in; deccanherald.com

3 How far did India climb in the old World Bank rank?

The World Bank, not the WTO, OECD or World Economic Forum, published the Doing Business rank. India stood 142nd in Doing Business 2015. It stood 63rd in Doing Business 2020. That is a climb of 79 places.

Why do questions say 2014 to 2019?

Each report is named for the year it is published. It uses data from the year before. So exam questions often say 2014 to 2019 for the same climb.

How steady was the climb?

The ranks the Bank published were 142, 130, 130, 100, 77 and 63. The Bank later revised its own 2015 and 2016 ranks to 134 and 131. The biggest single jump came between 2017 and 2018. India gained 30 places that year (130 to 100).

> **Quick check 3.** India's Doing Business rank rose from 142nd in Doing Business 2015 to 63rd in Doing Business 2020. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓



A lower rank number is better. The climb was 79 places. Original explanatory diagram.

Sources: usispf.org; documents1.worldbank.org

Good to know: the end of the rank, the trap and the clean-up

4 Why did the old rank end, and what replaced it?

In 2020 the World Bank found data irregularities in the report. It paused the report and ordered reviews. On 16 September 2021 it announced that Doing Business would be discontinued.

Which was the last report?

Doing Business 2020 was the last one. It came out in 2019. Many learners wrongly say the report stopped in 2020. The pause began in 2020, but the decision came in 2021.

What is B-READY?

B-READY, short for Business Ready, is the new World Bank report. Its first edition in 2024 covered 50 economies. India was not among them. The World Bank lists India for 2026. India is listed for 2026. As of early October 2026, no India score has been published. So India has no live global rank today.

> **Quick check 4.** The World Bank announced the end of the Doing Business report in 2020. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: timeline.worldbank.org; conversableeconomist.com; worldbank.org

5 What is the registering property trap?

The overall rank rose sharply. But not every topic improved. India held rank 121 in registering property in Doing Business 2015. In Doing Business 2020 it held rank 154. That is a fall of 33 places.

Why did the story flip here?

Registering property involves land records, stamp duty and state offices. Those are mostly State matters. A Central reform cannot fix them quickly.

How does the exam use this?

A question gives the 142 to 63 climb. Then it asks which topic got worse. Many learners guess a famous weak spot like taxes. The answer is registering property.

> **Quick check 5.** Every topic in India's Doing Business ranking improved between 2015 and 2020. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Sources: documents1.worldbank.org

6 What is the compliance-cutting drive?

A compliance is a rule a firm must follow. It may be a form, a licence or a filing. The Regulatory Compliance Burden drive, or RCB, trims these rules one by one.

How many rules were cut?

Over 47,000 compliances were reduced in five years. The Lok Sabha reply of 10 February 2026 gave the split. About 16,109 were simplified. About 22,287 were moved online. Another 4,623 were decriminalised and 4,270 were dropped outright.

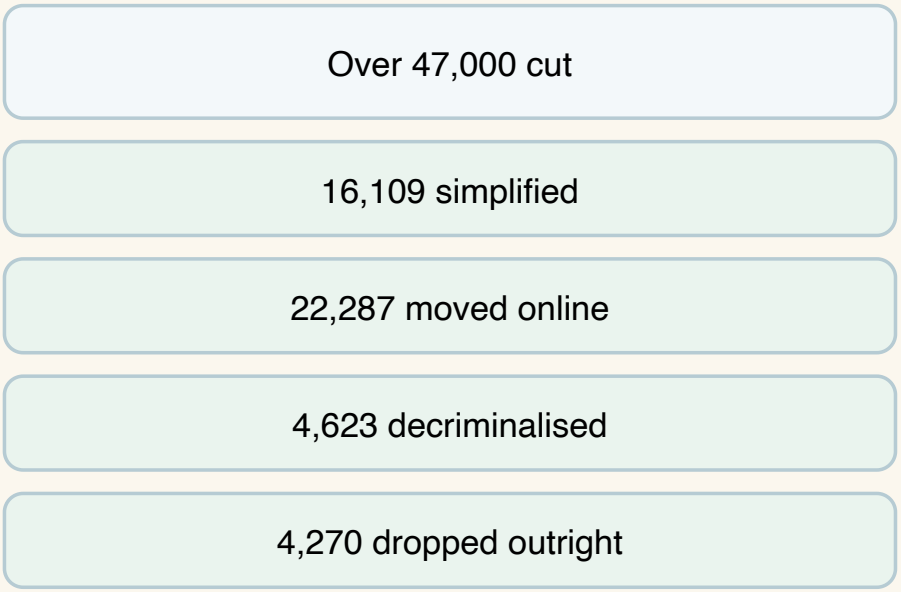
How is RCB different from BRAP?

BRAP scores States on their reforms. RCB cuts the rules themselves, in the Centre and in States. One is a report card. The other is a clean-up.

Do all sources give the same split?

The Commerce Committee report of August 2026 shows slightly different counts. It says 16,108 simplified and 4,458 decriminalised. Both sets of figures add up to over 47,000. So an exam question will use “over 47,000”.

Quick check 6. BRAP and the Regulatory Compliance Burden drive are the same initiative. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓



Four ways of cutting, one drive. Original explanatory diagram.

Sources: pib.gov.in; prsindia.org

7 What are Jan Vishwas and the single window?

The Jan Vishwas Act, 2023 took jail terms out of small business offences. It decriminalised 183 provisions across 42 Acts. Nineteen Ministries and Departments administered those Acts.

Why does decriminalising help?

A missed filing could once send a business owner to jail. Now many such lapses bring a fine instead. Owners worry less, and courts get fewer petty cases.

What is the National Single Window System?

The National Single Window System, or NSWS, is one online portal for approvals. It links 32 Central Ministries and Departments and 33 States and Union Territories. A firm can reach over 300 Central approvals and over 3,000 State approvals there.

Is there a newer Jan Vishwas Bill?

Yes. The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026 passed both Houses on 2 April 2026. It amends 784 provisions in 79 Central Acts run by 23 Ministries. Of these, 717 are decriminalised and 67 are for ease of living.

It followed a 2025 Bill that the Cabinet approved on 12 August 2025. That Bill had 355 amendments. Of these, 288 were for business ease and 67 for ease of living.

Sources: pib.gov.in

Great to know: the 2026 reports and the numbers

8 What did the Commerce Committee say in August 2026?

The Standing Committee on Commerce, chaired by Dola Sen, presented its report on 7 August 2026. It is titled “Doing Business in India: The Way Forward”. The report reviews India’s ease-of-doing-business reforms, including BRAP, NSWS and the compliance-cutting drive.



Sansad Bhavan, New Delhi. Parliament's Commerce Committee reviewed this reform agenda in its August 2026 report. (Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0)

What did it note?

It noted a stakeholder submission. The submission said a typical firm must navigate about 1,500 Acts. These impose 69,233 separate compliances and 6,618 independent filings. So the burden may still be heavy.

What did it recommend?

It asked for mandatory State onboarding on NSWS. It asked for automatic renewal of approvals for compliant firms. It also wanted audits to check BRAP claims on the ground. The report also asked for a single PAN-based identity for firms across States.

Sources: prsindia.org

9 What does the Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 change?

On 3 August 2026 a Joint Parliamentary Committee backed the Bill with clause-wise changes. The Bill eases compliance for One Person Companies, small companies, start-ups and producer companies. It also helps certain entities in the International Financial Services Centre.

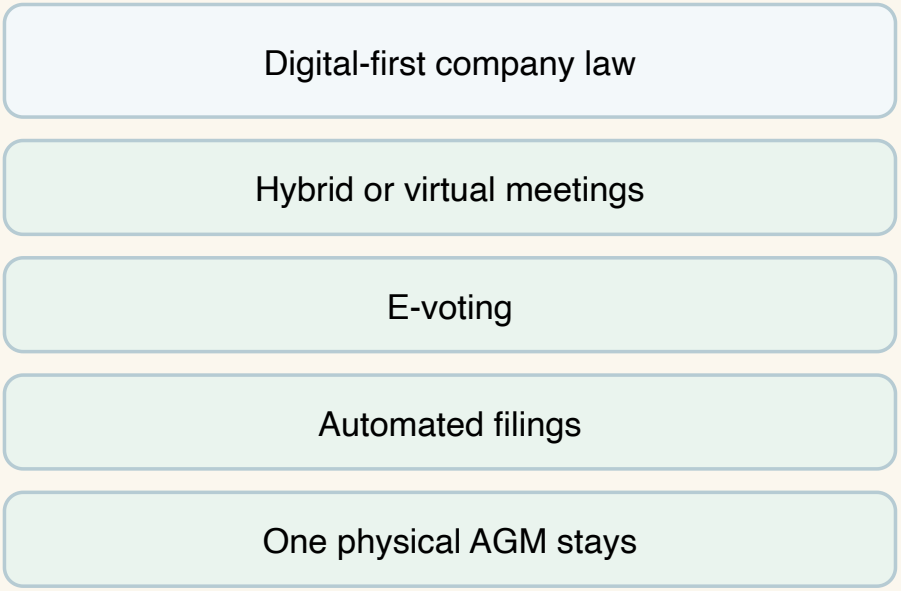
What is the digital-first model?

Companies could hold hybrid or virtual shareholder meetings. They could use e-voting and automated filings. One physical annual general meeting must still be held.

How did the committee work?

It held 25 sittings. It received 130 memoranda and heard 83 experts. Two members of the 31-member panel gave dissent notes.

> **Quick check 7.** The Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 removes the need for any physical annual general meeting. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓



Digital tools are added, but one in-person meeting stays. Original explanatory diagram.

Sources: tribuneindia.com; deccanchronicle.com

10 Which numbers should you hold?

These are the figures that questions on this topic keep using.

- Old rank: 142nd in Doing Business 2015 to 63rd in Doing Business 2020.
- Registering property: rank 121 in 2015, rank 154 in 2020.
- BRAP: begun in 2014, with seven editions so far.
- Compliances cut: over 47,000 in five years.
- Jan Vishwas Act, 2023: 183 provisions in 42 Acts.
- NSWS: 32 Central bodies and 33 States and Union Territories.
- Doing Business: stopped on 16 September 2021 and replaced by B-READY.

What should you not mix up?

Do not confuse BRAP with RCB. Do not say the old rank stopped in 2020. Do not say every topic improved.

Sources: timeline.worldbank.org; prsindia.org

Review the feedback after each answer. The understanding-check score lasts for this page session.

Reset the checks when you want another attempt. This score is separate from the Native Practice score below.

Questions to think through

Why do States compete on BRAP instead of the Centre ordering reforms?

Land, labour and many permits are State subjects. The Centre cannot change them alone. A public score gives each State a reason to act.

Why did the world drop the Doing Business ranking?

Reviews found data irregularities in the report. A rank is only useful if people trust it. Once trust broke, the Bank chose a new approach.

Why can an overall rank rise while one topic falls?

The overall rank averages ten topics. Big gains in some topics can hide a fall in one. Registering property fell because it depends on State land offices.

Why does a digital-first company law matter to a small firm?

A small firm has few staff. Travelling to physical meetings and filing on paper take real time. Virtual meetings and automated filings save both.

Practice MCQs

1. Which of these is NOT a sub-index of the World Bank's 'Ease of Doing Business Index'?

A. Paying taxes

B. Dealing with construction permits

C. Registering property

D. Maintenance of law and order

See answer ↓

2. Which department leads India's Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP)?

A. Ministry of Finance

B. Ministry of Corporate Affairs

C. NITI Aayog

D. Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)

See answer ↓

3. Between 2014 and 2019, how many ranks did India climb in the World Bank's Doing Business Report?

A. 25

B. 50

C. 79

D. 100

See answer ↓

4. Why did the World Bank discontinue its Doing Business Report?

A. Too few countries participated

B. It was replaced by a UN initiative

C. It ran out of funding

D. A data-integrity scandal

See answer ↓

5. Under the Regulatory Compliance Burden (RCB) initiative, roughly how many compliances have been reduced?

A. Over 100,000

B. Over 25,000

C. Over 10,000

D. Over 47,000

See answer ↓

6. The Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, endorsed by a Joint Parliamentary Committee, includes which reform?

A. Mandatory foreign audits for all companies

B. Removing all reporting requirements for large corporations

C. A digital-first governance model, with hybrid and virtual shareholder meetings

D. Abolishing the Companies Act, 2013 entirely

See answer ↓

7. India's ranking in the 'Ease of Doing Business Index' is sometimes seen in the news.

Which of the following has declared that ranking? [UPSC CSP 2016]

A. World Economic Forum

B. World Bank

C. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

D. World Trade Organization (WTO)

See answer ↓

8. As per the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Ranking, India's rank has improved from 142 in 2014 to 63 in 2019. During this period, in which of the following parameters has India's rank deteriorated?

A. Registering property

B. Ease of starting a business

C. Paying taxes

D. Getting electricity

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **D.** The answer is maintenance of law and order. The old Doing Business index covered ten topics, such as paying taxes, registering property and construction permits. Law and order was never one of them. ↑ Q1
2. **D.** The answer is DPIIT. It began BRAP in 2014 and scores every State and Union Territory on its reforms. Seven editions are complete, the latest completed being BRAP 2024; BRAP 2026 began in November 2025. ↑ Q2
3. **C.** The answer is 79. India stood 142nd in Doing Business 2015 and 63rd in Doing Business 2020. Questions often call this the climb from 2014 to 2019, after the data years of the two reports. ↑ Q3
4. **D.** The answer is a data-integrity scandal. The World Bank found data irregularities in 2020 and paused the report. It announced on 16 September 2021 that the report would be discontinued. B-READY is the new report. ↑ Q4
5. **D.** The answer is over 47,000 in five years. About 16,109 were simplified and 22,287 moved online. Another 4,623 were decriminalised and 4,270 were dropped outright. ↑ Q5
6. **C.** The answer is a digital-first governance model. The Committee backed hybrid and virtual shareholder meetings, e-voting and automated filings. One physical annual general meeting must still be held. ↑ Q6
7. **B.** The answer is the World Bank. It published the ranking in its Doing Business Report. India stood 142nd in Doing Business 2015 and 63rd in Doing Business 2020. The Bank announced the end of the report in September 2021. ↑ Q7
8. **A.** The answer is registering property. India held rank 121 on this topic in Doing Business 2015. It held rank 154 in Doing Business 2020. The overall rank rose while this one fell. ↑ Q8

Quick-check answers

1. **False.** The ten topics covered a firm's life, from starting a business to resolving insolvency. Law and order was not one of them. ↑ 1
2. **True.** DPIIT began BRAP in 2014. Seven editions are complete. ↑ 2
3. **True.** That is a climb of 79 places. ↑ 3
4. **False.** The pause began in 2020. The decision to discontinue was announced on 16 September 2021. ↑ 4

5. **False.** Registering property fell from rank 121 to rank 154 even as the overall rank rose. ↑ 5
6. **False.** BRAP scores States on reforms. RCB cuts the compliance rules themselves. ↑ 6
7. **False.** The digital-first model keeps at least one physical annual general meeting. ↑ 7

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