

U4 Expert Answer



Corruption and governance indicators in selected Asian countries

Query

Can you provide an overview of corruption indicators in the following countries: Nepal, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Myanmar/ Burma?

Content

1. Corruption levels in selected Asian countries
2. Other governance and corruption-related indicators
3. References

Summary

This answer provides an overview of governance and corruption-related indicators in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Tajikistan.

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U4 is a resource centre for development practitioners who wish to effectively address corruption challenges in their work. Expert Answers are produced by the U4 Helpdesk – operated by Transparency International – as quick responses to operational and policy questions from U4 Partner Agency staff.

1. Corruption levels in selected Asian countries

Available indicators show that corruption in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Tajikistan is a significant problem, affecting a wide range of sector and institutions.

There has been limited progress in fighting corruption in these countries, with serious consequences for the population. In particular, the majority of these countries have a poor track record of promoting transparency and accountability. Opaqueness and secrecy have been for many years the norm in the public sector and more needs to be done to ensure that government decision-making happens in a transparent and accountable manner so that corruption can be prevented and, when it happens, detected and punished.

Most companies in the majority of these countries consider corruption as a major impediment for doing business.

Analysis of available governance indicators also points to money laundering as an issue of concern in the region. Most of the countries of interest have an inadequate legal framework to combat money laundering.

Another problem identified in these countries relates to the lack of transparency in the management of public finances. This is particularly relevant since many of the countries of interest rely extensively on funds from development assistance. Improvements are required to ensure that money entering the domestic budget is spent adequately and that there are enough safeguards to prevent abuses.

Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)

CPI measures the level of perceived corruption in the public sector in countries. It is a composite index, based on global surveys and expert assessments of corruption. Since 2012, CPI scores can be compared from one year to the next, but changes in scores do not necessarily mean that a country has improved or declined. A more thorough analysis is necessary to ensure that the change is statistically significant (Transparency International 2016).

The 2015 CPI assessed 168 countries and territories, ranking them using a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). As shown in the table below, all countries of interest score below 40 out of 100. India is the best performer of the group with a score of 38 points and occupying place 76 in the ranking. Afghanistan is the worst performer of the group and also one of the worst overall, ranking 166, behind only North Korea and Somalia (Transparency International 2016).

Analysis of the scores over time shows that the perception of corruption has remained rather stable in the region. None of the countries of interest has improved or declined since 2012 – the small variations seen below, such as for Myanmar or Afghanistan, are not statistically significant as they fall within the confidence interval, meaning that the change is within the confidence interval and does not necessarily reflect a real improvement.

Corruption Perceptions Index's scores

Country	2015	2014	2013	2012
Afghanistan	11	12	8	8
Bangladesh	25	25	27	26
India	38	38	36	36
Kyrgyzstan	28	27	24	24
Myanmar	22	21	21	15
Nepal	27	29	31	27
Pakistan	30	29	28	27
Tajikistan	26	23	22	22

Source: Transparency International

Global Corruption Barometer (GCB)

GCB is a worldwide public opinion survey on perceptions and experiences of corruption. As a poll of the general public, it provides an indicator of how corruption is viewed and experienced at national level and how efforts to curb corruption around the world are judged on the ground.

The last available data for the majority of the countries of interest is from 2013. Myanmar and Tajikistan were not part of the assessment. In the

current round (2015-2016), the survey is being carried out at regional level.

Respondents to the 2013 GCB in the countries of interest perceive corruption in the public sector as a significant problem (see table below), with more than 70% of the surveyed population perceiving corruption as a problem or as a serious problem. In Kyrgyzstan and in Pakistan, only 9% of the population think corruption in the public sector is not a problem. Similarly, a significant percentage of individuals surveyed in these countries perceive corruption to have increased in the two years preceding the survey (see below). For instance, in

Nepal and in Pakistan corruption seems to have increased for 72% of respondents. In Afghanistan, on the other hand, the majority of people believe that corruption levels either stayed the same (32%) or decreased a little (22%).

The approval of governments' action to fight corruption varies across countries. In Afghanistan, back in 2013, 49% of respondents thought the government was effective in fighting corruption. In India, only 9% of the respondents considered the government's actions effective, and in Nepal only 13% (see below).

Global Corruption Barometer 2013

	% of citizens who think corruption is a problem¹	% of citizens who believe corruption has increased²	% of citizens that believe the gov't is effective in fighting corruption
Afghanistan	71	40	49
Bangladesh	76	60	25
India	80	71	9
Kyrgyzstan	91	41	17
Nepal	85	72	13
Pakistan	91	72	16

Source: Transparency International 2013

¹ Answers include both citizens who consider corruption to be a problem and citizens who consider corruption to be a serious problem.

² Surveyed individuals answered to the following question: "Over the past two years how has the level of corruption in this country/territory changed?" The percentage data include citizens who believe corruption increased a little or increased a lot.

The police, political parties and public officials are perceived by citizens in the countries of interest to be the most corrupt among 12 institutions analysed.

When asked about their experience with corruption, respondents in the countries of interest confirm that corruption is a reality in several institutions and sectors. In Afghanistan, for instance, 65% of citizens who had been in contact with the judiciary in the year preceding the survey reported paying bribes. This corroborates with the fact that 60% of individuals surveyed perceive the judiciary as the most corrupt institution in the country. Of the Afghan respondents, 58% also reported paying bribes to access registry and licences, and 51% to the police (Transparency International 2013).

In Bangladesh, 72% of citizens who had been in contact with the police in the year preceding the survey reported paying bribes. The police are also perceived as the most corrupt institution in Bangladesh by 60% of citizens. Of the Bangladeshi respondents, 63% also reported paying bribes to judiciary services and 44% to land services.

In India, experience with corruption also seems to be high among citizens who have had contact with the police, with 62% of people reporting having paid bribes. The percentage of individuals reporting paying bribes to access registry and permit services (61%) and land services (58%) are also high.

In Nepal, 40% of those who had contact with the land services reported paying bribes. In the same country, 37% reported paying bribes to the judiciary services and 30% to the police. Political parties and public officials are perceived as the most corrupt for 90% and 85% of individuals surveyed, respectively.

In Pakistan, 75% of those who had contact with the land services and 65% of those in contact with the police reported paying bribes. Bribery incidence in the utilities services and tax revenue are also high, with 57% and 55% of those surveyed reporting paying bribes. The police is perceived by 82% of the population as corrupt/ extremely corrupt, followed by public officials (81%) and political parties (76%).

Enterprise surveys

Enterprise Surveys, conducted by the World Bank Group, measure firms' perceptions of country business environments and experience with government processes, including informal payments and corruption. They measure, among other things, the percentage of firms that expect to engage in bribery to access public services or secure government contracts, and provides an estimate of the number of businesses that consider corruption to be a major constraint for doing business in the country (World Bank Group 2016).

An analysis of the countries of interest shows that in all of them, firms' perception and experience with corruption is high (see table below). In Afghanistan, for instance, 34.6% of companies surveyed reported having had to give gifts or make informal payments to access services. Almost 50% of the companies surveyed, reported being expected to give gifts to secure a government contract. The value of the gift/ informal payments is also higher than in other countries in the region, reaching approximately 4.5% of contract value. Overall, 62.6% of companies consider corruption a major constraint for doing business in the country.

In Bangladesh, bribery incidence is also much higher than the average of countries in South Asia, with more than 47% of respondents to the survey reporting having had to pay a bribe (see table below), while 43.9% reported that a gift or informal payment was requested when dealing with utilities access, permits, licences and taxes. The percentage of enterprises that reported being expected to give gifts to access procurement contracts is also high (48.9%). Corruption seems to be particularly rampant for an import licence, with 77.2% of firms reporting being expected to give gifts against a regional average of 27.4%. As a consequence, it is not surprising that 49.6% of enterprises surveyed consider corruption as a major impediment for doing business in the country.

In India, enterprises' perceptions and experiences with corruption are slightly below the regional average but still higher than the average of all countries assessed (see table below). For instance, 19.6% of firms declared that an informal payment or gift was requested to access services. Bribery incidence is particularly high to get an electrical connection (according to 51.5%) and water connection (52.5). A significant percentage

(39.8%) of firms also reported being expected to give gifts amounting to 0.1% of contract value to secure government contracts. Overall, 35.8% of firms identified corruption as a major constraint for doing business in the country.

Private sector's perception and experience with corruption in Kyrgyzstan is particularly high with 59.8% of firms surveyed reported having to pay bribes to access services, compared to 17.4% of firms surveyed in the Europe and Central Asia region. A majority (55.1%) of respondents reported being expected to pay an average of 2.4% of contract value in bribes/gifts to secure government contract. Within this framework, more than 60% of firms surveyed consider corruption a major constraint for doing business in the country.

Bribery incidence among the private sector in Myanmar is slightly higher than in other countries in East Asia, with 42.9% of firms surveyed reporting having experienced corruption to access public services in Myanmar compared to 38.9% in the East Asia & Pacific region. Of the firms surveyed, 32.5% also reported being expected to give gifts to secure government contracts and more than 53% to get an import licence. However, probably given political instability and other issues afflicting the country, only 9.3% of enterprises surveyed perceived corruption a major constraint for doing business in Myanmar.

Nepal has the lowest rates of corruption as experienced by the private sector in comparison to the other countries analysed. Of those Nepalese firms surveyed, 14.4% reported having experienced corruption to access public services. The average in the South Asia region is 24.8%. Nevertheless, the percentage of surveyed firms that report having to give gifts to secure government contracts is high: 64.5%. The amount expected to be paid is similar to Afghanistan and only lower than in Pakistan: 4.4% of contract value. Overall, corruption is perceived a major constraint for doing business in the country by 44.7% of firms.

The private sector's experience with corruption in Pakistan paints a dark picture of the business environment in the country. Of the firms surveyed in 2013, 30.8% reported paying bribes to access public services and 88.2% reported being expected to give gifts to secure public contract. Moreover, the expected value of the gift/informal payment required to access such contracts is extremely high: 8.2% of the contract value

(against 2.9% in the South Asia region). Overall, 68.3% of enterprises identify corruption as a major constraint for doing business in the country.

Bribery incidence in Tajikistan is high in comparison with other countries in the Europe and Central Asia region but lower than in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan, according to enterprises surveyed (see table). Of the firms surveyed, 33.6% declared being expected to give gifts to access public contracts, paying an average of 2% of the contract value. Corruption is perceived as a major constraint for doing business in the country by 23.7%, slightly above the regional average of 22.4%.

Enterprise Surveys

	% of firms reporting bribery incidence	% of firms expected to give gifts to secure public contracts	% of firms identifying corruption as a major constraint
Afghanistan (2014)	46.8	46.9	62.6
Bangladesh (2013)	47.7	48.9	46.9
India (2014)	22.7	39.8	35.8
Kyrgyzstan (2013)	59.8	55.1	60.2
Myanmar (2014)	42.9	32.5	9.3
Nepal (2013)	14.4	64.5	44.7
Pakistan (2013)	30.8	88.2	68.3
Tajikistan (2013)	36.8%	33.6	23.7

Source: World Bank Group, Enterprise Surveys

United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)

All the countries of interest have signed and ratified the UNCAC. When countries ratify or accede to the UNCAC, they must align national laws, institutions, policies, procedures, and programmes with the convention, and report periodically on their anti-corruption initiatives and impact.

Within this framework, the UNCAC Review Mechanism analyses the level of implementation of the convention in a given country. However, the majority of countries of interest have not published the assessment or an executive summary of the findings, making it difficult for citizens, civil society and other relevant stakeholders to assess whether or not the country has made any progress.

Information about the review process is published on UNODC website [country profile pages](#). As of February 2016, only Bangladesh has published the executive summary of the implementation review, but no final report has been made available. There is no information on whether Afghanistan, India, Myanmar, Pakistan and Tajikistan have already finalised their review.

UNCAC status

	Status
Afghanistan	Signed 20/02/04, Ratified 25/8/08
Bangladesh	Accession 27/02/07
India	Signed 9/12/05, Ratified 9/05/11
Kyrgyzstan	Signed 10/12/03, Ratified 16/09/05
Myanmar	Signed 2/12/05, Ratified 20/12/12
Nepal	Signed 10/12/03, Ratified 31/03/11
Pakistan	Signed 9/12/03, Ratified 31/08/07
Tajikistan	Accession 25/09/06

Source: UNCAC website

World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI)

WGI provide an assessment of the quality of six broad dimensions of governance: voice and accountability; political stability and absence of violence; government effectiveness; regulatory quality; rule of law; and control of corruption (World Bank 2015).

WGI report aggregate and individual governance indicators for 215 economies over the period 1996–2014, and can be used to observe trends over longer periods of time. However, as is the case with CPI, the control of corruption dimension is also based on perceptions-based data.

The results of the last assessment, which was conducted in 2014, show that corruption is perceived as a significant problem across the region. All countries of interest scored below the 40 percentile rank (100 being highest control of corruption; see table below).

Afghanistan performs particularly poorly (six percentile rank) and it has shown no real improvement since 2003 when data was first available for the country.

Kyrgyzstan follows as the second worst performer (12 percentile rank), and the country has also not shown any real improvement in the last years.

India and Nepal are the best performers among the group. India has maintained a score oscillating between the 40 and 39 percentile ranks from 1996 onwards. Nepal's 2014 assessment puts the country in the 36 percentile rank. An analysis of the country's scores in previous years shows quite a lot of variation (60 percentile rank in 1996 to 28 in 2009, for example), but this variation could be explained by the number of sources used rather a real change in perception.

Source: World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators Control of Corruption

2. Other governance and corruption-related indicators

Anti-money laundering index (AML Index)

The Basel AML Index scores provide an overall picture of a country's anti-money laundering framework and risk level. The index takes into consideration a country's money laundering/terrorist financing risk, corruption risk, financial transparency and standards, public transparency and accountability as well as the political and legal risk (Basel Institute on Governance 2015).

Four of the countries of interest are considered as having extremely high risks.

For instance, Afghanistan ranks second out of 152 countries assessed. It is considered to have a high risk of money laundering with an overall score of 8.48, where 0 means low risk and 10 high risk. Tajikistan ranks third with a score of 8.26. Myanmar ranks 10 with a score of 7.78, and Nepal ranks 12 and scores 7.62.

Other countries of interest also perform relatively poorly: Pakistan is in position 44 with a score of 6.52; Bangladesh ranks 52 and scores 6.43; Kyrgyzstan ranks 56 and scores 6.27, and India is the best performer in place 79 of the ranking with a score of 5.77.

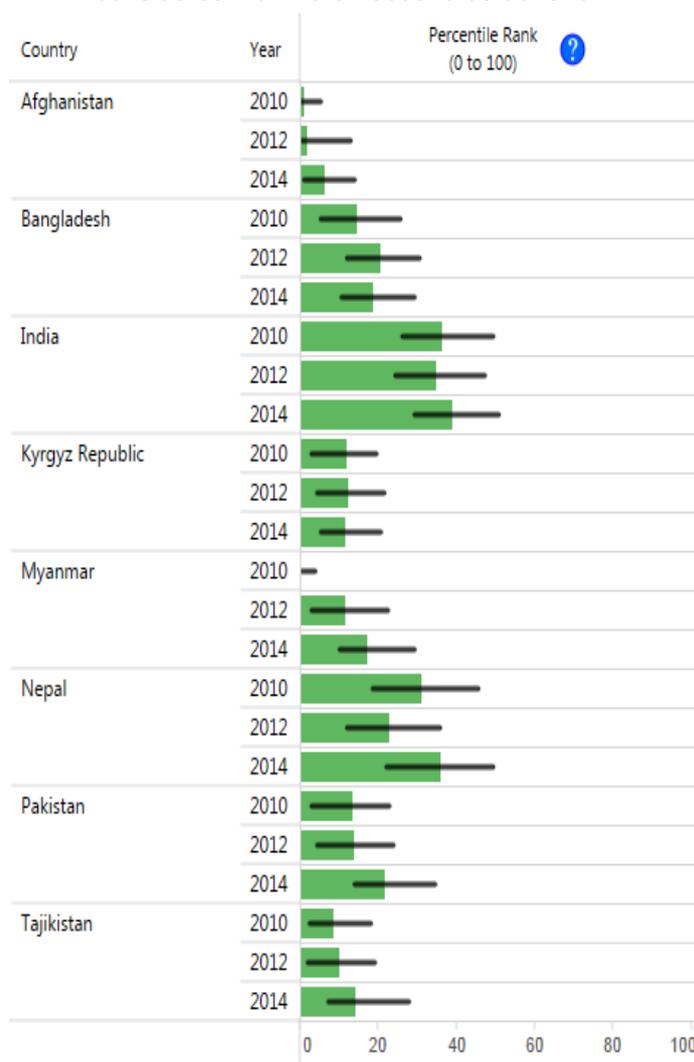
Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

FATF is an inter-governmental body that has as its main objective to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related

threats to the integrity of the international financial system.

As part of its review mechanism, the FATF identifies jurisdictions which have strategic anti-money laundering or terrorist financing (AML/CFT) deficiencies for which the body develops an action plan recommending improvements. In February 2016, FATF published a note containing the latest review update and the list of jurisdictions considered as having strategic deficiencies. Of the countries of interest, Afghanistan and Myanmar are part of the list and the FATF will continue to monitor their progress in the future.

In 2012, Afghanistan made a high-level political commitment to work with the FATF and the relevant regional group to improve its strategic AML/CFT deficiencies. In spite of recent measures undertaken by the government, the FATF considered that more needs to be done to



ensure a sound AML framework. In particular, the FATF has recommended: (i) implementation of

the legal framework for identifying, tracing and freezing terrorist assets; (ii) establishment of an adequate AML/CFT supervisory and oversight programme for all financial sectors; and (iii) implementation of effective controls for cross-border cash transactions (FATF 2016).

Myanmar's commitment to the FATF was made in 2010 and since then has taken a series of important steps to address key deficiencies. It has, among others, improved its legal framework to criminalise money laundering and terrorist financing and implemented the legal framework for identifying, tracing and freezing terrorist assets. The FATF will conduct an on-site visit to confirm that the process of implementing the required reforms and actions is underway to address deficiencies previously identified by the FATF.

Freedom in the World

Freedom in the World is Freedom House's flagship annual report, assessing the condition of political rights and civil liberties around the world. Countries are classified into free, partially free and not free (Freedom House 2016).

Considering the countries of interest, Bangladesh and Tajikistan are among the countries that experienced a decline in freedom in comparison with previous assessments. Bangladesh is assessed as partially free and Tajikistan as not free. India is the only country of interest assessed as free; all the others are considered partially free (Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan) or not free (Afghanistan and Myanmar) (Freedom House 2016).

Global Right to Information Rating (RTI), Access Info & Centre for Law and Democracy

RTI Rating comparatively assesses the strength of legal frameworks for the right to information from around the world.

As of 2016, 103 countries have been assessed and ranked according to the strength of their legal framework. The rating does not analyse how well the legal framework has been implemented.

Within this framework, India is the best performer among the countries of interest, ranking third out of the 103 countries assessed. Bangladesh ranks 20; Nepal 23, Kyrgyzstan 28, Afghanistan 64, and

Pakistan and Tajikistan are the worst performers ranking 85 and 101, respectively (RTI 2016).

Myanmar still lacks an access to information law.

Government Defence Anti-Corruption Index (GI), Transparency International

GI assesses the existence, effectiveness and enforcement of institutional and informal controls to manage the risk of corruption in defence and security institutions.

Many of the countries of interest have experienced a massive expansion in military expenditure in the past years, making transparency and accountability in the sector even more relevant: India's military spending has increased 147% in the last decade, Pakistan by 107%, and Bangladesh by 202% (TI Defence & Security 2015).

In spite of such expansion, the risks of corruption in the defence establishments are found to be significant. According to the index, in Bangladesh and India, corruption risks are assessed as high, in Afghanistan and Pakistan as very high, and in Myanmar as critical (TI Defence & Security 2015).³

The report highlights several problematic issues: In Pakistan, for example, there is no transparency or effective oversight of the military's business empire, estimated in 2007 to be worth \$10 billion. In India, in 2013, the army was found to be illegally running golf courses on government-owned land; air force officials have used defence land for unauthorised use such as the building of shopping malls and cinema halls. India's defence institutions have also been found to be involved in the exploitation of the country's natural resources.

In Bangladesh, the report provides evidence of military officials involved in the country's natural resource exploitation through timber businesses and the "grabbing" of land and forest resources. At the institutional level, the military operates a range of businesses directly and indirectly through Sena Kalyan Shangstha, a retired officials' welfare association (TI Defence & Security 2015).

³ Kyrgyzstan, Nepal and Tajikistan were not part of the assessment.

Open Budget Index (OBI)

OBI, produced by the International Budget Partnership, assesses government budget transparency, focusing specifically on whether the government provides the public with timely access to comprehensive information contained in eight key budget documents in accordance with international good practice standards (International Budget Partnership 2015).

All the countries of interest perform poorly in the assessment and do not publish sufficient information on their budgets. The majority of them, including Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan published only limited information. Nepal and Tajikistan published minimal information and Myanmar scant or none (International Budget Partnership 2015). More information on the performance of each of the countries is available [here](#).

Open Government Index

The World Justice Project Open Government Index measures government openness using four dimensions: publicised laws and government data, right to information, civic participation, and complaint mechanisms. Scores range from 0 to 1 (greatest openness).

Among the countries of interest⁴, India is the best performer followed by Nepal. India ranks 37 out of 102 countries assessed and first among countries in the South Asia region, with an overall score of 0.57. Nepal ranks 40 and second in the South Asia region, with a score of 0.56.

All the other countries have a relatively poor performance. Kyrgyzstan ranks 64 out of 102 countries and 8 among the 13 countries assessed in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region, with a score of 0.50. Bangladesh is in position 73 of the overall ranking and ranks four among South Asian countries, with a score of 0.47. Pakistan ranks 83 in the overall rank and fifth among South Asian countries, followed by Afghanistan in position 89 of the rank and the worst performer in South Asia. Finally, Myanmar performs very poorly, ranking 100 out of 102 countries assessed with a score of 0.32. Myanmar is also the worst performer in the East Asia & Pacific region.

⁴ Tajikistan is not part of the assessment.

The World Justice Project Rule of Law Index

The Rule of Law Index produced by the World Justice Project provides original data on how the rule of law is experienced by the general public in 102 countries around the globe.⁵ The index is based on household and experts surveys covering eight categories: Constraints on Government Powers, Absence of Corruption, Open Government, Fundamental Rights, Order and Security, Regulatory Enforcement, Civil Justice, and Criminal Justice (World Justice Project 2015).

The absence of corruption category analyses three forms of corruption: bribery, improper influence by public or private interests, and misappropriation of public funds or other resources. These three forms of corruption are examined with respect to government officers in the executive branch, the judiciary, the military and police, and the legislature, encompassing a wide range of possible situations in which petty and grand corruption can occur (World Justice Project 2015).

Afghanistan is the worst performer in the 2015 assessment. The country ranked 102 out of 102 countries assessed in the Rule of Law Index, with an overall score of 0.35 (scores range from 0 – lowest - to 1 – highest). In the category “absence of corruption”, Afghanistan received a score of 0.23 (1 being highest), with the judiciary and the legislature perceived as most corrupt among the areas assessed (executive, legislature, military and police and judiciary).

Pakistan occupied position 98 in the ranking, with an overall score of 0.38. The perception of absence of corruption is also very low (0.35). The majority of individuals surveyed perceive corruption within the military / police to be relatively higher than in the other assessed areas.

Bangladesh ranked 93 and received an overall score of 0.42. Its score on absence of corruption is even lower (0.27), with the military / police perceived as being the most corrupt among the areas assessed.

Myanmar ranked 92 out of 102 countries assessed, with an overall score of 0.42. The country also performs poorly in the absence of

⁵ Tajikistan is not part of the assessment.

corruption category, receiving a score of 0.42. The judiciary is the area perceived as being more prone to corruption among the areas assessed.

Kyrgyzstan ranked 74, with an overall score of 0.47. The country performs poorly on the absence of corruption indicator (0.3), with the legislature among the areas perceived as most prone to corruption.

India ranked 59, with a score of 0.51. The country also performs below average in the category absence of corruption (0.4). The legislature is perceived as the most prone to corruption among the areas assessed.

Nepal ranked 48 out of the 102 countries assessed with an overall score of 0.53. The country is the best overall performer across the countries of interest. The category absence of corruption received a score of 0.39, and corruption within the legislature appears as the most problematic area.

World Press Freedom Index

The Reporters without Borders World Press Freedom Index ranks the performance of 180 countries according to a range of criteria that include media pluralism and independence, respect for the safety and freedom of journalists, and the legislative, institutional and infrastructural environment in which the media operate. The index is based upon the organisation's assessment of the countries' [press freedom](#) records in the previous year (Reporters without Borders 2015).

Overall, the 2015 assessment shows that media freedom is in retreat on all five continents. Considering the countries of interest, a slight improvement in media freedom can be seen in some of them compared to the 2014 assessment, including Nepal, which was up 15 places thanks to a decline in violence by the security forces against journalists, and Kyrgyzstan, up nine places (Reporters without Borders 2015).

Nevertheless, all the countries of interest in the Asia Pacific region are assessed as having either "noticeable problems", scoring between 25.01 to 35 points (100 being the worst possible), such as Nepal; or being in a "difficult situation" with scores between 35.01 to 55 points, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Pakistan.

In Central Asia, Tajikistan is also assessed as having noticeable problems (score of 36.19). Kyrgyzstan performs a bit better with a score of 30.69 (Reporters without Borders 2015).

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