

CRS Report for Congress

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India: Chronology of Recent Events

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Summary

This report provides a reverse chronology of recent events involving India and India-U.S. relations.¹ For a substantive review, see CRS Issue Brief IB93097, *India-U.S. Relations*. This report will be updated regularly.

Acronyms:

BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party

- 07/28/04** — An 8-hour gunbattle on the shores of Dal Lake in Indian Kashmir left five policemen and two suspected separatists dead. On the same day, Maoist rebels from the People's War Group held their first public rally in more than a decade one week after the government of Andhra Pradesh lifted its ban on the group.
- 07/27/04** — **India and China ended two days of talks aimed at settling their long-running border dispute.** An Indian government statement said the talks were held in a "friendly, constructive, and cooperative atmosphere." On the same day, a Pakistani government spokesman again asserted that the composite dialogue with India requires a time frame. Also, India and Burma signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop Burma Railways.
- 07/26/04** — Indian Air Force units including 200 personnel, six Jaguar fighters, and four air tankers began participation in Cooperative Cope Thunder multilateral exercises in Alaska. On the same day, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told the visiting Iranian Foreign Minister that he had an "open mind" on Iran's proposal to build a natural gas pipeline to India through Pakistan. Also, suspected separatist militants beheaded a Kashmiri man and his two children whom they suspected of being informants. Finally, a spat between Hindus and Muslims sparked three

¹ Sources include, but are not limited to, the U.S. Department of State Washington File, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, Associated Press, BBC News, Reuters News, Agence France-Presse, *Hindu* (Madras), *Hindustan Times* (Delhi), and *Indian Express* (Bombay).

- days of communal rioting in Gujarat that left at least two people dead, 13 injured, and up to fifty buildings burned down.
- 07/25/04** — At least ten people reportedly were killed in separatist-related violence in Indian Kashmir.
- 07/24/04** — Coal Minister Shibu Soren reportedly resigned after being missing for three days. Soren was believed to be fleeing from authorities who accuse him of inciting a mob that killed ten people, mostly Muslims, in a 1975 tribal dispute.
- 07/23/04** — **External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh met with Pakistani President Musharraf** in Rawalpindi, where Musharraf “emphasized the need for simultaneous progress” on all issues, especially Kashmir, which he said needed to be resolved within “a reasonable time frame.” Singh reportedly responded by saying that, “Flexibility also means flexibility on time.”
- 07/21/04** — External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh met with his Pakistani counterpart Khurshid Kasuri in Islamabad for “frank and friendly” talks on efforts to continue their bilateral peace process. It was their third meeting since Singh took office with New Delhi’s new government in May. On the same day, the government of Andhra Pradesh lifted an 11-year-old ban on the communist militant People’s War Group (PWG) in preparation for upcoming peace talks. The PWG appears on the U.S. State Department’s list of “other terrorist groups.”
- 07/20/04** — India and Sri Lanka agreed to expedite their proposed defense cooperation agreement and expand their bilateral economic cooperation.
- 07/19/04** — Foreign Secretary Shashank met with his Pakistani counterpart in Islamabad to discuss efforts to continue their bilateral peace process. On the same day, a high-level Israeli defense delegation visited India for talks on future bilateral security cooperation under the new Congress-led government.
- 07/15/04** — Congress Party chief Sonia Gandhi admitted that India needed to do more to combat AIDS and vowed to increase government efforts in this regard. On the same day, former Indian Law Minister Ram Jethmalani issued a public apology for having supported the enactment of the controversial Prevention of Terrorism Act in 2002, a law that he says is “draconian” and “has been badly misused.”
- 07/14/04** — **U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Armitage made a visit to New Delhi** to meet with top Indian leaders, where he told reporters that the new Indian government appears to be just as desirous of enhanced U.S.-India relations as the previous one and that the United States has “absolute confidence that the U.S.-India relationship is going to grow in all its aspects.” He also said that he made no request that India send troops to Iraq and that “the infrastructure [in Pakistan] that supports cross-border activities [in Kashmir] has not been dismantled.”
- 07/13/04** — India and Pakistan announced scheduling a series of six rounds of bilateral talks over the coming six weeks ahead of a planned meeting of foreign ministers in late August. On the same day, a grenade attack on the convoy of the Deputy Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir in Srinagar injured a policeman, but left the official unharmed.
- 07/12/04** — A Pakistan government spokesman said that India’s large defense budget increase “would accentuate the asymmetry that we already have in the conventional sphere.” On the same day, the Left Front coalition of Indian

communist parties vowed to fight government plans to increase limits on foreign investment. Also, the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir asked the New Delhi government to initiate an unconditional dialogue with hardline Kashmiri separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani.

- 07/08/04** — **The new Congress-led government released its first budget**, a \$105 billion spending plan that some called “mildly contractionary,” but that at least one major Indian industry group called “progressive and forward-looking,” with economic reforms “firmly on track.”
- 07/07/04** — The chairman of the moderate faction of the Hurriyat Conference of Kashmiri separatist groups, **Molvi Abbas Ansari, formally resigned**, appointing Mirwaiz Umer Farooq to replace him. Farooq declined the position of interim chairman while vowing to continue efforts to reunite with the hardline Hurriyat faction. On the same day, New York-based Human Rights Watch claimed that the “forced displacement of thousands of sex workers and others” in Goa will “drastically harm efforts to contain HIV/AIDS in the area.”
- 07/06/04** — The Joint U.N. Program on AIDS released a fact sheet indicating that India is suffering from “extremely serious epidemics” in a number of states. National HIV prevalence is 1.3%, with about 5.1 million Indians living with HIV in 2003. On the same day, 17 people, most of them separatist militants, reportedly were killed in gunbattles in Indian Kashmir. Also, an Indian Home Ministry official said that there were 30 “infiltration incidents” at the Kashmiri LOC during the first half of 2004, compared to 164 and 138 during the same periods of 2002 and 2003, respectively.
- 07/03/04** — At least eight lower caste Indians were shot dead in a struggle between upper and lower caste militias in Bihar. On the same day, a bomb exploded in Srinagar, Kashmir, killing two and injuring at least 21 others.
- 07/02/04** — At least 22 people, including seven policemen and three children, reportedly were killed in separatist-related violence in Indian Kashmir.
- 06/30/04** — **The Indian economy reportedly grew by 8.2% in the year ending March 31**, one of the fastest growth rates in the world.
- 06/29/04** — Police in Indian Kashmir reported killing two Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists and arresting 20 others who were planning a suicide attack on the Bombay stock exchange. On the same day, a Bombay court formally charged five people with causing twin bomb explosions that killed 55 people near the Gateway of India in August 2003. Also, a leader of the World Hindu Council (or VHP) blamed the BJP for its recent electoral loss by betraying the cause of Hindu nationalism and threatened to form a new party that would “take care of the interests of Hindus.”
- 06/28/04** — Two days of **bilateral talks between foreign secretaries** ended on a positive note with India and Pakistan agreeing to continue mutual notifications of missile launches and to return their respective embassies to full strength. Mr. Shashank and Mr. Khokhar are slated to meet again in August ahead of a meeting of foreign ministers set for the same month.
- 06/27/04** — The U.S. Deputy Secretary of State for Visa Services reportedly said that Indians will be the single largest group affected by new U.S. visa rules, as they account for 46% of the 50,000 visas issued under six major categories during 2003. On the same day, the outgoing Indian Ambassador to Russia

- said that India and Russia are considering inviting China to participate in collaborative development of a fifth-generation, multi-role fighter aircraft.
- 06/25/04** — Two Hindus who had been kidnaped days earlier in India Kashmir were found dead with their throats cut. Authorities blamed separatist militants.
- 06/24/04** — In his first address to the nation as Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh vowed that government reform would be the overriding priority of his new Congress-led coalition. On the same day, six people were killed and 17 injured when a bomb exploded on a bus in India's northeastern Assam state. Authorities blamed the banned United Liberation Front of Assam.
- 06/23/04** — **India and Pakistan agreed to reopen consulates in Bombay and Karachi.** On the same day, the head of the U.S. Air Combat Command said that February's "Cope India" joint air force exercises over central India resulted in a defeat of U.S. F-15Cs at the hands of India's newer Russian-built fighter aircraft. Also, "Indian Maritime Doctrine" was released by the Indian navy, indicating that India is seeking to project power through "reach, multiplied by sustainability" across its "legitimate areas of interest" stretching from the Persian Gulf to the Strait of Malacca.
- 06/22/04** — At a conference in Bangalore, Under Secretary of Commerce Ken Juster announced that the Bush administration had approved a license authorizing Boeing Satellite Systems to work with the Indian Space Research Organization on possible joint development and marketing of communication satellites. On the same day, Indian police reported receiving 450 complaints of alleged human rights violations by Indian security forces in Jammu and Kashmir over the past year.
- 06/21/04** — A five-day **India-United States conference on space science and commerce** opened in Bangalore, home of the Indian Space Research Organization. On the same day, India's External Affairs Minister met with his Pakistani counterpart for the first time. Both men vowed to continue the peace process begun last year. Also, the banned People's War Group of Indian Maoists declared their acceptance of a three-month cease-fire offer from the government of the southern Andhra Pradesh state. Finally, India and China vowed to strengthen bilateral defense and trade ties.
- 06/20/04** — After two days of talks on nuclear confidence-building measures, **India and Pakistan agreed to establish a hotline** to reduce the threat of accidental nuclear war. They also agreed to continue an existing moratorium on nuclear testing. On the same day, India's Defense Minister said that India plans to fence all of its land borders to prevent terrorist infiltration and illegal immigration.
- 06/18/04** — India announced that a Value Added Tax of 12.5% will begin on April 1, 2005 in what some called the biggest reform of Indian public finances in 50 years. On the same day, a report indicated that an employee of India's Research and Intelligence Wing, Rabinder Singh, defected to the United States during the latter half of May, just before his allegedly impending arrest for passing intelligence information to the United States.
- 06/16/04** — Pakistan and India agreed to increase bilateral counternarcotics cooperation.
- 06/15/04** — Police in Gujarat reported killing four suspected militants who were planning to assassinate the state's controversial Chief Minister, Narendra Modi. On the same day, the government of Andhra Pradesh in southern

India formally offered a three-month cease-fire to the banned People's War Group of Indian Maoists.

- 06/14/04** — A State Department report on trafficking in persons placed India on the "Tier 2 Watch List" as a "source, transit, and destination country for women, children, and men trafficked for the purposes of sexual and labor exploitation," stating that India's "huge trafficking problem" has not been sufficiently addressed by government and law enforcement agencies there.
- 06/13/04** — Indian military officials reported an increase in attempted "terrorist" infiltration attempts across the Kashmiri LOC since the beginning of June.
- 06/11/04** — A grenade attack by suspected separatist militants killed four tourists, including a six-year-old girl, and injured 25 more at a restaurant in Srinagar. On the same day, in response to the External Affairs Minister's statement that India would take a "fresh look" at the issue of contributing troops for service in Iraq, the national coalition-leading Congress Party said that there was neither a proposal from the United States nor any consideration for sending troops to Iraq.
- 06/08/04** — Indian National Security Advisor J.N. Dixit reportedly had a covert meeting with his Pakistani counterpart in Amritsar. On the same day, the government of Andhra Pradesh in southern India formally invited the banned People's War Group of Indian Maoists to engage in negotiations. Finally, India's Commerce and Industry Minister called foreign legislation against business process outsourcing "unfortunate" and "ironic" in countries allegedly committed to free trade.
- 06/05/04** — External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh said that India would be willing to consider building a \$3 billion gas pipeline from Iran if Pakistan would provide security guarantees.
- 06/02/04** — The Indian government lowered the ceiling on foreign ownership in its proposed sale of the New Delhi and Bombay airports from 74% to 49%.
- 06/01/04** — A U.S. delegation led by Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith sat with Indian officials in New Delhi for **a meeting of the U.S.-India Defense Policy Group**. Topics included terrorism and weapons proliferation, along with plans for further joint military exercises and possible weapons sales to India. On the same day, India's External Affairs Minister said that India is unlikely to send troops to Iraq if they do not operate under U.N. command. Also, the main opposition BJP elected former Deputy PM Advani as its parliamentary leader.
- 05/29/04** — After **Pakistan test-fired its nuclear-capable Ghauri medium-range ballistic missile**, an Indian government official said the test was "escalating the arms race."
- 05/24/04** — A landmine apparently planted by the Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist group killed at least 33 Indian soldiers south of Srinagar.
- 05/22/04** — **Manmohan Singh was sworn in as India's 13th Prime Minister.**
- 05/20/04** — **H.R. 4449** was introduced in the House "to provide assistance to combat HIV/AIDS in India, and for other purposes."
- 05/19/04** — Senior Congress Party leader and Oxford-educated economist **Manmohan Singh was named to become India's new Prime Minister.** As Finance Minister from 1991-1996, Singh was the architect of major Indian economic reform and liberalization efforts.

- 05/18/04 — Sonia Gandhi stunned her Congress Party supporters by telling them she “must humbly decline” the offered position of Prime Minister in a new government. Most analysts opined that threats of national instability and agitation by groups unhappy with her foreign origin were major factors.
- 05/17/04 — **The Sensex index of the Bombay stock exchange lost 11.1% of its value**, its second-largest daily loss ever. Senior Congress Party leader and economist Manmohan Singh sought to calm investor fears with assurances that a new Congress-led government would be “pro-growth, pro-savings, and pro-investment.”
- 05/16/04 — The defeated BJP threatened to launch a nation-wide agitation campaign against Sonia Gandhi to protest her foreign origin.
- 05/15/04 — The Congress Party unanimously elected Sonia Gandhi as its parliamentary leader and its choice to become India’s new Prime Minister.
- 05/13/04 — India’s **Congress Party won a “shocking” electoral victory** to become the largest bloc in the 543-seat parliament with a 145 seats (up from 110 previously). **PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee resigned** after a defeat that was seen by some as a repudiation of his BJP’s agenda of economic reforms (the BJP won 138 seats, down from 181 previously; among the lost seats was that of External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha). **A coalition of leftist parties led by the Communist Party Marxist won a total of 62 seats**, their best-ever showing.
- 05/11/04 — Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leader Chandrababu Naidu was ousted from power by a Congress Party sweep in the southern Indian state known for its booming information technology sector. The TDP had been a key ally of the national coalition-leading BJP.
- 05/03/04 — **The U.S. Trade Representative again named India to the Special 301 Priority Watch List** for its “weak” protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights.
- 04/29/04 — **A new Senate India Caucus currently comprised of 32 Senators** was announced. The Caucus, to be co-chaired by Senator John Cornyn and Senator Hillary Clinton, “provides a forum for U.S. Senators and Indian leaders to consider strategic and economic cooperation between the two nations.” On the same day, the State Department released *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, which indicated that India suffered more “significant terrorist incidents” than any other country in 2003. The report for the first time listed two Indian “Naxalite” communist organizations, the People’s War Group and the Maoist Communist Center, as “other terrorist groups.”
- 04/21/04 — **H.R. 4191** was introduced in the House. The bill seeks to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide for the establishment of pediatric centers in India and other developing countries to treat children with HIV/AIDS.
- 04/20/04 — **India’s four-phase national election opened** with voting in 13 states and three union territories.
- 04/12/04 — A stampede for free saris left at least 21 women dead at a BJP rally in the city of Lucknow.
- 04/08/04 — At least 26 policemen were killed in Jharkhand state when suspected People’s War Group militants attacked a patrol. On the same day, at least nine people were killed and 20 injured when militants detonated a hand grenade at a political rally near Srinagar, Kashmir.