

CRS Report for Congress

Received through the CRS Web

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. Sources include, but are not limited to, the U.S. Department of State Washington File, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Hindu* (Madras), *Hindustan Times* (Delhi), *Indian Express* (Bombay), and major newswires. See also CRS Issue Brief IB93097, *India-U.S. Relations*. This report will be updated regularly.

Acronyms:

BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party
LOC: Line of Control (Kashmir)
NSSP: Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (U.S.-India)

- 11/01/04** — The World Hindu Council (or VHP) chief called former Deputy PM and new BJP president L.K. Advani a “failure” in the eyes of Hindus who was “not fit” to be a mass leader. On the same day, an Indian press report claimed that a senior F.B.I. official had visited India and warned that Al Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden may seek to enter India.
- 10/30/04** — New York-based Human Rights Watch urged the New Delhi government to launch fresh investigations into the mass murders of Sikhs in India in November 1984, claiming that organizers of the violence have received political protection and some currently occupy government posts.
- 10/29/04** — Bandits reportedly killed at least 13 villagers in the central Madhya Pradesh state.
- 10/27/04** — India test-launched a naval version of its Prithvi short-range ballistic missile. On the same day, a senior leader of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) said that the Left Front would like to see the government stop the disinvestment process.
- 10/26/04** — India reacted coolly to Pakistani President Musharraf’s previous day’s statements on Kashmir, saying that discussions on the subject should not be held through the media. An unnamed Indian senior official later called Musharraf’s proposal a re-hash of old ideas. Some Kashmiri separatists welcomed Musharraf’s comments as “path-breaking.” On the same day,

- PM Singh said that India is prepared to engage in joint counter-insurgency operations with neighboring countries.
- 10/25/04** — Pakistani President Musharraf suggested to a group of journalists that a “geographical” solution for Kashmir that would discuss seven regions (five in India and two in Pakistan) to be identified, demilitarized, and finally, have their status settled.
- 10/24/04** — **India welcomed visiting Burmese leader Gen. Than Shwe**, whose controversial trip to New Delhi spurred pro-democracy demonstrations and later elicited a statement from U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell that, “It is absolutely appalling that the world’s largest democracy is embracing one of the world’s most repressive and illegitimate military juntas.”
- 10/21/04** — An Indian government statement said that “substantial progress” had been made in talks on NSSP implementation. On the same day, a top International Monetary Fund official said that “India remains a relatively closed economy” and urged greater trade liberalization and regional economic integration for India.
- 10/20/04** — **Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Rocca arrived in New Delhi** to further discuss NSSP issues with top Indian officials. On the same day, a meeting between top Indian and Chinese officials produced a statement that the two longtime rivals had entered a “new phase” of cooperative relations.
- 10/19/04** — Former Deputy PM L.K. Advani was named as the new president of India’s main opposition BJP. On the same day, an unnamed Indian government official reportedly said that a U.S. sale of F-16 warplanes to Pakistan would be opposed by New Delhi as “they could be used against India” or “could spark a ... weapons race in the region.” Also, the World Bank country director for India lauded the country’s economic achievements, but called accelerating reforms “essential” for sustained growth and poverty reduction.
- 10/18/04** — K.M. Veerappan, one of India’s most notorious outlaws, was shot and killed by police in Tamil Nadu after a decades-long manhunt.
- 10/16/04** — The 10/13 **election in Maharashtra resulted in an important victory for a coalition led by the Indian National Congress**, which overcame anti-incumbent sentiments to defeat a coalition of Hindu nationalist parties led by the BJP.
- 10/14/04** — A three-day meeting of Indian and Pakistani border security officials ended with agreements to increase bilateral cooperation in fighting transborder smuggling and other crimes. On the same day, the United States and India launched a five-year, \$30 million initiative to expand bilateral cooperation on electric power distribution reform in India.
- 10/13/04** — Voting ended in the populous Maharashtra state, where a Congress Party-led alliance was pitted against a Hindu nationalist alliance of Shiv Sena and the BJP.
- 10/12/04** — During a visit to Bhutan, External Affairs Minister Singh thanked the Bhutanese government for undertaking last year’s military operations against Indian separatists and pledged India’s full support for whatever security assistance is required by Thimphu.
- 10/11/04** — **Under Secretary of Commerce Juster began two days of meetings with top Indian officials in New Delhi** to discuss NSSP issues and

- announced that his department plans to permanently post an official in Delhi to help coordinate high technology trade with India.
- 10/09/04** — External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh said that the India-Pakistan peace process is “critically dependent” on Pakistan fulfilling its pledges to end all activities by terrorist groups on its soil.
- 10/07/04** — **H.Res. 839**, urging a peaceful resolution of the conflict over Kashmir, was introduced in the House. On the same day, PM Singh told reporters that India has an “impeccable record on export controls” and is “interested in working with like-minded countries to strengthen the [nuclear] nonproliferation system,” but that circumstances are not right for India’s signing of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.
- 10/06/04** — **A group of Pakistani journalists arrived in Srinagar, Kashmir** for the first-ever such visit to the Kashmir Valley since 1947.
- 10/05/04** — **The U.S. Ambassador wrote a letter to the Chief Minister of Assam** offering U.S. assistance in the investigation of recent terrorist attacks there. The Congress-led government in New Delhi expressed appreciation for the offer, but said it should have come through “the normal channel.” Opposition parties, including the BJP and communists, rejected the U.S. offer as unneeded interference in India’s affairs. On the same day, **“Malabar 2004,” the sixth round of U.S.-India joint naval exercises**, began off India’s west coast and involved a total of 1,000 personnel. Also, ten people were killed and 13 injured when suspected separatists attacked a village market in rural Assam.
- 10/04/04** — **A three-day spate of bombings and shootings in the northeastern Assam and Nagaland states** left at least 63 people dead and some 200 injured. Police blamed two major separatist groups. On the same day, the retrial of the “Best Bakery” case opened in Bombay. The case involves 17 Hindus charged with murdering 12 Muslims in communal rioting in Gujarat in 2002.
- 10/01/04** — An Indian government spokesman said that India had asked the U.S. government to withdraw sanctions imposed on two Indian scientists suspected of selling WMD technology to Iran, as “no transfer of sensitive technology has taken place.”
- 09/30/04** — The Indian economy grew by 7.4% during the first quarter of FY2005. On the same day, a press report indicated that India plans to have its first-ever military base on foreign soil — an air base located near the Tajik capital of Dushanbe — ready by the end of 2004. Also, a member of the Hurriyat Conference, Mohamed Rafiq Shah, was shot dead in Srinagar. Finally, the head of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) said that the recent lifting of some U.S. export restrictions could result in a threefold increase of ISRO imports of high technology U.S. goods.
- 09/29/04** — The U.S. State Department determined that **Indian scientists C. Surender and Y.S.R. Prasad were among 14 entities that violated the Iran Nonproliferation Act of 2000** and will be sanctioned for the transfer to Iran of WMD-related equipment and/or technology. On the same day, tens of thousands of supporters turned out in Hyderabad for a rally of the previously banned Maoist People’s War Group, which appears on the U.S. State Department’s list of “other terrorist groups.”
- 09/24/04** — **PM Manmohan Singh met for the first time with Pakistani President Musharraf** on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly meeting in

New York. In a joint statement the two leaders agreed to explore possible options for a “peaceful, negotiated settlement” of the Kashmir issue “in a sincere manner and purposeful spirit.” They also discussed a possible multilateral gas pipeline project. On the same day, New York-based Human Rights Watch released a report indicating that authorities in the western Gujarat state are intimidating rather than protecting court witnesses testifying in cases related to 2002 communal riots.

- 09/22/04 — Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Saeed escaped unharmed after two grenades were fired at him near Srinagar.
- 09/21/04 — **President Bush met for the first time with Prime Minister Singh** on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in New York to discuss issues of terrorism and nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction. On the same day, India, Brazil, Germany, and Japan issued a joint statement of shared recognition that each is a legitimate candidate for a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council.
- 09/18/04 — Separatist-related violence in Indian Kashmir left a reported 18 people dead, including 14 militants and four civilians.
- 09/17/04 — The United States and India issued a joint statement announcing “**major progress**” in the **Next Steps in Strategic Partnership** initiative, including modifications of U.S. export licensing policies that will “foster cooperation in commercial space programs and ... [civilian] nuclear facilities.” On the same day, **the New Delhi government repealed the controversial 2002 Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA)** in response to widespread allegations of human rights abuses. New York-based Human Rights Watch later called the repeal of POTA “a major step forward for civil liberties.”
- 09/16/04 — In the annual U.S. Narcotics Certification Report, **President Bush again identified India as a “major drug transit or illicit drug-producing country.”** On the same day, Under Secretary of State Alan Larson told an audience in Bombay that “trade and investment flows between the U.S. and India are far below where they should and can be,” adding that American exports to India “have not fared as well” as have Indian exports to the United States and that “the picture for U.S. investment is also lackluster.” He identified the primary reason for the suboptimal situation as being “the slow pace of economic reform in India.”
- 09/15/04 — The U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom said that the 2002 communal riots in Gujarat were carried out by mobs that “appear to have been aided by state or local government officials, and the police did not respond in a way that would appear normal.” On the same day, the head of Global Fund called the HIV/AIDS epidemic in India an “extremely grave, ticking timebomb.” Also, a close aide to Kashmiri hardline separatist Syed Ali Geelani was shot dead in Srinagar by an unknown assailant.
- 09/13/04 — About 200 Hindu nationalist demonstrators were arrested in western India after threats to demolish a 17th century Muslim tomb there.
- 09/12/04 — PM Singh assured the visiting Nepali prime minister that **New Delhi would upgrade its security assistance to Kathmandu**, including provision of counter-insurgency training to Nepali police, to help in the battle with Maoist militants. On the same day, National Security Advisor

- J.N. Dixit reportedly ended two days of “secret” talks with his Pakistani counterpart Tariq Aziz on ways to break the Kashmir deadlock.
- 09/11/04** — The government of the southern Tamil Nadu state declared the Maoist People’s War Group an “unlawful association.”
- 09/08/04** — India and Pakistan announced that they would grant each other tourist visas for the first time since the 1948 partition and independence. On the same day, former PM Vajpayee said that President Musharraf was not fulfilling his January 2004 pledge to end the use of Pakistani territory by terrorist groups.
- 09/06/04** — **External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh ended two-day talks with his Pakistani counterpart, Khurshid Kasuri, in New Delhi.** The meetings took place in a “cordial and constructive atmosphere” and both sides agreed to continue their dialogue, yet tensions arose over the issue of Kashmir: Singh repeated Indian charges that Pakistan had not fulfilled its pledge to halt the “cross-border infiltration” of militants and Kasuri restated Pakistan’s concerns about human rights abuses in Indian Kashmir.
- 09/03/04** — President Bush reportedly told an interviewer that he is “absolutely committed to building an enhanced, comprehensive relationship with the government of India” and that Indian-Americans have “made themselves a part of the fabric of this country through their hard work, their patriotism, and their contributions.”
- 09/02/04** — Fourteen people, including seven militants and a soldier, were reported killed in separatist-related violence in Indian Kashmir.
- 09/01/04** — The **sixth meeting of the U.S.-India Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism** ended in Delhi. State Department Coordinator for Counterterrorism Cofer Black led the U.S. delegation.
- 08/31/04** — A bilateral exchange of prisoners involved the repatriation of 36 Indians and 19 Pakistanis. On the same day, the head of India’s Defense Research and Development Organization said that India and Israel seek to jointly develop a “long-range” ballistic missile.
- 08/30/04** — The government of the southern Karnataka state dropped all criminal charges against resigned Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Uma Bharti, a leading Hindu nationalist of the BJP and vocal opponent of Sonia Gandhi, who had been jailed on 8/24.
- 08/29/04** — Ten separatist militants and six civilians reportedly were killed in gunbattles in Indian Kashmir.
- 08/28/04** — About two dozen Indian and Chinese soldiers participated in joint mountaineering exercises in Tibet.
- 08/26/04** — Parliament passed a “mildly expansionary” \$104 billion budget without debate as opposition parties boycotted the vote to protest what they called the prime minister’s “insulting” behavior toward them. On the same day, the Asian Development Bank issued a report finding that 52% of the 690 million “extremely poor” people in developing Asia are in India.
- 08/23/04** — A Parliamentary Committee report said that 831 people — 515 civilians, 105 policemen, and 211 militants — were killed in “Naxalite” (Maoist extremist) violence in India in 2003.
- 08/22/04** — **Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Uma Bharti, a leading Hindu nationalist of the BJP and vocal opponent of Sonia Gandhi, resigned** in the face of criminal charges related to her role in 1994 communal rioting in the southern Karnataka state. She was jailed two days later.

- 08/21/04 — India's ruling Congress Party claimed that Pakistan continues to support ongoing "cross-border terrorism" in Kashmir.
- 08/17/04 — **India's Supreme Court ordered the government of the western Gujarat state to reopen its investigations into communal violence** that left up to 2,000, mostly Muslims, dead there in 2002. More than 2,000 related cases remain unsolved.
- 08/15/04 — **A bomb exploded at an Independence Day parade in the northeastern Assam state, killing at least 18 people**, many of them women and children. Police blamed the separatist United Liberation Front of Assam.
- 08/13/04 — Home Minister Shivraj Patil said that there would be "no conditions" for holding talks with Kashmiri separatist leaders.
- 08/12/04 — India and Pakistan concluded two-day talks on economic cooperation without notable progress.
- 08/11/04 — India and Pakistan concluded two-days talks on terrorism and drug trafficking with an agreement to bolster counternarcotics cooperation. However, progress was hampered by disagreement over the meaning of the term "terrorism." On the same day, London-based Amnesty International called for a repeal or review of India's Armed Forces Special Powers Act because it "facilitates grave human rights violations."
- 08/08/04 — Hardline Kashmiri separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani launched the Tehreek-e-Hurriyat-e-Kashmir (Movement for Freedom for Kashmir).
- 08/06/04 — India and Pakistan concluded two-day talks on their territorial dispute over the Siachen glacier in northern Kashmir. A joint statement said that "frank and candid discussions were held in a cordial and constructive atmosphere," and the two sides agreed to continue their dialogue.
- 08/05/04 — The *Washington Post* reported that use of torture and deadly force are frequent in Indian police stations, and that there were 1,307 deaths in police and judicial custody in India in 2002.
- 08/04/04 — India and Pakistan concluded two-day talks on people-to-people contacts with reports that both countries will relax their visa requirements. On the same day, nine Indian policemen were killed when suspected separatist militants attacked their camp near Srinagar, Kashmir.
- 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.
- 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."
- 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."
- 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."