

CRS Report for Congress

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India: Chronology of Recent Events

K. Alan Kronstadt
Analyst in Asian Affairs
Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division

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, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Hindu* (Madras), *Hindustan Times* (Delhi), *Indian Express* (Bombay), and major newswires. This report will be updated regularly.

- 05/17/05** — Prime Minister Singh stated that India is prepared for “the broadest possible engagement” with the international nonproliferation regime and vowed that India will not be a source of proliferation of sensitive technologies.” On the same day, separatist-related violence left 12 people dead in Indian Kashmir. Also, an Indian court charged Railways Minister and key Bihari politician Laloo Yadav with embezzling funds worth more than \$600,000.
- 05/13/05** — Police opened fire on political protestors in the southern Andhra Pradesh state, killing five members of the opposition Telugu Desam party and injuring 20 more. On the same day, a former governor of the western Gujarat state and top BJP official said the government there failed to act with proper speed to halt communal rioting in 2002 and he urged an investigation into the actions of Chief Minister Narendra Modi’s response to the violence.
- 05/12/05** — The lower house of the Indian Parliament passed a bill designed to strengthen India’s nonproliferation laws by banning the transfers of WMD or their delivery systems. On the same day, India test-launched a Prithvi short-range ballistic missile.
- 05/11/05** — The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom released its annual report, which placed India on a “Watch List” of countries requiring “close monitoring due to the nature and extent of violations of religious freedom engaged in or tolerated by the governments.” However, as a result of “marked improvement in conditions” since May 2004 elections

Acronyms:

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

in India, the Commission no longer recommends that India be designated as a Country of Particular Concern. On the same day, India and Pakistan concluded a first round of technical-level talks on the launching of two new bus routes between two Indian cities and Lahore, Pakistan. Also, **H.Res. 272**, recognizing the historic steps India and Pakistan have taken toward achieving bilateral peace, was introduced in the House. Finally, a Home Ministry official reported to Parliament that spring 2002 communal riots in the western Gujarat state had killed 1,044 people, including 790 Muslims.

- 05/10/05** — After consulting with the Indian and Pakistani governments, **the World Bank named a Swiss engineer to serve as Neutral Expert** to address the dispute over a dam India is constructing on the Chenab River in Baghliar. On the same day, a possible car bomb explosion in Srinagar, Kashmir, left at least two people dead and 34 injured. Also, the leader of the moderate faction of the Hurriyat Conference of Kashmiri separatist groups offered to resign in an effort to reunify the organization.
- 05/09/05** — Pakistani irrigation experts accepted an invitation from India to inspect the controversial dam project at Kishanganga in Indian Kashmir. On the same day, London-based Amnesty International urged the New Delhi government to repeal its 1958 Armed Forces Special Powers Act, calling a facilitator of “grave human rights abuses” in Jammu and Kashmir and the northeastern states.
- 05/07/05** — External Affairs Minister Singh told an interviewer that **India-U.S. relations “have never been better,”** and suggested India would go ahead with an Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project despite U.S. concerns.
- 05/06/05** — Pakistan’s prime minister said that Pakistan would not be open to investment from Indian companies until more progress is made “on many issues, including the core issue of Kashmir.”
- 05/05/05** — Home Minister Patil “decided in principle” to go ahead with construction of a border fence along the India-Bangladesh border.
- 05/02/05** — India began a major military exercise involving about 20,000 troops in Punjab near the border with Pakistan. On the same day, the Indian army reported that ten people, including six suspected separatist militants, had been killed in gunbattles in Indian Kashmir. Also, the nephew of the chief minister of the Jammu and Kashmir state was shot dead by suspected separatist militants.
- 04/30/05** — The New Delhi government welcomed Nepali King Gyanendra’s lifting of a state of emergency in Kathmandu, calling it a “first step toward the beginning of a political process” there.
- 04/29/05** — Japan’s prime minister visited New Delhi, where he and Prime Minister Singh set out an 8-point initiative to strengthen the India-Japan “global partnership.”
- 04/28/05** — During a visit to New Delhi, U.N. Secretary General Annan urged India to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.
- 04/27/05** — The New Delhi government condemned the arrest of Nepal’s ousted prime minister, saying the move was “contrary to assurances conveyed” by the Nepali king. On the same day, gunbattles in Indian Kashmir reportedly left 12 people dead, including ten suspected separatist militants.
- 04/26/05** — **Air India announced approval of a \$6.9 billion deal to purchase 50 Boeing passenger aircraft.** On the same day, **H.Res. 227**, to recognize

the contributions of Indian-Americans to American society and for other purposes, was introduced in the House. Also, an Indian court sentenced seven men to death for their roles in a 2002 attack on the U.S. cultural center in Calcutta that left five policemen dead.

- 04/25/05 — External Affairs Minister Singh said that **India would resume “unconditional” arms sales to Nepal**, reversing an earlier requirement that democracy first be restored in Kathmandu.
- 04/23/05 — Prime Minister Singh met with Nepal’s King Gyanendra in Indonesia, their first meeting since the Nepali monarch took direct control of Kathmandu’s government. Singh reportedly indicated that Indian arms sales to Nepal would resume “very soon.”
- 04/21/05 — The Director of the U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency reportedly said, “Both Lockheed and Boeing have applied to the State Department for licenses to supply [F-16 and F/A-18] aircraft to India.” On the same day, the second trans-LOC bus arrived safely at its destination despite continuing threats from militants. Also, **H.Res. 225**, recognizing the historic steps India and Pakistan have taken toward achieving bilateral peace, was introduced in the House.
- 04/20/05 — Prime Minister Singh told the Indian Parliament, “The threat to the [India-Pakistan] peace process from extremist forces and terrorist organizations has not been eliminated.”
- 04/19/05 — A senior AIDS expert said that India had overtaken South Africa as the country with the most HIV-positive patients and called India’s AIDS epidemic “out of control.”
- 04/18/05 — Following meetings between Prime Minister Singh and Pakistani President Musharraf, **India and Pakistan released a joint statement calling their bilateral peace process “irreversible”** and agreeing to move forward on a broad range of fronts, including increased trade and confidence-building measures related to Kashmir. On the same day, Secretary of Transportation Mineta said that the United States is committed to helping India fully develop its transportation infrastructure.
- 04/17/05 — India released 156 Pakistani fishermen who had been held for illegal fishing in India’s territorial waters.
- 04/16/05 — **Pakistani President Musharraf arrived in India** bearing a “message of peace” and declaring his visit “very historic.”
- 04/14/05 — **Indian External Affairs Minister Singh met with President Bush and Secretary of State Rice in Washington** to discuss ways to enhance the U.S.-Indian relationship. President Bush reportedly said he was “extremely excited” about the state of U.S.-India relations. On the same day, **the United States and India signed an Open Skies aviation agreement** that will provide passenger and cargo air carriers from both countries unlimited access to each other’s markets. Also, Pakistan President Musharraf called the new trans-LOC bus service in Kashmir “the first step to converting [the LOC] into a soft border” and reiterated that Pakistan “cannot accept the Line of Control to be a final solution.” Finally, a police official from the eastern Gujarat state claimed that the state’s government had authorized the killing of Muslims during communal rioting in 2002. The national coalition-leading Congress Party called for an investigation into the charges.

- 04/13/05 — Secretary of State Rice told an interviewer that, given international legal obligations, the United States is not currently in a position to sell civilian nuclear technology to India.
- 04/12/05 — Adm. William Fallon, Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, arrived in New Delhi for a four-day visit to meet with senior Indian officials.
- 04/11/05 — **India and China agreed to launch a “strategic partnership”** that will include broadened defense links and efforts to expand economic relations. China formally recognized Indian sovereignty over the former kingdom of Sikkim and India reiterated that Tibet is a part of China. Indian Prime Minister Singh said, “India and China can together reshape the world order.” A State Department spokesman said the United States has “always welcomed any progress that [India and China] ... can make to reduce tension and improve their relationship.” On the same day, the Indian navy began construction of a 37,500-ton aircraft carrier to be complete by 2012.
- 04/09/05 — **Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao arrived in New Delhi** for a four-day visit to meet with senior Indian leaders. On the same day, suspected Maoist militants shot and killed a Congress Party official in the southern Andhra Pradesh state.
- 04/07/05 — **A new bus service was launched linking Srinagar in Indian Kashmir and Muzaffarabad in Pakistani Kashmir.** The service is a major confidence-building measure that allows separated Kashmiri families to reunite for the first time since 1947. A State Department spokesman applauded “the courage of the Kashmiri passengers who made this historic journey” and congratulated “the leaders of India and Pakistan for their vision in launching this initiative on behalf of the people of Kashmir.”
- 04/06/05 — A spokesman at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi announced that U.S. fighter jets and transport aircraft would participate in joint exercises with Indian units in “Cope Thunder III,” scheduled for November 2005 in India’s eastern West Bengal state.
- 04/05/05 — A bomb exploded on the Indian side of the route of a new trans-LOC bus service, injuring at least seven people. A State Department spokesman condemned the attack as “a wanton act of terror on a powerful symbol of rapprochement between India and Pakistan.” On the same day, India and Uzbekistan signed pacts to increase cooperation in education, trade, and defense, emphasizing counterterrorism and joint military exercises.
- 04/03/05 — Gunbattles in Indian Kashmir left seven suspected separatist militants and a civilian dead.
- 04/01/05 — Beijing’s ambassador to New Delhi said, “We have nothing against India’s growing ties with the U.S. ... But Indo-U.S. ties should not be directed against a third country.” On the same day, Pakistan denied a request that eight Indian politicians be allowed to travel on the maiden voyage of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus line across the Kashmiri LOC. Also, Indian security forces reportedly launched a 2,000-man operation against separatist militants in the northeastern Assam state.
- 03/31/05 — Police in the southern Andhra Pradesh state repulsed an attack by suspected Maoist militants that left two rebels dead.
- 03/30/05 — A group of four militant Kashmiri separatist groups issued a warning that any Kashmiris who boarded a new trans-LOC bus service would be branded as “traitors” and could be subjected to lethal attacks.

- 03/28/05** — The State Department’s 2004-2005 report on *Supporting Human Rights and Democracy* called India “a vibrant democracy with strong constitutional human rights protections,” but asserted that “poor enforcement of laws, especially at the local level, and the severely overburdened court system weaken the delivery of justice.” On the same day, Indian Defense Minister Mukherjee said F-16 aircraft “are not required for fighting terrorism,” adding, “Given Pakistan’s track record, we fear such weapons will be directed toward India.”
- 03/25/05** — **An unnamed senior State Department official articulated “the Administration’s new strategy for South Asia”** based in part on a judgment that the NSSP was insufficiently broad and that sets as a goal “to help India become a major world power in the 21st century.” The official said that the United States would respond positively to India’s request for information on the possible purchase of F-16 or F-18 warplanes and is ready to discuss the sale of “transformative systems in areas such as command and control, early warning, and missile defense.” **Indian Prime Minister Singh expressed “great disappointment” at the U.S. decision to sell F-16 aircraft to Pakistan**, saying the move “could have negative consequences for India’s security environment.” The coalition-leading Congress Party later termed the decision “unfortunate and disappointing,” while opposition parties claimed that the United States was fueling an arms race in the region.
- 03/22/05** — The Indian navy announced plans to build a new aircraft carrier by 2012.
- 03/20/05** — Pakistan freed 529 Indian fishermen who had been held for illegal fishing in Pakistan’s territorial waters.
- 03/18/05** — **The State Department denied a diplomatic visa request by Narendra Modi, the chief minister of India’s eastern Gujarat state**, and revoked his existing visa under a section of the Immigration and Nationality Act that bars entry for foreign government officials found to be complicit in severe violations of religious freedom. The decision was widely criticized in India; New Delhi expressed regret and requested that the decision be reconsidered. An Indian government statement later called the decision incompatible with shared Indian and U.S. objectives.
- 03/17/05** — **H.R. 1408**, to provide assistance to combat HIV/AIDS in India and for other purposes, was introduced in the House. On the same day, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom expressed “deep concern” over a planned U.S. visit by Narendra Modi, the chief minister of India’s eastern Gujarat state, and urged the State Department to “forestall or prevent” the visit.
- 03/16/05** — **Secretary of State Rice visited New Delhi**, where she lauded positive U.S.-India relations, said that Phase II of the NSSP would be completed “very shortly,” and expressed U.S. “concerns about gas pipeline cooperation between India and Iran.” On the same day, **H.Res. 160** was introduced in the House. The resolution seeks to “condemn the conduct of [Indian Gujarat] Chief Minister Narendra Modi for his actions to incite religious persecution”
- 03/13/05** — Indian Trade and Commerce Minister Nath announced plans to allow Indian states to establish Chinese-style special economic zones that would encourage foreign investment and boost employment by bypassing the country’s strict labor laws.

- 03/12/05 — Maoist militants in the southern Andhra Pradesh state launched an attack that left seven people dead, including three police officers.
- 03/10/05 — **The Indian government invited Pakistani President Musharraf to visit India** to watch a cricket match between the Indian and Pakistan national teams. On the same day, separatist militants in the northeastern Assam state launched a series of attacks that left one police officer dead and seven civilians wounded.
- 03/07/05 — Police in the southern Andhra Pradesh state said they had killed ten suspected Maoist militants, including two “senior leaders.”
- 03/05/05 — Pakistan television reported that Indian soldiers had killed six Kashmiri youths in a “fake encounter.”
- 03/04/05 — A Hyderabad meeting of the India-U.S. Defense Policy Group ended with an agreement to hold joint workshops on missile defense issues. On the same day, Indian soldiers in the northeastern Tripura state exchanged gunfire with Bangladeshi soldiers in a dispute over a border fence there.
- 02/28/05 — **The Indian government released a budget plan** with a broadly reformist tone and calls for extensive anti-poverty spending, but no movement on overhauling the country’s tax system. The budget will increase defense spending by 7.8% over 2004 levels.
- 02/27/05 — **Elections in three Indian states** saw the national coalition-leading Congress Party win a major victory in the northern Haryana state, but suffer notable setbacks in the eastern Bihar and Jharkhand states, where poll-related violence left at least 30 people dead earlier in the month. In Bihar, the key Congress-allied Rashtriya Janata Dal and its prominent lower-caste leader Lalu Yadav were unseated.
- 02/26/05 — A spokesman for the opposition BJP party criticized the Congress-led government for its decision to launch a trans-LOC bus service, saying, “Terrorists would no longer have to cross mountains, they can now come to India in air-conditioned buses.”
- 02/23/05 — A Pakistan foreign ministry spokesman said that India’s potential purchase of U.S.-made Patriot anti-missile systems would “send the entire region into crisis mode.” On the same day, the Washington-based Council on American-Islamic Relations urged the U.S. government to bar entry to Narendra Modi, chief minister of the southern Gujarat state, for his alleged complicity in communal rioting there in 2002.
- 02/22/05 — **Top Indian and Pakistani officials opened two-day economic cooperation talks** in New Delhi that the Indian commerce minister described as a “historic step” in bilateral relations. On the same day, the Indian government announced that **New Delhi’s military shipments to Kathmandu had been halted** due to recent anti-democratic developments there.
- 02/16/05 — In a major confidence-building development, **India and Pakistan agreed to allow bus travel across the Kashmiri LOC between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad** commencing April 7, 2005.