

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. Sources include, but are not limited to, major newswires, the U.S. Department of State, *Hindu* (Madras), *Hindustan Times* (Delhi), and *Indian Express* (Bombay). For a substantive review, see CRS Issue Brief IB93097, *India-U.S. Relations*, by K. Alan Kronstadt. This report will be updated regularly.

- 11/13/05** — Indian police announced having arrested the suspected ringleader of the 10/29 bomb attacks in Delhi, a resident of Indian Kashmir with alleged links to Lashkar-e-Taiba, a Pakistan-based, U.S.-designated terrorist group. On the same day, a SAARC summit in Bangladesh inducted Afghanistan as the body's eighth member and agreed in principle to include China and Japan as observers. Also, six people, including four suspected separatist militants, an Indian soldier, and a civilian, were killed in gunbattles in Kashmir.
- 11/12/05** — **Prime Minister Singh held talks with his Pakistani counterpart** on the sidelines of a South Asia summit in Bangladesh, but no new steps were announced for improving bilateral relations. Singh reportedly warned that terrorist incidents could disrupt the peace process. On the same day, **U.S. Trade Representative Portman visited New Delhi** for meetings with top Indian officials, where he inaugurated the U.S.-India Trade Policy Forum and urged "ambitious" cuts in India's trade-distorting agricultural subsidies. Also, the United States and India formalized a U.S.-India Knowledge Initiative on Agriculture meant to re-energize bilateral agricultural relations.
- 11/09/05** — Treasury Secretary Snow led a U.S. delegation at a meeting of the U.S.-India Financial and Economic Forum in New Delhi.

Acronyms:

BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party
IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency
LOC: Line of Control (Kashmir)
SAARC: South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

- 11/08/05** — The U.S. Department of State's *International Religious Freedom Report 2005* found that the status of religious freedom in India had "improved in a number of ways ... yet serious problems remained."
- 11/07/05** — **The United States and India began 12-day joint air force exercises** in the eastern West Bengal state where tens of thousands of Indian communists reportedly turned out to protest the event. On the same day, **External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh was stripped of his ministry portfolio** following accusations that he was involved in corruption in the U.N.-Iraq oil-for food program. Singh, who denies any wrongdoing, is to be kept on as minister without portfolio. On the same day, Singh and his Chinese and Russian counterparts reportedly agreed that Iran's nuclear program should not be referred to the U.N. Security Council.
- 11/06/05** — **Treasury Secretary Snow arrived in India** for a five-day visit focusing on India's efforts to further liberalize its financial sector and improve financing infrastructure. On the same day, External Affairs Minister Singh said that India might change its IAEA vote on referring Iran's nuclear program to the U.N. Security Council if a stronger resolution is offered at a slated 11/24 IAEA meeting.
- 11/03/05** — In response to planned U.S.-India joint air force exercises in the eastern West Bengal state, India's leftist parties warned the New Delhi government against deepening military ties with the United States, saying such ties did not auger well for India's strategic interests and independent foreign policy. The government later rejected the warning and said the exercises would go ahead as scheduled.
- 11/02/05** — During a **Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on U.S.-India nuclear energy cooperation**, Members lauded increasingly warm U.S.-India ties. The Committee chairman and ranking member both raised numerous questions about the wisdom and details of current Administration plans to engage in full civilian nuclear cooperation with India. Administration officials speaking before the panel insisted that such plans were in the U.S. interest and they urged Congress to avoid setting additional conditions on India that "would likely prove to be dealbreakers." Common among the four expert witnesses giving statements was a view that, without placing further requirements on India, the Administration's current plans might not lead to a net benefit for U.S. interests. On the same day, a suspected separatist suicide car bomber killed himself and 4 others, and injured as many as 20 more, near Srinagar, Kashmir.
- 11/01/05** — **S. 1950**, to promote global energy security through increased cooperation between the United States and India on non-nuclear energy-related issues, was introduced in the Senate.
- 10/31/05** — **Prime Minister Singh received a telephone call from Pakistani President Musharraf**, who sought to extend condolences for the loss of life in 10/29 terrorist bombings in New Delhi and to offer to assist in the criminal investigation. Singh reportedly told Musharraf that there were "indications" of "external linkages" in the investigation and reminded the Pakistan president of past commitments to end "cross-border terrorism."
- 10/29/05** — **Three terrorist bombs exploded in Delhi, killing at least 60 people** and injuring 210 more on the eve of the Hindu Diwali festival. On the same day, after a meeting of officials in Islamabad, **India and Pakistan issued**

- a joint statement agreeing to open five crossing points on the Kashmiri LOC** on 11/7 for earthquake relief efforts.
- 10/27/05** — A report by independent investigators named India’s Congress Party and External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh as having been illicit financial beneficiaries of the U.N.-Iraq oil-for-food program. Both parties issued separate denials of any wrongdoing. Opposition parties demanded Singh’s resignation. On the same day, India and Iran reportedly agreed that “minor” differences over Iran’s nuclear program would not have negative impact on broader bilateral relations. Also, India’s external affairs minister met with Russian President Putin in Moscow, where he defined an India-Russia “strategic partnership.”
- 10/26/05** — During a **House International Relations Committee hearing on U.S.-India relations and nonproliferation**, Members lauded increasingly warm U.S.-India ties. Many Members in attendance also called for close scrutiny of and no rush into plans for civil nuclear cooperation with India as called for by the Bush Administration. Committee Chairman Hyde himself called “strange and unusual” the Administration’s minimal consultation with Congress on the details of such plans and said he was “troubled” by public statements from the Administration suggesting that congressional support for such cooperation was broad and virtually guaranteed. Most of the five expert witnesses appearing before the Committee expressed concerns that, without placing further requirements on India, the deal could do significant damage to U.S. nonproliferation interests. On the same day, a car bomb planted by suspected separatist militants killed an Indian soldier and injured more than 25 other people in Kashmir. Also, Prime Minister Singh held talks with representatives of the separatist United Liberation Front of Assam, which appears on the U.S. State Department’s list of “other selected terrorist organizations.”
- 10/24/05** — Foreign Secretary Saran gave a major policy speech in which he reiterated India’s commitment to the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons while calling for a global consensus on nonproliferation that would account for developments taking place since 1968. Part of this, he said, would entail bringing India “inside the tent” of multilateral regimes and making an exception for India to receive civil nuclear assistance from abroad. Saran also denied any connection between the U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation deal and India’s 9/24 IAEA vote. On the same day, Indian troops reportedly killed five suspected separatist militants in Kashmir near the LOC.
- 10/21/05** — Under Secretary of State Burns visited New Delhi to discuss U.S.-India relations with top Indian officials, where he expressed being “convinced” that Congress would support making changes in U.S. law to enable civil nuclear cooperation with India. On the same day, Paris-based Reporters Without Borders placed India 106th out of 167 countries in its annual ranking of world press freedoms.
- 10/18/05** — **Under Secretary of State Burns gave a major policy speech on U.S.-India relations** in which he reiterated the Administration’s belief that bringing India into the global nonproliferation “mainstream” would benefit U.S. interests and that assisting India in the field of civil nuclear power would facilitate a “more secure global energy future.” He also called India’s 9/24 IAEA vote a “dramatic example” of New Delhi’s

stance to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability. On the same day, suspected separatist militants shot and killed the junior education minister of Indian Kashmir, along with two of his bodyguards. Also, Berlin-based Transparency International placed India 88th out of 158 countries in its annual ranking of world corruption levels.

- 10/17/05** — **India and the United States signed a Science and Technology agreement** to promote bilateral technological and scientific cooperation. On the same day, the chairs and ranking members of the Senate Foreign Relations and House International Relations Committees sent a letter to Secretary of State Rice requesting that the Administration begin “substantive discussion” with their committees on possible legislative proposals related to proposed civil nuclear cooperation with India. Also, 7 people were killed and 28 injured in 4 days of communal violence between Hindus and Muslims in the northern Uttar Pradesh state. Finally, 37 people were killed in tribal violence in the northeastern Assam state.
- 10/13/05** — **India’s first-ever female suicide bomber** attacked an army convoy in Kashmir, killing only herself. Indications are that Jaish-e-Mohammed, a U.S.-designated terrorist group, was responsible.
- 10/10/05** — India and Russia began joint military exercises involving naval ships and airborne troops.
- 10/08/05** — **A major earthquake centered near the city of Muzaffarabad** (in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir some 90 miles northwest of Srinagar) left at least 73,000 Pakistanis and Kashmiris dead and millions homeless. Approximately 1,400 Indians also were killed. On the same day, a landmine planted by suspected Maoist rebels killed 15 policemen in the eastern Jharkhand state.
- 10/07/05** — India’s army chief confirmed that militant infiltrations into Indian Kashmir had declined, “lessening internal disturbances” and “boosting tourism” there.
- 10/06/05** — India and France signed a \$3 billion deal for New Delhi’s purchase of six Scorpene diesel submarines equipped with Exocet missiles. The vessels are to be built at Indian naval facilities near Bombay.
- 10/05/05** — External Affairs Minister Singh ended a four-day visit to Pakistan with calls for Islamabad to open its economy to facilitate increased bilateral trade with India. On the same day, at least 10 people were killed and 13 injured in separatist-related violence in Kashmir.
- 10/04/05** — **India and Pakistan issued a joint statement expressing satisfaction with the progress of their bilateral Composite Dialogue** and vowed to find a “framework” for the “mutually acceptable” settlement of the Siachen and Sir Creek territorial disputes.
- 10/03/05** — External Affairs Minister Singh visited Islamabad, where **India and Pakistan finalized an agreement on pre-notification of ballistic missile tests and made plans to establish a hotline between coast guard services**. On the same day, the United States and India ratified a 2001 agreement on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters.
- 09/29/05** — The leader of the coalition-supporting Communist Party of India (Marxist) called New Delhi’s 9/24 IAEA vote the “final act of surrender” to the United States.
- 09/27/05** — Indian and Chinese officials in Beijing ended two-day talks on territorial disputes with no apparent progress.

- 09/26/05 — Canada reversed its previous policy and announced that it would supply nuclear-related “dual-use items” to India’s civil nuclear program.
- 09/25/05 — The largest-ever “Malabar” joint U.S.-India naval exercises began in the Arabian Sea.
- 09/24/05 — **India voted with the majority on an IAEA resolution finding Iran’s controversial nuclear program in noncompliance with its IAEA obligations.** The vote brought waves of criticism from opposition parties and others who accused the New Delhi government of betraying a friendly country by “capitulating” to U.S. pressure. Foreign Secretary Saran later defended his government’s vote in the interests of “allowing time for further negotiations” and being in India’s national interest.
- 09/16/05 — **Twelve Members of the House sent a letter to Prime Minister Singh** lauding positive U.S.-India relations and encouraging New Delhi to “join the international community in sending a unified message to Iran” about Tehran’s controversial nuclear program. On the same day, India’s space agency said that Boeing Satellite Systems had withdrawn from a deal to assist in the production of Indian communication satellites. Also, Prime Minister Singh promised to suspend India military operations against the United Liberation Front of Assam, a separatist group which appears on the U.S. State Department’s list of “other selected terrorist organizations.”
- 09/15/05 — President Bush again determined that India is among 20 “major drug-transit or major illicit drug-producing countries” worldwide. On the same day, suspected separatist militants killed five people in Kashmir.
- 09/14/05 — **President Bush met with Prime Minister Singh** on the sidelines of a United Nations session in New York to express U.S. concerns about Iran’s nuclear program. **Singh and Pakistani President Musharraf met also**, where they reaffirmed commitment to previous agreements, but announced no new progress in bilateral relations.
- 09/12/05 — Prime Minister Singh visited Paris, where India and France committed themselves to further deepening their “strategic partnership” that would include bilateral cooperation on civil nuclear issues. On the same day, Maoist rebels killed 15 villagers in the eastern Jharkhand state.
- 09/10/05 — India dispatched an air force plane containing 22 tons of relief supplies for victims of Hurricane Katrina. On the same day, 12 people, including a child and 3 soldiers, were killed, and another 13 injured, in separatist-related violence in Kashmir.
- 09/08/05 — During a **House hearing on U.S.-India relations**, members of the International Relations Committee expressed widespread approval of increasingly warm bilateral ties. However, many expressed concerns about potential damage to international nonproliferation regimes that could result from requested changes in U.S. law to allow U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation. Many also voiced strong concerns about India’s relations with Iran and the possibility that New Delhi’s policies toward Tehran’s controversial nuclear program may not be congruent with those of Washington.
- 09/07/05 — Top European Union officials visited New Delhi for a meeting of the sixth India-EU Summit, where an “action plan” for India-EU strategic partnership was signed. On the same day, the head of the Pentagon’s Defense Security Cooperation Agency arrived in New Delhi for talks on possible sales to India of U.S.-made combat aircraft and PAC-3 anti-

- missile systems. Also, nine people, including two militants and two policemen, were killed in separatist-related violence in Kashmir.
- 09/05/05** — After a **meeting between Prime Minister Singh and moderate leaders of the Hurriyat Conference of Kashmiri separatists**, India vowed to pull troops out of Kashmir if militant infiltrations and violence there cease. Hurriyat leaders lauded the talks as “a very good beginning” of a “triangular process.”
- 09/03/05** — **Maoist rebels killed at least 23 policemen and a civilian** in a landmine attack in the central Chhattisgarh state. On the same day, **External Affairs Minister Singh began a three-day visit to Tehran**, where India expressed support for Iran’s nuclear program so long as it abides by international obligations.
- 09/02/05** — **Foreign Secretary-level India-Pakistan talks** expressed satisfaction at progress made in the “Composite Dialogue” and set January 2006 dates for the third round of such dialogue. India expressed being pleased with the progress in the bilateral peace process despite ongoing concerns about the infiltration of Islamic militants into Kashmir, while Pakistan urged increased focus on efforts to resolve the dispute over the territory. On the same day, **the top leaders of India’s and Nepal’s Maoist parties announced a decision to “fight together** and establish socialism and communism” in the two countries.
- 08/31/05** — Prime Minister Singh invited representatives of the Hurriyat Conference of Kashmiri separatist groups to New Delhi for peace talks. On the same day, nine suspected separatist militants were killed in a gunbattle near the Kashmiri LOC.
- 08/30/05** — **The United States removed six Indian firms from the Commerce Department’s Entity List**, making them eligible to purchase some sensitive U.S.-made technologies without a license. On the same day, **Home Secretary-level India-Pakistan talks on terrorism and drug trafficking** ended with agreements to release hundreds of fishermen and other civilians from each other’s jails, improve consular access to prisoners, notify each other of arrests, and further cooperate on counterterrorism efforts.
- 08/29/05** — A CRS report indicated that India was the developing world’s top weapons buyer in 2004, as well as during the period 1997-2004.
- 08/28/05** — **Prime Minister Singh visited Kabul** — the first such visit by an Indian leader since 1976 — where he and Afghan President Karzai discussed a broad range of bilateral and regional issues, and India pledged an additional \$50 million in assistance for Afghanistan. Pakistan later rejected Singh’s request for commercial transit rights across Pakistan unless the “core issue” of Kashmir was resolved.
- 08/18/05** — Seven people, including an Indian policeman, four civilians, and two suspected militants, were killed in separatist-related violence in Kashmir.
- 08/16/05** — **The New Delhi government announced that it was abandoning plans to sell more than a dozen state-owned companies** in what many analysts called a major setback to India’s economic reform program.
- 08/15/05** — **India celebrated its 58th Independence Day**. On the same day, suspected Maoist rebels shot dead ten people in the southern Andhra Pradesh state, including a ruling party legislator.