

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 from September 2001.¹ For a substantive review, see CRS Issue Brief IB93097, *India-U.S. Relations*. This report will be updated regularly.

Acronyms:

BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party
LOC: Line of Control (Kashmir)
SAARC: South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

- 02/24/04** — A press report indicated that India's intelligence agency had shared communication intercepts with its Pakistani counterpart to help foil a planned February attempt to assassinate the Pakistani President.
- 02/21/04** — Police in Indian Kashmir announced the arrest of three Pakistani nationals, members of the Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist group, who allegedly were planning an attack on the New Delhi airport.
- 02/19/04** — India's Tata Motors Ltd. purchased South Korea's Daewoo Commercial Vehicle Co. for \$102 million in the company's first major foreign investment move.
- 02/18/04** — The foreign secretaries of **India and Pakistan agreed to a "road map" of planned meetings** to discuss Kashmir, terrorism, and nuclear weapons, among other issues. The meetings are scheduled to culminate with an August 2004 summit of foreign ministers. The United States expressed being "very pleased" with the "vision and determination" of New Delhi and Islamabad. Kashmiri separatist leaders also welcomed the news, but warned that Kashmiris "will have to be included in the process at some stage." On the same day, the Chairman of the U.S. Commission on

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).

- International Religious Freedom noted that India was the world's only democratic country that had not invited the Commission to visit.
- 02/16/04** — U.S. Trade Representative Zoellick held talks with Indian trade officials in New Delhi, where he urged India to increase market access for goods, services, and agriculture, especially if India wants to continue to “have outsourcing.” On the same day, air force units from the United States and India began ten days of joint exercises over central India.
- 02/15/04** — Two members of the Hurriyat Conference of Kashmiri separatists — the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front — refused to support nominal Hurriyat Chairman Ansari in his talks with the New Delhi government.
- 02/13/04** — During a visit to New Delhi, the French Foreign Minister called India and France “strategic partners” and reiterated France’s support for India’s candidacy as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council.
- 02/12/04** — India welcomed President Bush’s call for collective action to halt WMD proliferation, saying that it believes “meeting new proliferation challenges requires fresh approaches, pooling together the efforts and resources of the international community.” On the same day, India’s Central Bureau of Investigation submitted a report alleging the gang rape and murder of numerous Muslims during communal violence in Gujarat in early 2002. India’s Supreme Court had ordered the case reopened after local police failed to file charges.
- 02/11/04** — During a visit to Bombay, **Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca said that the U.S.-India relationship is “better than it’s ever been.”**
- 02/10/04** — A press report indicated that India plans to build hundreds of underground bunkers along its western frontier to protect troops from nuclear strikes.
- 02/09/04** — A 15,000-person protest was spurred by the killing of five civilians in a gunbattle in Indian Kashmir. The Indian Army vowed to investigate the deaths. On the same day, India’s Navy Chief said that India would begin building its own aircraft carriers in 2005.
- 02/08/04** — Speaking at a security conference in Germany, India’s National Security Advisor said that India has a “vital political, economic, and strategic interest in peace and stability in the Middle East region.” On the same day, the influential Samajwadi Party of northern India announced that it would not join any alliances in the run-up to spring parliamentary elections, but would support any parties committed to secularism.
- 02/07/04** — More than 300 Naxalites — communist militants — stormed a town in Orissa, killing four Indian police officers, injuring five others, and looting vehicles and weapons.
- 02/06/04** — **The lower house of India’s parliament was dissolved** ahead of general elections expected to take place in April or May. On the same day, the Chairman of the U.S. Export-Import Bank concluded a visit to three Indian cities. Ex-Im’s more than \$1 billion in Indian exposure includes help for Jet Airways and the Indian Oil Corporation, among others. Also, an Indian company closed a \$1.5 million deal to supply 80 SUVs and 40 jeeps to the Afghan National Army.
- 02/05/04** — Five Indian soldiers and ten militants were killed in a spate of separatist violence in Indian Kashmir. On the same day, a group of 15 representatives from U.S. arms dealers met with India’s Defense Minister and three military chiefs to discuss the sale of advanced weaponry to

India. Also, India's Army Chief said that recent Indian and Bhutanese military operations against separatist militants had left nearly 1,000 militants "neutralized" — killed or captured. Finally, the new U.S. Ambassador to India, David Mulford, arrived in New Delhi.

- 02/04/04** — **A House International Relations Committee hearing on L Visas** included extensive discussion of the problem of "off-shoring" and the role of India. One Indian press report called the hearing "something of an India-bashing session." On the same day, an Indian parliamentary committee confirmed the August 2003 findings of an environmental group that 12 beverages made in India by PepsiCo and Coca-Cola contained unacceptable levels of pesticide residue.
- 02/02/04** — India's Finance Minister said that the economy had "never been better" and that it was India's "national destiny" to be a leading global power.
- 01/29/04** — Indian PM Vajpayee reportedly called "unfair" a section of P.L. 108-199 that bans certain types of federal work from being outsourced to other countries, including India. On the same day, the Indian Defense Minister said that infiltration across the Kashmir LOC was at an "all-time low." Also, Tajikistan's Foreign Minister denied reports that India was establishing a military base in Tajikistan.
- 01/28/04** — The national coalition-leading BJP struck an alliance with the AIADMK, a key Tamil party based in Madras and led by former actress J. Jayalalitha.
- 01/27/04** — Pakistan and India announced that bilateral "composite dialogue" talks agreed to earlier in January will commence for three days from February 16. On the same day, **Indian Deputy PM Advani stated that, "There has been an ebb in violent incidents [in Kashmir] and infiltration [of cross-border militants] is down,"** but added that New Delhi had no plans to establish a cease-fire with militant groups in Kashmir due to "unhappy experiences" in the past.
- 01/26/04** — An editorial article by Senator Richard Lugar, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, called on the United States to promote nuclear confidence-building measures in South Asia, including "assistance on export controls, border security, and the protection, control, and accounting of nuclear stockpiles and arsenals."
- 01/21/04** — The 6-day World Social Forum, an annual gathering of peace and anti-globalization activists, ended in Bombay. Some 100,000 people from 130 countries attended the forum's first-ever meeting outside of Brazil.
- 01/20/04** — **Indian External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha met in Washington with Secretary of State Powell,** who noted "a rapidly improving relationship between the United States and India on strategic matters, on trade matters, and the cooperation we see between the United States and India on regional matters." Sinha offered that the "nature, level, and frequency of dialogue are unprecedented in the history of [India-U.S.] bilateral relations."
- 01/15/04** — The Samjhauta Express rail service between Delhi and Lahore was restarted after a two-year suspension. On the same day, the Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization said that a June 2004 workshop in Bangalore would discuss an Indian role in U.S. space exploration plans.
- 01/14/04** — Forty scientists from India and the United States concluded a workshop in Goa, where they discussed the use of science in combating terrorism.

- 01/12/04** — President Bush issued a statement indicating that **the U.S.-India “strategic partnership” includes expanding cooperation** in the areas of civilian nuclear activities, civilian space programs, and high-technology trade, and expanding dialogue on missile defense. U.S. Under Secretary of Commerce for Industry and Security Juster later called the agreement a **“major milestone in the U.S.-India relationship.”** On the same day, Indian and Chinese officials in Beijing began a new round of talks aimed at resolving ongoing border disputes. Also, the national coalition-leading BJP called for early parliamentary elections, possibly in a bid to capitalize on positive economic news and improved ties with neighboring Pakistan.
- 01/07/04** — Pakistan-based militant groups expressed their determination to continue fighting against Indian forces in Kashmir despite recent Pakistan-India agreements.
- 01/06/04** — **India and Pakistan agreed to launch a “composite dialogue”** in February 2004 to bring about “peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, to the satisfaction of both sides.” A SAARC protocol on increased multilateral counterterrorism efforts was issued, and PM Vajpayee was reassured by the Pakistani President that he would not permit any territory under Pakistan’s control to be used to support terrorism. The United States called the dialogue agreement a “historic development,” and lauded India’s and Pakistan’s “concrete and practical steps” and “determination to move forward.”
- 01/05/04** — **PM Vajpayee and Pakistani President Musharraf met** informally for more than one hour, their first such meeting since July 2001. A top Pakistani Islamist leader accused Indian and Pakistani leaders of trying to “sideline the main issue of Kashmir,” while a top Kashmiri separatist militant accused them of “not respecting the wishes of the Kashmiris.” The United States warmly welcomed the meetings.
- 01/04/04** — On the opening day of the SAARC summit meeting in Islamabad, Pakistani PM Jamali received PM Vajpayee for a 30-minute “courtesy call,” **the first bilateral meeting between Indian and Pakistani leaders since July 2001.**
- 01/02/04** — SAARC foreign ministers reported agreeing on a framework for a regional free trade zone. On the same day, four Indian security men and two suspected Islamic militants were killed in a gunbattle in Indian Kashmir. Finally, Bombay’s benchmark Sensex stock index crossed the 6,000 mark for its highest closing ever.
- 01/01/04** — **India and Pakistan restored bilateral air links** after a two-year suspension. President Bush commended the leaders of Pakistan and India for “taking steps toward a peaceful reconciliation of major issues that have divided them.” On the same day, India’s foreign minister called on Pakistan to make the current cease-fire permanent. Pakistan responded by saying that its expectation was that the cease-fire was and is “indefinite.” Also, the hardline Jamaat Islami party withdrew from the Kashmiri separatist Hurriyat Conference in protest over the July election of a moderate chairman. Finally, and for the 13th consecutive year, Pakistan and India exchanged upgraded lists of their nuclear facilities.
- 12/29/03** — The government of India’s Jammu and Kashmir state announced that the incidence of separatist violence in the region had declined by nearly one-third since an 11/26 cease-fire went into effect. On the same day, about

- 2,000 people protested in Calcutta to demand that U.S. forces release captured former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.
- 12/26/03** — The Gujarat High Court rejected a motion to retry 21 Hindus who had been acquitted of killing 12 Muslims at the Best Bakery during communal rioting in early 2002.
- 12/23/03** — PM Vajpayee stated that talks with Pakistan would not take place until Islamabad ends “cross-border terrorism” and dismantles the “terrorist infrastructure.” On the same day, Pakistan’s foreign minister said that confidence-building measures “are in themselves not good enough” and that what is needed is a “composite dialogue” that includes the issue of Kashmir. Also, the foreign ministers of India, Burma, and Thailand met to reaffirm their commitment to promoting transport linkages and expanding trade among their countries.
- 12/22/03** — A spokesman for India’s coalition-leading BJP said that his party strongly objected to the observation of a 12/18 U.S. State Department report that the BJP is a Hindu nationalist party with links to militant organizations.
- 12/20/03** — **India’s foreign exchange reserves surpassed \$100 billion.** On the same day, Indian and Pakistani border security forces agreed to jointly patrol the Punjabi frontier. Also, eight separatist rebels and two Indian soldiers were killed in separate gun battles in Indian Kashmir. Finally, India tested its new Trishul anti-aircraft missile for the fourth time in three days.
- 12/19/03** — Technical-level discussions between Pakistani and Indian officials resulted in a decision to resume the Samjhauta Express rail service between Lahore and Delhi as of January 15, 2004. The service had been suspended in January 2002. On the same day, the World Bank country director for India said that India is set to achieve impressive growth of up to 8% per year over the next few years.
- 12/18/03** — The U.S. Department of State’s annual report on international religious freedom stated that the Indian government “sometimes did not act effectively to counter societal attacks against religious minorities and attempts by state and local governments to limit religious freedom.” It also noted a “gradual but continual institutionalization of ‘Hindutva’” that “excludes other religious beliefs and fosters religious intolerance.”
- 12/17/03** — Pakistani President Musharraf gave an interview in which he expressed a willingness to be “bold and flexible” in attempting to resolve the Kashmir dispute and indicated that **Pakistan may be ready to drop its long-standing demands** for the implementation of relevant U.N. resolutions.
- 12/15/03** — **Bhutan launched major military operations against Indian separatist rebels** based in border areas near India’s Assam state. By the end of the month, more than 130 people had been killed in the fighting, and the leader and founder of the United Liberation Front of Assam had been captured.
- 12/13/03** — Pakistan informed India that it was “seriously concerned” about New Delhi’s efforts to erect a fence along the Kashmiri LOC. Three days later, Pakistan’s foreign minister was quoted as saying that, by going ahead with the fencing, India was seeking to take advantage of the cease-fire to “change the character of the LOC.” On the same day, India’s foreign minister said that India will continue to assist Iran’s nuclear energy program.

- 12/12/03** — David Mulford, chairman of Credit Suisse First Boston, former Treasury Department official (1984-1992), and personal friend of President Bush, was approved by the Senate as the **next U.S. Ambassador to India**. On the same day, more than 500 delegates from Pakistan and India met in Karachi for the sixth convention of the Pakistan-India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy.
- 12/11/03** — A *Hindustan Times* report said that India would be dispatching commando units to enhance security at its consulates in Afghanistan following the kidnaping of two Indian aid workers by Taliban forces.
- 12/10/03** — Kashmiri separatist leaders Yasin Malik and Syed Geelani were among dozens arrested during International Human Rights Day protests in Srinagar.
- 12/06/03** — Indian Deputy PM Advani said that Pakistan was not reciprocating adequately to India's recent peace initiatives. On the same day, a senior Indian military commander said that "terrorist" infiltration from Pakistan across the Kashmiri LOC was continuing. Also, more than 2,600 members of the Bodo Liberation Tigers separatist army surrendered to authorities in India's northeastern Assam state.
- 12/05/03** — A statement of the Indian Space Research Organization claimed that India had successfully developed a cryogenic rocket engine suitable for high-altitude satellite launches or intercontinental ballistic missiles.
- 12/02/03** — Mr. Shashank, a career foreign service officer, replaced Kanwal Sibal as **India's new foreign secretary**.
- 12/01/03** — In what was viewed as an important test of BJP and Congress Party strength ahead of national elections in 2004, the national coalition-leading **BJP won major upset electoral victories** in the Indian states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Chattisgarh. The polls marked a serious setback for the Congress, which was only able to retain power in the Union Territory of New Delhi. On the same day, Pakistan and India agreed to restore airline overflight and landing rights by January 1, 2004.
- 11/26/03** — At midnight, **Pakistan and India began a formal cease-fire** at their shared international border, as well as along the LOC and Actual Ground Position Line on the Siachen glacier. The United States hailed the move as "steps toward peace [that] offer hope for real progress in the region."
- 11/23/03** — **Pakistani PM Jamali announced a unilateral cease-fire** by Pakistani forces at the LOC to begin on the final night of Ramadan (11/26). On the same day, Indian External Affairs Minister Sinha strongly rejected the notion that warming India-U.S. or India-ASEAN ties are aimed at "containing" China.
- 11/19/03** — Violence between Assamese- and Hindi-speaking people in India's northeastern Assam state left 25 dead and more than 100 homes destroyed.
- 11/14/03** — A notable **sign of improved India-China relations** came when the two nations' navies held their first-ever joint exercises off the coast of Shanghai. Also, PM Vajpayee arrived in Syria, where the New Delhi and Damascus governments signed nine agreements meant to boost trade.
- 11/12/03** — A press report indicated that India is actively upgrading Tajikistan's Anyi air base and has plans to station troops and warplanes there.