

CRS Report for Congress

Received through the CRS Web

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.

Acronyms:

BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party

LOC: Line of Control (Kashmir)

CBMs: Confidence-building measures

NSSP: Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (U.S.-India)

- 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. Also, during a visit to New Delhi, Iran’s foreign minister said that an Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline would be “the best and most desirable step” in India-Iran energy cooperation. Finally, at least 170 people were reported killed and hundreds more missing in avalanches and mud slides after the worst snowfall in Indian Kashmir in two decades.
- 02/21/05 —** A U.S. delegation led by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency’s regional director visited New Delhi to brief Indian officials on the Patriot missile defense system, which some reports say the Indian government will consider purchasing.
- 02/17/05 —** The Indian army began demining efforts along a road to be used for bus service across the Kashmiri LOC. On the same day, the Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist group threatened to disrupt such service, saying it will “weaken the idea of Kashmir uniting with Pakistan.” Moderate Kashmiri separatist leader Abdul Gani Bhat called the service a “small but significant step,” while hardline figure Syed Ali Shah Geelani claimed the opening of the road link “will make no difference.”
- 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. External Affairs Minister Singh concluded “extremely useful and intensive” discussions with his Pakistani counterpart and called India-Pakistan cooperation “not just a desirable objective; it is an imperative.” On the same day, five Indian soldiers were killed and one seriously injured when their convoy was ambushed by suspected separatist rebels in the northeastern Manipur state.
- 02/15/05** — **External Affairs Minister Singh arrived in Islamabad** for the first such bilateral visit since 1989, saying “substantial progress” had been made in India-Pakistan relations since January 2004 and expressing hope that further progress would come during his visit. On the same day, election-related violence left at least 18 people dead after Maoist rebel attacks in the eastern states of Jharkhand and Bihar.
- 02/11/05** — A U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) delegation ended a four-day visit to India for technical discussions and visits to selected nuclear facilities. Commissioner Jeffery Merrifield led the first NRC visit to India since the January 2004 launching of the U.S.-India NSSP initiative. On the same day, at least six Indian policemen were killed and another five injured when Maoist rebels planted explosives in their sleeping quarters in the southern Karnataka state. Also, ten people were reported killed in separatist-related violence in Indian Kashmir.
- 02/10/05** — **The inaugural session of the U.S.-India High-Technology Defense Working Group** met in Bangalore. Participant and U.S. defense contractor Lockheed Martin announced having won export licenses to sell C-130J transport and P-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft to India.
- 02/09/05** — **H.Res 83**, expressing the sense of the House that India should be a permanent member of the UN Security Council, was introduced in the House. On the same day, Indian Defense Minister Mukherjee said that the possibility of sanctions reduces U.S. credibility as a reliable supplier of defense equipment. Also, in a bid to increase potential business with India, U.S. defense contractor Lockheed Martin said it would (under special license) share with India sensitive technology related to its P-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft should the Indian navy choose to purchase them. Finally, a cabinet meeting chaired by PM Singh approved holding talks with Pakistan, Burma, Bangladesh, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan to discuss the construction of new gas pipelines in the region.
- 02/08/05** — Defense Minister Mukherjee said that the number of infiltrators from across the Kashmiri LOC was down 60 percent over the previous year. On the same day, World Bank president James Wolfensohn said that a “neutral expert” would be appointed to arbitrate an India-Pakistan dispute under the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty.
- 02/07/05** — India’s air force chief said that **U.S.-built F-16 warplanes were among four types of multi-role fighters that India will considering purchasing**. On the same day, India launched its first human clinical trials of a vaccine designed to prevent HIV.
- 02/03/05** — State-level election-related violence left at least 20 people dead as first-round ballots were cast in Jharkhand, Bihar, and Haryana. On the same day, the Indian rupee hit a five-year high of 43.3 per U.S. dollar after the country’s currency rating was raised.
- 02/02/05** — After PM Singh cancelled his participation in a scheduled early February SAARC summit due to concerns about security in host country

Bangladesh and political turmoil in Nepal, Pakistan, the current SAARC chair, announced that the summit would be postponed indefinitely.

- 02/01/05 — **Nepal's King Gyanendra dissolved his country's parliament and assumed emergency powers** after blaming the prime minister for failing to hold polls or end the Maoist insurgency there. The Indian government, a major supplier of military equipment to Kathmandu that faces its own indigenous Maoist rebels, called the developments “a serious setback for the cause of democracy in Nepal” that was “of grave concern to India.” New Delhi later indicated that military assistance to Kathmandu would continue because, “If Maoist activity is not restrained in Nepal, it may cause problems in India.” On the same day, India's petroleum minister said that his country's energy relationship with Iran is moving “full steam ahead” despite “differences in perspectives the world over on how the world should treat Iran.”
- 01/31/05 — Eleven people, including seven civilians, were reported killed in separatist-related violence in Indian Kashmir. On the same day, Lt. Gen. J.J. Singh took over as India's new chief of army staff.
- 01/29/05 — During his first visit to Hyderabad, U.S. Ambassador to India Mulford reportedly said that he and investors had been concerned about Maoist violence in Andhra Pradesh, but got “good answers” about the investment climate from area business leaders. On the same day, Pakistani Foreign Minister Kasuri told an audience in Switzerland that “in concrete terms [Pakistan and India] are not making much progress” in bilateral dialogue, “not just on Kashmir but even on other issues.”
- 01/27/05 — London-based Amnesty International issued a report critical of Indian authorities for failing to pursue justice for figures, including government officials, responsible for bloody communal riots in Gujarat in 2002.
- 01/26/05 — Pakistani PM Aziz told an audience in Belgium that he has “yet to detect any indication so far” that India is ready to address the Kashmir issue “seriously, substantively, and purposefully,” adding that “The security situation in South Asia will remain tenuous unless we are able to resolve peacefully the core [Kashmir] dispute.” Aziz also claimed that a widening gap between Pakistan and India in the area of air and naval military power “is causing a serious imbalance in South Asia.”
- 01/25/05 — **H.Res. 47**, urging a peaceful resolution of the conflict over Kashmir, and for other purposes, was introduced in the House. On the same day, former intelligence chief M.K. Narayanan received permanent appointment as India's National Security Advisor, replacing J.N. Dixit, who died earlier in the month. Also, India's two top political leaders, Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi, indicated that peace talks between the Andhra Pradesh government and Maoist rebels should continue. Finally, some 300 Hindu pilgrims, including women and children, were killed in a stampede and subsequent fire near a temple 160 miles southeast of Bombay.
- 01/24/05 — **India and China opened their first strategic dialogue** when China's vice foreign minister arrived in New Delhi for two-day talks with his Indian counterpart. On the same day, Pakistan said that three days earlier **Indian troops had broken a 14-month-old cease-fire agreement with small arms fire across the LOC**. India denied the claim.

- 01/19/05 — A public opinion survey in 21 countries found that India was one of only three where a majority of those polled (62%) thought the reelection of President Bush was a positive development for world security.
- 01/18/05 — **The World Bank received a letter from the Pakistani government asking that a “neutral expert” be appointed** to help settle the Baglihar dam dispute under the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty. The Indian government said the request was “unjustified” and that dam construction will continue. On the same day, **the Indian army said that Pakistani troops had fired a dozen mortar shells over the Kashmiri LOC** in violation of a 14-month-old cease-fire agreement. The Pakistani army denied the claim. Also, Indian security forces reportedly killed five “infiltrators” at the LOC.
- 01/17/05 — The Communist Party of India (Maoist), a grouping of “Naxalite” rebel groups, withdrew from peace talks with the government of the southern Andhra Pradesh state, accusing that government of breaking a six-month-old cease-fire agreement.
- 01/16/05 — **The United States and India signed an “Open Skies” agreement** that would remove restrictions and lower fares on bilateral airline service.
- 01/15/05 — **India’s army chief said that the number of infiltration attempts at the Kashmiri LOC was down 90% in 2004.** On the same day, Pakistani President Musharraf said that his country would offer no more confidence-building initiatives until Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service is launched.
- 01/14/05 — An Indian military official announced that a contingent of ten Indian helicopters and 285 personnel would serve alongside Pakistani peacekeeping troops in Congo.
- 01/10/05 — A Pakistan government spokesman said that the recent failure to resolve the Baglihar dam dispute will have a negative impact on the India-Pakistan dialogue process. On the same day, while in New Delhi, former U.S. Ambassador to India Robert Blackwill reportedly questioned why the United States would consider selling F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan when that country “had not stopped sponsoring cross-border terrorism.”
- 01/07/05 — Three days of talks between Indian and Pakistani officials failed to resolve **an ongoing dispute over a dam that India is constructing in Baglihar, Kashmir.** On the same day, Pakistan released to India 266 Indian fishermen that had been arrested the previous year for allegedly entering Pakistani waters in the Arabian Sea. Also, Indian Maj. Gen. Randhir Kumar Mehta was appointed to be the new Military Adviser for UN Peacekeeping Operations.
- 01/04/05 — **H.R. 164** was introduced in the House. The bill seeks to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide for the establishment of a network of pediatric centers in India and certain other developing countries to provide treatment and care for children with HIV/AIDS.
- 01/03/05 — **Indian National Security Advisor J.N. Dixit died** suddenly after a heart attack. Special Advisor to the Prime Minister M.K. Narayanan, a former intelligence chief, was named to temporarily replace him.
- 01/01/05 — Pakistan’s state television network reported that Indian troops had “martyred 1,675 innocent Kashmiris” in 2004.
- 12/28/04 — **India and Pakistan concluded two-day, foreign secretary-level talks** in Islamabad. The talks, which were “held in a frank, cordial, and constructive atmosphere,” produced no major agreements, but reviewed

- overall progress in the “Composite Dialogue” and made plans for its continuation in 2005. On the same day, in Beijing, **Indian Army Chief Gen. Vij and his Chinese counterpart agreed to deepen bilateral defense cooperation** at the conclusion of the first such visit in a decade.
- 12/26/04** — An earthquake beneath the Indian Ocean near Indonesia caused **a tsunami that devastated coastal areas in 15 littoral countries and killed up to 200,000 people, about 16,000 of them in India.** Most of the Indian deaths and damage were in the southern Tamil Nadu state and the remote Andaman and Nicobar Islands. On the same day, India’s external affairs minister said that Pakistan’s willingness to discuss Kashmir *and* other issues showed that “progress is being made” in bilateral dialogue, but he warned that “there are no quick fixes” to the countries’ mutual problems.
- 12/24/04** — The chief minister of the West Bengal state accused Pakistan’s intelligence agency of operating from Bangladesh and encouraging the activities of anti-India militants there.
- 12/21/04** — PM Singh told Parliament he had informed Pakistani President Musharraf that India is “willing to look at various options” for settlement of the Kashmir issue, but that India would “not agree to any redrawing of boundaries or another partition of the country.”
- 12/20/04** — A former external affairs minister and current opposition BJP member in Parliament, Yashwant Sinha, said that India’s foreign policy was “in a shambles” with “no coordination” on major foreign policy issues by the new government.
- 12/17/04** — Indian authorities arrested Avinish Bajaj, a naturalized American citizen and the chief executive of Ebay Inc.’s Indian subsidiary, on charges related to the posting of an allegedly obscene video on an Indian Internet auction site. The State Department said that the situation is “of concern at the highest levels of the U.S. government.”
- 12/16/04** — Defense Minister Mukherjee told Parliament that the construction of a fence along the LOC in Kashmir had been completed.
- 12/15/04** — **India and Pakistan concluded two-day, expert-level talks** on nuclear and conventional arms CBMs, and the territorial dispute over Sir Creek. The talks, all held in Pakistan as part of the “Composite Dialogue” agreed to in September 2004, came in a “cordial and constructive atmosphere,” but produced only agreements to meet again in the future. On the same day, **the United States and India signed a Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement** to facilitate bilateral cooperation on customs law enforcement. Also, more than 50 separatist leaders from both the Indian and Pakistani regions of Kashmir concluded a three-day meeting in Nepal sponsored by the Pugwash Foundation.
- 12/13/04** — U.S. Ambassador to India Mulford reportedly said that the United States “would like to be a bigger supplier of military equipment and weapons to India.” On the same day, India’s defense minister said that “the argument of the U.S. that it was supplying arms to Pakistan to tackle terrorism does not stand.”
- 12/08/04** — **Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld arrived in New Delhi**, where he called for an expanded U.S.-India defense relationship. Hours before his arrival, India’s external affairs minister said that India had “cautioned the United States” against a decision to sell F-16 fighter jets, adding that the “U.S.

- arms supply to Pakistan would have a negative impact on the goodwill the United States enjoys with India, particularly as a sister democracy.”
- 12/07/04** — The dialogue with Pakistan on opening bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad in Kashmir apparently remained deadlocked on the issue of travel documents for passengers, with Pakistan calling for locally issued passes and India seeking passport requirements.
- 12/06/04** — The Indian Parliament voted to repeal the controversial Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) amid opposition protests that the move will be a setback in the war against terrorism. The body then passed a new set of laws, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill 2004.
- 12/05/04** — **U.S. Treasury Under Secretary John B. Taylor visited New Delhi**, where he told a World Economic Forum audience that eradicating poverty will require India to increase its productivity through capital investment and education, and he lauded New Delhi for policies that put India on the “right track.” On the same day, at least 10 Indian soldiers, including an army major, were killed when suspected separatist militants exploded a bomb near their vehicle. The Pakistan-based Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist group claimed responsibility.
- 12/03/04** — **During a visit to New Delhi by Russian President Putin, India and Russia signed ten bilateral agreements**, including a joint declaration emphasizing continued strategic partnership between the two countries. Other pacts include arrangements for oil and gas deals, joint energy and space exploration, and defense trade. On the same day, Indian and Pakistani officials agreed in principle to begin repairs on a badly deteriorated rail line between Pakistan’s Sindh province and India’s Rajasthan state that has been closed since 1965.
- 11/30/04** — **The benchmark Bombay Sensex stock index reached an all-time closing high.**
- 11/29/04** — The Indian army claimed it had overrun scores of separatist militant camps during a one-month, 6,000-man operation in northeastern Manipur state.
- 11/26/04** — Moderate Kashmiri separatist leader Mirwaiz Umer Farooq reportedly said that **efforts to reunite the split Hurriyat Conference had failed**, and he blamed hardline figure Syed Ali Shah Geelani for the impasse.
- 11/24/04** — **PM Singh and other Indian leaders met with Pakistani PM Shaukat Aziz in New Delhi**, the first visit to India by a Pakistani prime minister in more than ten years. Both sides called the talks “friendly” and “constructive,” but Pakistan offered no new formulations on the Kashmir issue and the Indian prime minister reiterated that the issue can have no “territorial solutions.” Aziz also met with Kashmiri separatist leaders.
- 11/18/04** — U.S. and Indian government officials and business leaders met in Washington to discuss ways of increasing bilateral high-technology trade. The U.S. Department of Commerce hosted the event under the auspices of the U.S.-India High-Technology Cooperation Group.
- 11/17/04** — **PM Singh visited the Jammu and Kashmir state for the first time while in office**, where he presented a \$5.3 billion assistance plan, offered unconditional dialogue with any separatists who shun violence, and suggested that more troop reductions could come if the security situation there remains static.