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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, 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.

- 06/20/05** — At least four suspected separatist militants and one Indian soldier were killed in gunbattles in the northeastern Assam state. A bomb also exploded at the state capitol, but no injuries were reported.
- 06/19/05** — Violent clashes between police and political protestors in Calcutta left some 70 people injured.
- 06/18/05** — India and Pakistan reportedly decided to postpone talks on nuclear confidence-building measures until they are able to resolve differences over a proposed missile test pre-notification pact.
- 06/17/05** — Six suspected separatist militants were reported killed by Indian army troops as they tried to cross the LOC into Indian Kashmir.
- 06/16/05** — Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control Rademaker reportedly said that “it would be a mistake to proceed with this [Iran-Pakistan-India gas] pipeline” as it would generate revenue that Iran would use “for funding its weapons of mass destruction program and for supporting terrorist activities.” New Delhi later rejected such concerns. On the same day, former Prime Minister Vajpayee wrote a letter to Prime Minister Singh saying the India-Pakistan peace initiative had become “Kashmir-centric” and criticizing the Pakistani president for reneging on promises to end violence in the region.
- 06/15/05** — **H.Res. 321**, expressing the sense of the House that the United States should support membership expansion of the UN Security Council to include India and several other countries, was introduced in the House. On the same day, a leading Kashmiri separatist and a former Pakistani

Acronyms:

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

army chief made separate accusations that Pakistani Information Minister Rashid operated a training camp for Kashmiri separatist militants during the 1980s. New Delhi later said Rashid would not be allowed to travel across the Kashmiri LOC due to the allegations. Rashid said the move would “set back” the peace process. Also, London-based Amnesty International released a report claiming that Indian military assistance to Nepal has contributed to “grave human rights violations” there.

- 06/14/05 — **During a House International Relations Committee hearing on the United States and South Asia**, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca said, “With India, this is a watershed year in U.S.-India relations. We’re accelerating and transforming this relationship, which moved briskly over the past four years, We’re now ready to take it to the next level.” Several Members in attendance spoke against a U.S. policy of selling combat aircraft to South Asian countries. One expert witness called for completing the “transformation of U.S.-Indian relations as rapidly as possible in order to permanently entrench India in the ranks of our friends and allies,” while another encouraged attention to India’s still relatively closed economy and its “anti-American voting record in the United Nations.”
- 06/13/05 — **A bomb exploded near a school in Indian Kashmir, killing 14 people and injuring at least 100 more.** On the same day, India and Iran finalized a \$22 billion deal for Tehran to deliver five million tons of natural gas to India annually for 25 years beginning in 2009.
- 06/12/05 — Prime Minister Singh said the time had come to make the Siachen Glacier a “peace mountain.” Islamabad responded that it hopes “India would unconditionally withdraw its aggression on the basis of past agreements.”
- 06/11/05 — Prime Minister Singh said that his government will begin negotiations with Pakistan on the possibility of opening a second road link across the Kashmiri LOC.
- 06/09/05 — During a visit to Pakistan, moderate Kashmiri separatist leader Mirwaiz Umer Farooq urged interested parties to “**move beyond**” UN resolutions that call for a plebiscite in the disputed region. On the same day, India expressed concern at the large numbers of Nepali refugees entering India. Also, six suspected separatist militant and an Indian soldier were reported killed in a gun battle in Indian Kashmir. Finally, two factions of the Kashmiri separatist Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front announced a decision to reunite.
- 06/07/05 — **Indian opposition leader and former Deputy PM Lal Advani resigned** his position as BJP president after coming under fierce criticism for recent comments he made in Pakistan where he called Pakistani founding father Mohammed Ali Jinnah a “secular” leader. Leading Hindu nationalists had called Advani a “traitor” and a “grave liability” to the BJP. Two days later, Advani withdrew his resignation after it was rejected by the BJP leadership. On the same day, Indian and Pakistani officials discussing energy cooperation agreed that “transnational gas pipeline projects should be given top priority” and began talks on a proposed gas pipeline from Iran to India. India’s oil minister suggested that construction of a pipeline from Iran to India could begin in three years or less.
- 06/06/05 — Sixteen people, including four civilians and 11 suspected separatist militants, were killed over a two-day period in gunbattles in Indian

Kashmir. On the same day, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute said that India imported \$8.5 billion worth of weapons systems from 2000 to 2004, placing it second only to China.

- 06/04/05 — President Bush invited Prime Minister Singh to meet with him at the White House on July 18. On the same day, Singh called it “imperative” that India “embark on a major expansion of nuclear energy,” in part through international collaboration. He also said, “Artificial barriers and [nuclear] technology denial regimes are an anachronism in the age of globalization and must be progressively dismantled.”
- 06/03/05 — **The U.S. State Department’s annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* again placed India on its “Tier 2 Watch List”** for its “inability to show evidence of increased efforts to address trafficking in persons.” On the same day, a local politician was shot and killed by suspected separatist militants in Indian Kashmir.
- 06/02/05 — **Leaders of the moderate faction of the Hurriyat Conference of Kashmiri separatist groups began an unprecedented visit to Pakistan.** On the same day, talks between Indian and Pakistani officials seeking to resolve a water dispute over India’s Kishanganga dam project ended in deadlock. Also, the foreign ministers of India, China, and Russia met in Vladivostok and declared an intention to cooperate in a trilateral format on security and economic issues.
- 05/31/05 — **The inaugural meeting of the U.S.-India Energy Dialogue was held in Washington.** On the same day, Indian opposition leader and former Deputy PM Lal Advani met with top Pakistani officials in Islamabad where he declared that there was “broad consensus” on the peace process in India. Also, India’s defense minister inaugurated India’s largest naval base at the southwestern city of Karwar on the Arabian Sea.
- 05/30/05 — **Prime Minister Singh said, “Not enough has been done [by Pakistan] to dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism, which is still intact.”**
- 05/29/05 — **Talks between Indian and Pakistani officials seeking to resolve a territorial dispute over the Sir Creek ended in deadlock.**
- 05/28/05 — At least 33 people were injured in two separate explosions in Indian Kashmir.
- 05/27/05 — **Talks between Indian and Pakistani officials seeking to resolve a militarized dispute over the Siachen Glacier ended in deadlock.**
- 05/26/05 — New York-based Human Rights Watch lauded the Indian government’s overall response to the December 2004 tsunami, but found that the government recovery efforts did not adequately serve the needs of vulnerable groups such as women, children, and Dalits (“untouchables”).
- 05/25/05 — London-based Amnesty International’s annual report claimed that during 2004 perpetrators of human rights violations in India “continued to enjoy impunity in many cases.” On the same day, the Times of India reported that top Nepali Maoist leader Baburam Bhattarai had met with Indian communist leaders in New Delhi. The Communist Party of India later issued a formal denial that any such meeting had taken place.
- 05/24/05 — New Delhi signed a truce with the National Democratic Front of Bodoland, a leading separatist group in the northeastern Assam state.
- 05/23/05 — The Islamabad government invited the leadership of the Hurriyat Conference of Kashmiri separatist groups to visit Pakistan in June.

Leaders of the moderate Hurriyat faction later accepted the invitation. Militant separatists condemned their decision. On the same day, China's top military official visited New Delhi to discuss increased defense ties between Indian and China. Also, a U.S. State Department official's statement to the 2005 Review Conference of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty included setting a goal that Israel, India, and Pakistan eventually join the Treaty as non-nuclear weapons states.

- 05/22/05 — One person was killed and 49 more injured by bomb explosions at two Delhi movie theaters that were showing a controversial film opposed by some Sikh groups. Police later arrested three suspects, including two members of a Sikh militant group.
- 05/20/05 — At least four Indian soldiers, including an officer, and five suspected separatist militants were killed in gunbattles in Indian Kashmir.
- 05/17/05 — **The United States and India held a meeting of the U.S.-India Global Issues Forum** in Washington. The delegations were led by U.S. Under Secretary for Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky and Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran. On the same day, 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.” Also, separatist-related violence left 12 people dead in Indian Kashmir. Finally, 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 an opposition political 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 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.
- 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.

- 05/09/05 — London-based Amnesty International urged the India 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 fence along the India-Bangladesh border.
- 05/02/05 — 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.
- 04/27/05 — 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.
- 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.”
- 04/20/05 — 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.
- 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.
- 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.” 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.
- 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.”
- 04/05/05 —** 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.”
- 04/03/05 —** Gunbattles in Indian Kashmir left seven suspected separatist militants and a civilian dead.
- 04/01/05 —** 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.
- 03/28/05 —** 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.”