



India: Chronology of Events, November 2006-February 2007

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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, and Indian news outlets. For a substantive review, see CRS Report RL33529, *India-U.S. Relations*. This report will not be updated.

02/13/07—Commerce Secretary Gutierrez began a two-day visit to New Delhi, where he discussed with top Indian officials expanding bilateral trade, enforcement of intellectual property rights, reducing bureaucratic obstacles to commerce, planned civil nuclear cooperation, and Doha multilateral trade negotiations. On the same day, Home Secretary Duggal made a visit to Rangoon, where he discussed drug trafficking and border security with Burmese officials, and requested Burmese military action against separatist rebels operating in India's northeast. Also, state assembly elections were held in the Punjab state, currently ruled by the Congress Party. Finally, two international human rights groups issued a report critical of New Delhi's efforts to end serious discrimination against India's 165 dalits, or "untouchables."

Acronyms:

BJP:	Bharatiya Janata Party
ULFA:	United Liberation Front of Assam

02/12/07—Two years after his appointment by the World Bank, a **"neutral expert" mediating the Baglihar dam dispute under the 1960 India-Pakistan Indus Waters Treaty submitted a report** which both New Delhi and Islamabad claimed upheld their respective positions.

02/09/07—An Indian government survey found that **nearly half of the country's children are malnourished**. On the same day, at least six policemen were killed by suspected separatist rebels in the Manipur state.

02/08/07—New Delhi appeared to be renewing its previously suspended disinvestment policies by joining a sell-off process involving three publicly-owned power companies. On the same day, India's air force chief said New Delhi would soon purchase 40 Russian-built Sukhoi-30 combat aircraft for about \$1.6 billion. Also, at least five policemen were killed and another six injured in a landmine explosion in the Chhattisgarh state. Maoist rebels were believed responsible.

02/06/07—U.S. Representatives Jim McDermott and Joe Wilson were elected as co-chairs of the 184-member Congressional Caucus on India and Indian-Americans. On the same day, an Indian official said that India would by mid-2007 issue a tender for 126 combat aircraft it plans to purchase for up to \$10 billion.

02/04/07—Moderate Kashmiri separatist leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq urged armed militants to declare a temporary cease-fire that could allow New Delhi to reduce some of its troop strength in the region.

02/03/07—Prime Minister Singh said the Pakistani government was "saying the right thing" in recent statements rejecting armed militancy as a solution to the Kashmir problem, adding that he had accepted an invitation to visit Islamabad in the near future. On the same day, **authorities in Kashmir exhumed the bodies of five men who may have been civilians killed in "staged encounters" with security forces**. Shortly after, four policemen, including two senior officers, had been arrested, and separatist groups called for a protest strike which shut down most of Srinagar on 2/6.

- 02/01/07**—A top Congress Party leader in the Assam state was assassinated by suspected ULFA rebels.
- 01/31/07**—India’s central bank warned that rising inflation and surging stock and property markets were “signs of overheating” in the country’s economy. On the same day, India’s Tata Steel won a \$12.2 billion bid for the Anglo-Dutch firm Corus, creating the world’s fifth largest steelmaker in India’s largest-ever foreign takeover.
- 01/30/07**—**India regained full investment-grade status after a 15-year hiatus** when Standard & Poor’s upgraded India’s sovereign rating.
- 01/28/07**—India’s air force chief said New Delhi was building an aerospace defense command aimed at preventing possible attacks from space.
- 01/26/07**—**Officials from India, Pakistan, and Iran reportedly agreed on a pricing formula for Iranian natural gas**, thus potentially clearing a major obstacle to the planned construction of a pipeline to deliver such gas to India via Pakistan. India’s oil minister later said he expected a final deal by June. The U.S. government is opposed to the \$7 billion project.
- 01/25/07**—**Russian President Putin ended a two-day visit to New Delhi**, where he met with top Indian officials; signed several bilateral agreements on energy, science, and space cooperation; and offered to sell four new 1,000-megawatt nuclear reactors to India. On the same day, the Indian army claimed that Pakistani and Indian troops had exchanged small arms fire across the Kashmiri LOC. Also, several bomb blasts killed 2 people and injured 7 others in the Assam state. Police blamed ULFA rebels.
- 01/23/07**—Foreign Minister Mukherjee met with top Afghan officials in Kabul, where he announced a \$100 million increase in Indian aid to Afghanistan.
- 01/21/07**—A series of bomb blasts and gunbattles left 2 people dead and 19 injured in the Assam state. Police blamed separatist ULFA rebels.
- 01/20/07**—Two alleged Harkat-ul-Mujahideen terrorists were killed and a policeman injured in a gunbattle in Kashmir.
- 01/18/07**—Moderate Kashmiri separatist leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq arrived in Islamabad for talks with top Pakistani leaders and called on armed militants to support the peace process. On the same day, a coalition of women’s rights groups accused the state-backed Sulwa Judum anti-Maoist militia of raping and abusing many of the women they are supposed to protect. Also, ULFA rebels warned all Hindi-speaking people to “stay away” from Assam.
- 01/17/07**—The *USS Trenton*, a decommissioned American amphibious transport dock purchased by India for \$44 million, became the second-largest ship in the Indian navy as it set sail with six surplus Sikorsky UH-3H Sea King helicopters purchased for another \$39 million. On the same day, India and China held a 31st round of talks to resolve their decades-old border disputes. Also, New Delhi lodged a formal protest with Islamabad over an alleged cross-border shooting incident that left two Indian soldiers injured. Finally, two civilians were killed in a suspected ULFA-launched bomb attack on a marketplace in the Assam state.

- 01/16/07**—Prime Minister Singh said his government was willing to negotiate with any northeastern separatists who abjure violence. On the same day, seven policemen were killed in a landmine blast triggered by Maoist rebels in the Chhattisgarh state.
- 01/15/07**—**Prime Minister Singh attended the 5th India-ASEAN summit** meeting in the Philippines, where he sought to forward India’s “Look East” policy by calling for a Pan Asian free trade agreement.
- 01/13/07**—**External Affairs Minister Mukherjee traveled to Islamabad** to meet with his Pakistani counterpart, the first such visit in more than one year. The two men agreed to launch in mid-March a fourth round of the Composite Dialogue that began in 2004. On the same day, ULFA rebels issued a threat to kill Congress Party politicians in the Assam state in retaliation for attacks on their cadres. Also, four Maoist militants were shot dead by police in the Andhra Pradesh state.
- 01/10/07**—India’s lead negotiator on civil nuclear cooperation with the United States, Shyam Saran, warned that existing stipulations proscribing the reprocessing spent fuel and further nuclear testing could kill the deal altogether. On the same day, in a rare statement on policy, the Indian Army called “dangerous” any proposal to demilitarize Kashmir, claiming it would “dilute” India’s control of the region.
- 01/09/07**—Pakistan released from jail 115 India fishermen in a gesture of goodwill ahead of foreign minister-level talks. On the same day, up to 13,000 Indian army and paramilitary troops fanned out across the Assam state in what was termed the “largest-ever” operations against ULFA rebels there. Also, Assam’s chief minister said there was “no doubt” that the ULFA was working under the instruction of Pakistan’s main intelligence service. Finally, the U.S. chapter of the Paris-based Doctors Without Borders named India’s internal conflicts as one of ten “most underreported humanitarian crises of 2006.”
- 01/08/07**—Prime Minister Singh said he hoped to someday conclude a treaty of security, peace, and friendship with Pakistan. Islamabad said such a treaty would be possible only after a resolution of the Kashmir dispute.
- 01/07/07**—**Suspected ULFA rebels killed at least 65 people**, most of them migrant workers, in multiple attacks over two days in the Assam state. Thousands of migrants began fleeing the region.
- 01/06/07**—Kashmiri separatist leader Sajad Gani Lone issued a document calling for a unified Kashmir administered by Kashmiris with regional defense jointly overseen by Kashmiris, India and Pakistan. On the same day, at least 1 person was killed and 30 others injured when a suspected separatist militant lobbed a grenade into a crowded marketplace in Kashmir.
- 01/04/07**—Indian Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Anil Kakodkar claimed that sections of U.S. legislation to permit U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation (P.L. 109-401) sought to “cap and roll back” India’s nuclear weapons program. On the same day, India’s main communist party, which holds about 8% of the country’s parliamentary seats, said it would launch a campaign against civil nuclear cooperation with the United States.

- 01/03/07**—Four alleged Pakistani nationals and members of the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen terrorist group were reported killed in a gunbattle with security forces in Kashmir.
- 01/02/07**—India’s largest domestic airline, Jet Airways, said it was purchasing ten Boeing 787-8 aircraft in a deal that could be worth \$1.5 billion.
- 12/30/06**—The New Delhi government called the execution of Saddam Hussein a disappointment and “unfortunate event” as thousands of protestors took to the streets of several Indian cities shouting anti-U.S. slogans. Protests in the Muslim-majority Jammu and Kashmir state were violent and lasted for days. On the same day, a policeman and a civilian were killed, and three other people were injured, in separatist-related violence in Kashmir.
- 12/28/06**—Commerce Minister Nath said **foreign investment flows into India were expected to double to more than \$11 billion in 2006-2007**. On the same day, nine people were killed and ten others injured in several incidents of separatist-related violence in Kashmir. Also, a senior Maoist militant leader was reported killed by police in the Andhra Pradesh state.
- 12/27/06**—A study by the Indian Ministry of Statistics found that more than 200 million citizens in rural areas subsist on less than 12 rupees (about 27 cents) per day. On the same day, two alleged Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists were killed in a gunbattle with Indian soldiers in Kashmir.
- 12/26/06**—Two people were killed in separatist-related violence in Kashmir.
- 12/25/06**—Two suspected separatist militants, an army officer, and a civilian were killed in a three-day gunbattle in Kashmir.
- 12/24/06**—New Delhi reiterated its position that Iran has the right to pursue a peaceful nuclear program and said it was “studying the implications” of a U.N. Security Council Resolution calling for sanctions on Tehran.
- 12/22/06**—**Two days of India-Pakistan talks on the militarized Sir Creek dispute** ended with agreement to conduct a joint survey. On the same day, India and Pakistan began a prisoner swap involving 57 Pakistani nationals and 70 Indians. Also, a task force on development in Jammu and Kashmir submitted a report to Prime Minister Singh calling for urgent efforts to improve power and infrastructure in the troubled state.
- 12/21/06**—Four people, including two policemen, were killed and six others injured in landmine attacks by Maoist rebels in the central Chhattisgarh state. On the same day, 23 people, including many women and children, were injured in twin bomb attacks by suspected ULFA militants in the northeastern Assam state.
- 12/20/06**—U.S. trade officials warned that India could be among six countries that may lose some duty-free access to the U.S. market after recent changes to the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences. The U.S. Trade Representative said preliminary assessments indicated India would lose duty-free access for gold jewelry exports to the United States (such exports were worth nearly \$2 billion in 2006).

- 12/19/06**—Defense Minister Mukherjee said India would “keep its options open to conduct nuclear tests” in the future.
- 12/18/06**—**President Bush signed into law H.R. 5682, the Henry J. Hyde United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act of 2006** (P.L. 109-401). Prime Minister Singh later told Parliament that “clearly difficult negotiations lie ahead” in launching such cooperation.
- 12/16/06**—Several leading Indian nuclear scientists, including three former chairmen of the country’s Atomic Energy Commission, published a statement of opposition to recently passed U.S. legislation enabling U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation, saying its stipulations “constitute an intrusion into India’s independent decision-making and policy matters.”
- 12/15/06**—**Prime Minister Singh paid a visit to Tokyo**, where India and Japan inked 12 bilateral agreements to forward their “strategic partnership,” including negotiations toward a future free trade agreement. Tokyo withheld endorsement of India’s entry into the civilian nuclear club.
- 12/12/06**—A report of the U.N. Children’s Fund found that about 7,000 fewer girls than expected are born each day in India due to female feticide.
- 12/10/06**—India’s main opposition BJP called on New Delhi to reject the act passed by the U.S. Congress regarding U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation, calling the conditions therein “humiliating.” A senior BJP figure later promised to “scrap” the deal if the BJP were returned to national power. India’s main communist party, which supports the Congress-led ruling coalition, later said the deal was “not acceptable,” as it would “seriously undermine India’s independent foreign policy.” On the same day, Defense Minister Antony said terrorist training camps in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir were still operational.
- 12/08/06**—Under Secretary of State Burns met with Foreign Secretary Menon in New Delhi to discuss “progress in all the areas” of U.S.-India relations.
- 12/07/06**—**A conference report (H.Rept. 109-721) was issued to accompany H.R. 5682, enabling U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation.** Congressional conferees reconciled House and Senate versions of the legislation and provided a 30-page explanatory statement. New Delhi welcomed final congressional approval, while also noting the legislation contained “extraneous and prescriptive provisions” which could complicate future negotiations. On the same day, Under Secretary of Commerce and Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Dudas told a New Delhi audience that “further modifications are necessary” in India’s intellectual property rights protection regime and that India’s copyright laws are “insufficient in many aspects.” Also, New York-based Human Rights Watch criticized New Delhi for offering to help arm Burma’s “brutal military dictatorship” with sophisticated weapons that would likely be used against Burma’s civilian population.
- 12/05/06**—**The benchmark Sensex index of the Bombay Stock Exchange rose above the 14,000 mark for the first time ever.**

- 12/04/06—Pakistani President Musharraf said Pakistan is “against independence” for Kashmir**, calling instead offering a four-point proposal that would lead to “self-governance,” defined as “falling between autonomy and independence.” Prime Minister Singh later welcomed the proposals, saying they “contribute to the ongoing thought process.”
- 12/01/06—At least 14 policemen were killed in a landmine attack by Maoist rebels** in the eastern Jharkhand state.
- 11/30/06—Indian police named a Pakistani national as the main conspirator behind the 7/11 Bombay terrorist bombings.**
- 11/28/06—Under Secretary of Commerce Franklin Lavin led a delegation of 250 American business executives to Bombay** on a mission to explore new opportunities to invest in India and develop new partnerships with companies there. The delegation represented 180 companies from a variety of sectors, including the nuclear sector, and was the largest-ever to visit India.
- 11/27/06—India successfully tested a rudimentary ballistic missile defense system** when a modified Prithvi II missile intercepted and destroyed another missile over the Bay of Bengal.
- 11/25/06—Seven security personnel and a militant were killed in separatist-related violence in Kashmir.**
- 11/24/06—Indian and Japanese coast guard ships conducted joint exercises in the Arabian Sea.**
- 11/21/06—During a four-day visit to New Delhi by Chinese President Hu**, the first such visit by a Chinese president since 1996, India and China issued a Joint Declaration outlining a “ten-pronged strategy” to boost bilateral socio-economic ties and defense cooperation, and to “reinforce their strategic partnership.” The two countries, which declared themselves “partners for mutual benefit” rather than rivals or competitors, also signed 13 pacts on a variety of bilateral initiatives. The Joint Declaration notably contained an agreement to “promote cooperation in the field of nuclear energy.” On the same day, during a visit to New Delhi to discuss bilateral and multilateral trade issues with top Indian leaders, **Agriculture Secretary Johannes urged India to “lead the way toward unlocking the Doha negotiations by offering real market access.”**
- 11/16/06—The Senate passed H.R. 5682, as amended, to enable civil nuclear cooperation with India**, by a vote of 85-12. On the same day, Foreign Minister Mukherjee met with Iran’s foreign minister in New Delhi, where the two officials agreed that “the economic potential of the [India-Iran] relationship needed to be actualized in the maximum.”
- 11/15/06—U.S. Under Secretary of Defense Edelman met with Defense Secretary Dutt in New Delhi for the eighth session of the U.S.-India Defense Policy Group**, where officials discussed bolstering bilateral cooperation in military security, technology, and trade. On the same day, **the India-Pakistan Composite Dialogue resumed** when Foreign Secretary Menon hosted a New Delhi visit by his Pakistani counterpart.

Author Contact Information

(name redacted)
Specialist in South Asian Affairs
[redacted]@crs.loc.gov, 7-....

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