

CRS Report for Congress

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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, 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.

- 02/07/06** — The United States joined India in supporting a major U.N. program to combat trafficking in persons in India. On the same day, the benchmark Sensex index of the Bombay Stock Exchange rose above the 10,000 mark for the first time ever. Also, former Prime Minister V.P. Singh asked New Delhi to review the July 2005 U.S.-India nuclear agreement in light of indications that Washington was using it as a lever against Tehran.
- 02/06/06** — **India announced that it would withdraw up to 5,000 troops from Indian Kashmir** in response to declining levels of violence there. The withdrawal removes perhaps 1% of all troops in the region and may be a gesture in the peace process with Pakistan. On the same day, large areas of Indian Kashmir were shut down by strikers protesting the publication in European newspapers of cartoons deemed offensive to Muslims.
- 02/05/06** — Leftist parties and the regional Samajwadi Party criticized New Delhi's 2/4 IAEA vote on Iran, calling it "unacceptable" and a capitulation to U.S. pressure. Some major newspaper editorials echoed the sentiments.
- 02/04/06** — **India voted with the majority on an IAEA resolution to "report" Iran's controversial nuclear program to the U.N. Security Council.** New Delhi called the resolution "well-balanced" in allowing diplomatic efforts to continue under the purview of the IAEA, and insisted that its vote should not be interpreted as detracting from India's traditionally close relations with Iran. The United States later expressed being pleased with India's vote. On the same day, airport workers ended four days of strikes when the government agreed to consider their concerns over airport

Acronyms:

BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party
IAEA: International Atomic
Energy Agency
LOC: Line of Control (Kashmir)

- privatization plans. Also, three suspected Maoist militants were killed in a gunbattle in the southern Andhra Pradesh state.
- 02/03/06** — **The Indian Navy declined an offer to lease two U.S. P-3C maritime reconnaissance aircraft**, calling the arrangements “expensive and time-consuming.” On the same day, the opposition BJP took power in the southern Karnataka state and its capital, Bangalore, the first time the BJP has led a government in southern India.
- 02/02/06** — **Director of Intelligence Negroponte told a Senate panel** that “rapid economic growth and increasing technological competence are securing India’s leading role in South Asia, while helping India to realize its longstanding ambition to become a global power.” On the same day, New Delhi formally launched the country’s most ambitious-ever anti-poverty initiative that would provide guaranteed jobs for one member of each of India’s 60 million rural households.
- 02/01/06** — Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs Dobriansky led the U.D. delegation for **a fourth meeting of the U.S.-India Global Issues Forum** was held in New Delhi. On the same day, contracts for the privatization of major Indian airports triggered strikes by 22,000 airport workers, closing the Calcutta airport and disrupting service in those of Delhi and Bombay. Also, Prime Minister Singh said India is committed to the “friendliest possible relations” with Pakistan.
- 01/31/06** — **Twenty major U.S. exhibitors, including the U.S. Army, participated in a four-day Defense Expo** in New Delhi. On the same day, India and Pakistan signed an agreement to relaunch a cross-border train service that was halted in 1965. Also, former Indian National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra said the July 2005 agreement on U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation could end up compromising India’s strategic interests and “should be thrown in the waste paper basket.”
- 01/30/06** — Texas-based Dell Inc. announced plans to add 5,000 jobs to its India operations, an increase of 50%.
- 01/29/06** — U.S. Ambassador to India Mulford reportedly said that India must “deliver a credible plan” for separation of its civilian and military nuclear facilities and “that standard had not been met yet.” The Ambassador also reportedly criticized Indian leftist parties for their opposition to opening India’s retail market to foreign investment. These parties later demanded the Ambassador’s recall for his “unbecoming” comments. On the same day, Prime Minister Singh announced major changes to his Cabinet, including replacement of Oil Minister Aiyar with Murli Deora, who is considered to be pro-reform and pro-U.S.
- 01/28/06** — Eight people, including six suspected separatist militants and two Indian soldiers, were reported killed in gunbattles in Indian Kashmir.
- 01/27/06** — Saudi King Abdullah visited New Delhi, where **India and Saudi Arabia signed a pact** to expand bilateral counterterrorism cooperation, trade and investment opportunities, and to develop a “strategic energy partnership.” On the same day, the influential regional Samajwadi Party announced plans to launch large-scale protests upon the expected visit of President Bush for his “anti-Iran and anti-Iraq policies.” The party and former Prime Minister V.P. Singh also demanded the recall of the U.S. ambassador for his 1/25 remarks. Also, India and Israel reportedly

- finalized their largest-ever joint weapons development pact involving a long-range air defense missile system.
- 01/26/06** — Former Prime Minister Vajpayee reportedly called the U.S. Ambassador's 1/25 remarks "outrageous" and a violation of all diplomatic norms, and leftist parties called the remarks "a serious affront to India and its sovereignty." On the same day, Secretary of State Rice told an interviewer "India has to make some difficult choices" with regard to reaching an agreement on U.S.-India nuclear power cooperation, but that progress was being made toward that goal.
- 01/25/06** — **U.S. Ambassador to India Mulford explicitly linked progress on a proposed U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation agreement with India's upcoming IAEA vote on Iran's nuclear program**, saying if India chose not to vote with the United States, he believed the U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation initiative "will die in the Congress." The External Affairs Ministry later stated that India "categorically rejects" any attempts to link the two issues. A State Department spokesman later called the Ambassador's comments a "personal opinion." On the same day, Trade Minister Nath announced new regulations that will allow foreign investors to own 51% of retail outlets selling only single-brand goods.
- 01/24/06** — **President Bush said he would travel to India** in March 2006.
- 01/22/06** — The national coalition-leading Congress Party issued a resolution on external security affairs which included a reiteration of India's "commitment to the ideals of the Non-Aligned Movement" and a strong endorsement of both the July 2005 U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation agreement and the June 2005 U.S.-India defense framework agreement. The resolution also expressed "serious concerns about terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan" and called on Islamabad to "dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism completely." On the same day, a series of bomb attacks by separatist militants killed at least two people and damaged oil facilities in the northeastern Assam state.
- 01/21/06** — Oil Minister Aiyar reportedly said that Iranian natural gas is critical to poverty eradication efforts in India and he expressed hope that the United States would be "sensitive to [India's] energy requirements."
- 01/20/06** — **Concluding two days of talks in New Delhi, Under Secretary of State Burns** called negotiations toward establishing U.S.-India nuclear power cooperation "a very difficult undertaking" with "some difficulties ahead," but he expressed hope that an agreement would be reached. Foreign Secretary Saran said that India's "long-standing, close" relations with Iran leads the Indian government to seek a non-confrontational approach to the issue of Tehran's controversial nuclear program.
- 01/19/06** — Career Foreign Service officer **Richard Boucher was nominated to be Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs.**
- 01/18/06** — **During a visit to Bombay, Under Secretary of State Burns** reviewed extensive common interests of the United States and India, and said the U.S.-India relationship stands on its own and "is not directed at any other country." He also called negotiations toward establishing bilateral nuclear power cooperation "quite challenging" and "quite complex," but expressed confidence that an agreement would be reached. On the same day, **foreign secretary-level India-Pakistan talks ended** with Foreign Secretary Saran offering a positive assessment of the ongoing "composite

dialogue” while also asserting that Pakistan had not taken sufficient steps to end “cross-border terrorism” in India. Also, New York-based Human Rights Watch released an annual report noting “important positive steps” by the Indian government in 2005 with respect to human rights, but also reviewing persistent problems such as abuses by security forces and a failure to contain violent religious extremism.

- 01/17/06** — An unnamed senior Indian official reportedly said that India would move forward on a proposed Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project regardless of “political developments” in India-Iran relations. On the same day, seven people, including five suspected separatist militants, were reported killed in gunbattles in Indian Kashmir.
- 01/15/06** — India’s army chief said his forces had stemmed militant infiltrations in Kashmir, but warned that such infiltrations across borders with Nepal and Bangladesh may be increasing. On the same day, five suspected separatist militants, including two members of the Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist group, were reported killed in gunbattles in Indian Kashmir.
- 01/14/06** — An alliance of leftist parties promised protest demonstrations wherever President Bush goes in his upcoming visit to India.
- 01/13/06** — Press reports that India might withdraw from a proposed Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project due to U.S. objections spurred India’s oil minister to reiterate that New Delhi was “fully committed” to the venture.
- 01/12/06** — U.S. and Indian officials in Bombay concluded **the inaugural meeting of the Civil Nuclear Working Group** as part of the U.S.-India Energy Dialogue. On the same day, **India and China agreed to cooperate in securing overseas oil resources.**
- 01/10/06** — **Foreign Secretary Saran concluded a visit to Beijing** where he discussed the India-China “strategic partnership” and unresolved border disputes with top Chinese leaders.
- 01/09/06** — The British medical journal *Lancet* published a study estimating that up to 10 million Indian females are “missing” due to sex-selective abortions and infanticide over the past two decades.
- 01/08/06** — **Pakistani President Musharraf accused India of arming and financing militants fighting in Baluchistan.** New Delhi categorically rejected the allegations as being “utterly baseless and false.”
- 01/07/06** — Pakistani President Musharraf offered a new initiative calling for the withdrawal of Indian troops from three key Kashmiri cities in return for Pakistani assistance in ending Islamic militancy in the region. New Delhi quickly rejected the proposal, saying such decisions are a matter of India’s sovereignty and “cannot be dictated by any foreign government.” On the same day, Prime Minister Singh formally launched a program to award citizenship to people of Indian origin living overseas.
- 01/06/06** — Indian and Pakistani officials met in New Delhi to finalize plans for a new cross-border railway service to begin in February.
- 01/05/06** — Secretary of State Rice told an interviewer that India “will have to access civil nuclear energy if it’s not to be totally dependent on carbon and if it is not to be dependent on carbon relationships with countries that we’ve had concerns about.”
- 01/04/06** — A senior State Department official said the United States is “absolutely opposed” to any gas pipeline projects involving Iran.

- 01/03/06 — The leader of India’s largest communist party said the Left Front would withdraw its support for the Congress-led coalition if it continued efforts to become a “strategic partner” of the United States.
- 01/02/06 — The main opposition BJP selected moderate Uttar Pradesh politician Rajnath Singh to lead the party following Lal Advani’s resignation.
- 12/31/05 — Suspected Maoist militants killed a senior police official in the northeastern Manipur state.
- 12/29/05 — Former Prime Minister and decades-long BJP notable **Atal Vajpayee announced his retirement from politics.**
- 12/28/05 — **Gunmen opened fire on conference attendees at a leading Indian science institute in Bangalore**, killing one and wounding four others. Police later arrested suspected members the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist group in connection with the attack.
- 12/27/05 — **The United States imposed sanctions on two Indian chemical concerns for selling WMD-related materials to Iran.** New Delhi later called the move “unjustified.” On the same day, an External Affairs Ministry spokesman told a questioner that India “has been watching with concern the spiraling violence in Baluchistan [Pakistan] and the heavy military action” and that New Delhi hopes Islamabad will “exercise restraint” in the region. A Pakistani official later sternly advised Indian leaders to “mind their own business.”
- 12/26/05 — Suspected Maoist militants killed four Indian railway police and attacked a police station in the eastern Orissa state.
- 12/22/05 — Opposition BJP figures in the Indian Parliament accused the Congress-led coalition of allowing India to become a “U.S. stooge” and warned that the U.S. Congress was preparing to “shift the goal posts” on a civil nuclear cooperation agreement.
- 12/21/05 — **Foreign Secretary Saran visited Washington**, where he met with top U.S. officials, including Secretary of State Rice, and reportedly presented a preliminary Indian plan to separate its civilian and military nuclear facilities as per the July 2005 U.S.-India Joint Statement. Saran lauded “dramatically” transforming U.S.-India relations and the “profound implications” of recent bilateral economic understandings, and he argued that full U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation would aid international nonproliferation efforts while facilitating further Indian economic growth. He said that suggested “improvements” to the nuclear deal — such as requiring India to end its production of fissile material — would be “deal-breakers.” On the same day, Indian and Pakistani officials meeting in Lahore agreed to launch new cross-border bush service.
- 12/19/05 — Canada urged India to allow IAEA access to the Canadian-supplied CIRUS nuclear facility which many experts believe was illicitly used by India to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons. On the same day, four suspected separatist militants were killed in a gunbattle in Indian Kashmir.
- 12/17/05 — India and Pakistan agreed to begin work by 2007 on a proposed Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project. On the same day, India bolstered by 20% its eastern Border Security Force, where 53,000 troops seek to block illegal migration and the movements of armed militants from Bangladesh.
- 12/16/05 — Two suspected separatist militants and a soldier were killed in a gunbattle in Indian Kashmir.

- 12/15/05** — **H.Con.Res. 318**, expressing concern regarding nuclear proliferation with respect to proposed full civilian nuclear cooperation with India, was introduced in the House.
- 12/14/05** — An Indian court sentenced 11 people to life imprisonment for their roles in lethal anti-Muslim rioting in Gujarat in 2002. On the same day, Indian soldiers killed six suspected separatist militants in a gunbattle near Srinagar, Kashmir.
- 12/07/05** — Defense Minister Mukherjee said that India-U.S. security relations did not include plans to cooperate on missile defense or in multilateral military operations outside the ambit of the United Nations. On the same day, Washington-based Microsoft Corp. announced plans to invest \$1.7 billion in India over the next four years.
- 12/06/05** — Senator Richard Lugar warned that Congress would be unlikely to approve the July 2005 U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation agreement if India presented an “opaque or incomprehensible” plan to separate its military and civilian nuclear facilities.
- 12/05/05** — Former External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh resigned from government following accusations he was involved in corruption in the U.N.-Iraq oil-for-food program. On the same day, California-based Intel Corp. announced plans to invest \$1 billion in India.
- 11/30/05** — Under Secretary of Commerce McCormick led the U.S. delegation at **the fourth meeting of the U.S.-India High-Technology Cooperation Group** in New Delhi.
- 11/23/05** — Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld met with Defense Secretary Dutt for **the seventh session of the U.S.-India Defense Policy Group**.
- 11/18/05** — Eighteen experts, scholars, and former U.S. government officials sent a **letter urging Members of the Congress to “critically examine” the 7/18 U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation agreement**, saying the proposal “poses far-reaching and potentially adverse implications for U.S. nuclear nonproliferation objectives” and is unlikely to bring India “into closer alignment with other U.S. strategic objectives.”
- 11/13/05** — U.S. Trade Representative Portman met with Commerce Minister Nath in New Delhi for **the inaugural session of the U.S.-India Trade Policy Forum**, where the two countries agreed to establish several focus groups to promote bilateral trade.
- 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.
- 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.”