

CRS Report for Congress

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India: Chronology of Events

K. Alan Kronstadt
Analyst in Asian Affairs
Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division

Summary

This report provides a reverse chronology of major events involving India and India-U.S. relations from September 2001.¹ For a review of India-U.S. relations, see CRS Issue Brief IB93097, *India-U.S. Relations*. This report will be updated regularly.

- 11/06/03** — A team of Indian parliamentarians visiting Tehran announced a **bilateral India-Iran agreement** to pursue joint strategies to combat terrorism.
- 11/05/03** — **New Delhi and Beijing announced plans to hold joint naval exercises** off the coast of Shanghai in November.
- 11/03/03** — A spokesman for Pakistan's Foreign office claimed that Indian "repression and state terrorism" in Kashmir had intensified in recent months.
- 11/02/03** — PM Vajpayee told a meeting of top Indian military commanders that their strategic planning should extend to horizons beyond South Asia, from the Persian Gulf in the west to the Straits of Malacca in the east to Afghanistan, Central Asia, and China in the north.
- 11/01/03** — PM Vajpayee said that "a meaningful dialogue with Pakistan is only possible when we see sincerity in their efforts to stop cross-border infiltration and to dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism." On the same day, Defense Minister Fernandes reportedly said that "India is serious about taking back its portion [of Kashmir] illegally held by Pakistan." Also, the head of India's air force said that, contrary to previous reports,

Acronyms

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

¹ Entries are on a day-to-day basis going back 60-90 days, then include periodic high-profile events. Sources include 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); *Indian Express* (Mumbai); *Dawn* (Karachi), and *Daily Times* (Lahore).

India will use its satellites for communications purposes only, and not for weapons delivery.

- 10/29/03** — In its first detailed response to New Delhi's 10/22 initiative, **Islamabad welcomed India's proposals** and accepted several of them — including a restoration of sporting ties, the establishment of a joint coast guard hotline, and the resumption of travel negotiations — while also expressing disappointment that India continues to shun direct bilateral dialogue with Pakistan. Islamabad's response came in the form of a 13-point list of measures, some of which New Delhi said were attached with “impractical, extraneous, or delaying conditions.” On the same day, an Indian appeals court overturned the conviction of a Muslim professor who had been accused of conspiracy under the controversial Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA).
- 10/27/03** — PM Vajpayee began a visit to the northeastern state of Nagaland, the first such visit by an Indian Prime Minister in six years. He discussed with Naga officials further devolvement of power and announced a \$76 million development package for the state, which has been wracked by separatist violence for more than 50 years. On the same day, police in Indian Kashmir claimed to have killed a “top militant” and chief of operations for the Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist group during a gun battle in Srinagar.
- 10/25/03** — Deputy PM Advani said that his talks with Kashmiri separatists will involve “no compromise on the country's unity and sovereignty,” but that New Delhi is willing to consider a “decentralization” of power.
- 10/23/03** — Indian national Security Advisor Mishra met with a top Chinese official in New Delhi to discuss a long-standing border dispute.
- 10/22/03** — **The Indian government unveiled a set of 12 proposals** meant to improve its relations with Pakistan. Many of the steps involve increasing people-to-people contacts between Pakistan and India. The United States warmly welcomed the Indian initiative. New Delhi also announced that **Deputy PM Advani would represent India's central government in its first-ever proposed negotiations with Kashmiri separatists.**
- 10/21/03** — In the first official visit of its kind in many years, a group of three Pakistani civil servants traveled to Indian-held Kashmir to inspect hydroelectric projects on the Chenab River there.
- 10/17/03** — **Up to 60,000 Hindu activists were arrested** across the state of Uttar Pradesh as they tried to reach a banned rally in the town of Ayodhya, site of a controversial temple that is claimed by both Hindus and Muslims. On the same day, apparent Islamic militants launched an attack on the home of the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, killing two Indian soldiers. Indian Deputy PM Advani blamed the attack on the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist group.
- 10/16/03** — **The U.S. Treasury Department identified Indian crime figure Dawood Ibrahim as a “global terrorist”** with links to both Al Qaeda and Lashkar-e-Taiba. Ibrahim, wanted by the Indian government for 1993 Bombay bombings that killed and injured thousands, is believed to be in Pakistan. On the same day, Pakistan's Interior Minister accused India of operating 6 “terrorist camps” in Afghanistan to train dissidents for carrying out attacks on Pakistan. Also, India's External Affairs Minister said Pakistan has done “nothing at all to stop cross-border terrorism.”

- 10/14/03 — Defence Minister Fernandes reportedly indicated that India and Israel have agreed in principal to hold joint military exercises in the future.
- 10/13/03 — A press report indicated that U.S. officials are reviewing an Indian request to purchase 12 PAC-3 tactical missile defense systems from the United States, a purchase that some analysts claim will upset the balance of power in South Asia. On the same day, India and Singapore signed a defense cooperation agreement establishing a bilateral Defense Policy Dialogue.
- 10/11/03 — Indian Chief of Army Staff Vij suggested that Al Qaeda may be active in Kashmir as “most of the terrorists killed in the state are foreign national these days. He claimed to have “information of 85 “terrorist camps” existing in Pakistan-held Kashmir. On the same day, Pakistan’s Information Minister insisted that there are no militant training camps operating on Pakistani soil.
- 10/10/03 — India signed an estimated \$1 billion deal to purchase Il-76 transport planes from Russia that will be outfitted with sophisticated **Phalcon airborne early warning systems** in Israel. The Pakistani government and some independent analysts claim that the purchase will upset the balance of power in South Asia.
- 10/09/03 — A trio of leftist Indian political parties came out against further joint India-U.S. military exercises, calling them “detrimental to the security of the nation.”
- 10/08/03 — **India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) signed their first accords**, agreeing to expand trade relations and cooperate in combating international terrorism. India also joined ASEAN’s 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. On the same day, **India-China relations were improved** when it emerged that Beijing was conceding New Delhi’s sovereignty over the previously contested Himalayan state of Sikkim.
- 10/07/03 — A *Christian Science Monitor* report indicated that infiltration rates at the Kashmiri LOC were on the rise, with the Indian Army killing 104 militants there so far this year, up from 72 last year.
- 10/06/03 — India’s Chief of Air Staff announced that a new aerospace command had begun work to develop weapons platforms for space.
- 10/05/03 — U.S. and Indian naval forces began their largest-ever joint exercises off India’s southern coast. The five-day “Malabar 2003” includes an American nuclear submarine, among other vessels.
- 10/03/03 — Secretary of State Powell said that the United States has “really restructured a new ... quite strong and satisfactory relationship” with India, and that **progress is being made on the “glide path” toward agreement on the “Trinity” issues** of high-technology trade, and space and civilian nuclear cooperation. On the same day, India’s benchmark Sensex stock index rose above the 4,500 mark and the rupee appreciated to a more than three-year high against the U.S. dollar, adding to economic optimism.
- 10/01/03 — Apparent leftist rebels attempted to assassinate the chief minister of India’s southern Andhra Pradesh state in a landmine attack.
- 09/30/03 — An Indian court deferred criminal proceedings against Human Resources Minister Joshi for conspiracy charges related to the 1992 destruction of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya and ensuing riots.

- 09/28/03 — Secretary of State Powell stated that for “a variety of reasons,” including domestic politics, **India would not be in a position to provide troops for service in Iraq.** On the same day, the newly-elected head of the Hurriyat Conference of Kashmiri separatists, hardliner Syed Ali Shah Geelani, reportedly claimed that the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist groups are “friends” and “benefactors” of his organization.
- 09/26/03 — **Indian PM Vajpayee ruled out any bilateral talks with Pakistan** during the January 2004 SAARC summit in Islamabad.
- 09/25/03 — While speaking to the U.N. General Assembly, Indian PM **Vajpayee contended that Pakistan had “let terrorism become a tool of blackmail.”** He also told President Bush that continued cross-border terrorism from Pakistan was making it difficult for India to maintain its peace initiative.
- 09/24/03 — While speaking to the U.N. General Assembly, Pakistani President **Musharraf criticized the “brutal suppression of the Kashmiris” under “Indian occupation.”**
- 09/23/03 — Indian Defense Minister Fernandes said that a U.S.-Israel-India axis against terrorism “does not seem feasible” due to continued U.S. links with Pakistan.
- 09/22/03 — Leading Hindu activist Dara Singh was sentenced to death for the 1999 murder of an Australian missionary and his two children.
- 09/20/03 — Pakistan formally invited the Indian prime minister to attend a January 2004 SAARC summit meeting in Islamabad.
- 09/19/03 — An Indian court ruled that Deputy PM Advani would not be tried for conspiracy charges related to the 1992 destruction of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya and ensuing riots. On the same day, one week after being criticized by the Indian Supreme Court, prosecutors in the western Gujarat state agreed to seek a retrial of 21 Hindus acquitted of murder during communal riots there in February and March 2002.
- 09/16/03 — India’s Supreme Court stalled the government’s attempts to privatize two major oil companies by ruling that only parliament — and not the cabinet — can approve their sale.
- 09/15/03 — **The Hurriyat Conference of Kashmiri separatists formally split** after a dispute between hardliners allied with Islamabad and those favoring negotiation with New Delhi.
- 09/14/03 — **Surging separatist violence in Kashmir** reportedly killed as many as 437 civilians, Islamic militants, and Indian security men during the first two weeks of September.
- 09/12/03 — India’s Supreme Court strongly admonished authorities in the western Gujarat state for their handling of attempts to prosecute those involved in deadly communal rioting there in February and March 2002. On the same day, Indian police claimed to have shot dead the “mastermind” of an August terrorist bombing in Bombay that left 52 people dead.
- 09/11/03 — While in New Delhi, Assistant Secretary of State Rocca said that the “outlook is bright for a vigorous global partnership” between the United States and India, while also noting that differences remain “over the development of India’s nuclear and missile programs, and the pace of India’s economic reforms.”

- 09/09/03 — A high-level U.S. Navy delegation arrived in New Delhi for negotiations on the sale to India of 8 P3 Orion maritime patrol aircraft.
- 09/08/03 — **Israeli PM Sharon arrived in India** to discuss the strengthening of political and military ties between Israel and India. Indian Muslim groups and leftist political parties denounced the diplomacy. On the same day, a landmine explosion killed 12, including 10 policeman, in the northeastern Bihar state.
- 09/07/03 — A potentially decisive split in the Kashmiri separatist Hurriyat Conference came when thirteen constituent members expelled the group's new chairman, who two weeks earlier had suggested that Pakistan need not be included in talks between Kashmiri separatists and New Delhi.
- 09/05/03 — US and Indian special forces soldiers began a two-week joint exercise in Ladakh near the India-China border.
- 09/03/03 — British company BAE Systems was awarded a \$1.7 billion contract to supply India with 66 Hawk fighter jets.
- 09/01/03 — **The first-ever session of Indian's Nuclear Command Authority** met to "consolidate India's nuclear deterrent."
- 08/31/03 — New Delhi police killed two suspected members of the Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist group who reportedly were planning a "spectacular attack" in the Indian capital.
- 08/25/03 — **Two car bombs exploded in Mumbai, India**, killing 52 and spurring New Delhi to suggest a role of Pakistan-based terrorist groups in the attack. On the same day, Indian and French naval forces began a joint exercise in the Arabian Sea.
- 08/23/03 — In a significant policy shift, Kashmiri separatist Hurriyat Conference Chairman Ansari expressed a willingness to hold talks with New Delhi without requiring the inclusion of Pakistan in the dialogue process.
- 08/14/03 — Apparent Independence Day-related **separatist violence left 34 civilians and 6 rebels dead** in India's northeastern Tripura state.
- 08/07/03 — A meeting of the **U.S.-India Defense Policy Group** ended in Washington.
- 07/03 — **Full diplomatic relations between New Delhi and Islamabad were restored** after an 18-month hiatus when the new Indian ambassador arrived in Pakistan. Also, **India rejected an American request to send peacekeeping troops to Iraq**, saying it would only consider doing so under an "explicit" U.N. mandate. Finally, Indian Foreign Secretary Sibal led a delegation to Washington for the first meeting of the **U.S.-India High-Technology Cooperation Group**.
- 06/03 — A major improvement in relations between the world's two most populous countries came when **Indian PM Vajpayee traveled to China**, the first visit by an Indian leader in more than a decade.
- 04/03 — **A significant thaw in India-Pakistan relations** came with the first direct contact between national leaders since the July 2001 summit in Agra, India. The two agreed to restore full diplomatic relations, reopen key transportation links, and pursue further confidence-building measures.
- 03/03 — **The Indian government called the U.S.-led war in Iraq "unjustified" and "avoidable."** Also, apparent Muslim extremists shot and killed 24 Hindu villagers in Indian Kashmir.
- 02/03 — The incumbent BJP suffered an upset loss to the Congress Party in state elections in the Hindu-majority northern state of Himachal Pradesh.

- 01/03 — **India and Iran launched a “strategic partnership”** with the signing of the New Delhi Declaration and seven other substantive agreements. India also signed a “landmark” defense cooperation protocol with Russia. Also, India announced that it has set up a Nuclear Command Authority.
- 12/02 — Elections in the state of Gujarat, the site of communal violence earlier in 2002, resulted in an unexpectedly decisive victory for the incumbent Hindu-nationalist BJP party, which ran a divisive communal campaign.
- 10/02 — **State elections in India’s Jammu and Kashmir state**, widely recognized as being free and fair, resulted in the ousting of the long-ruling National Conference and the seating of a new coalition government that vowed to “soften” policy toward separatist militants. Also, India announced a major redeployment of troops away from border areas, signaling **an end to a tense 10-month-long military face-off** with Pakistan. Finally, Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs Dobriansky met with Indian officials for the inaugural session of a new India-U.S. Global Issues Forum.
- 09/02 — Gunmen stormed a Hindu temple in Gujarat and killed 23 worshipers. The attackers were suspected to be Islamic militants seeking revenge for February 2002 anti-Muslim rioting in the state.
- 06/02 — Intense international diplomatic pressure — including multiple visits to the region by senior U.S. government officials — apparently was sufficient to persuade New Delhi to refrain from taking military action against Pakistan. Key to the effort were explicit **promises by Pakistani President Musharraf to U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Armitage** that all infiltration of militants across the Line of Control and into Indian-held Kashmir would be halted.
- 05/02 — **A terrorist attack on an Indian army base in Jammu and Kashmir killed 34**, mostly women and children. New Delhi blamed the attack on the “cross-border terrorism” of Pakistan-sponsored Islamic militants and vowed to fight a “decisive war.”
- 02/02 — After Muslims reportedly set fire to a train carrying Hindu activists, killing 58, **India’s worst communal rioting in more than a decade** spread across the Gujarat state and resulted in the deaths of up to 2,000, mostly Muslims, at the hands of vengeful Hindu mobs. Human rights groups accused top state governmental leaders of abetting the violence.
- 12/01 — **A terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament complex in New Delhi killed 14**. India blamed the attack on Pakistan-backed Kashmiri militants and began a massive military mobilization along the Pakistan-India frontier. Also in December, the United States designated two Pakistan-based militant groups — Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed — as Foreign Terrorist Organizations under U.S. law.
- 10/01 — **A terrorist attack on the assembly building in India’s Jammu and Kashmir state killed 34**. New Delhi blamed the attack on Pakistan-backed separatist militants.
- 09/01 — After major terrorist attacks on the United States, **India offered its full support for U.S. counterterrorism efforts** in the region.