

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 substantive review, see CRS Issue Brief IB93097, *India-U.S. Relations*. This report will be updated regularly.

- 12/02/03** — Mr. Shashank, a career foreign service officer, replaced Kanwal Sibal as **India's new foreign secretary**. Shashank promised to seek normalization of India-Pakistan relations. On the same day, India and Brazil signed a defense cooperation agreement. Also, India's navy chief said that New Delhi had agreed to pay Moscow \$652 million for the 29-year-old Russian aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov.
- 12/01/03** — Voters in the Indian states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, and New Delhi went to the **polls to choose new state legislatures** in what is viewed to be an important test of BJP and Congress Party strength ahead of national elections in 2004. Exit polling suggests that the BJP fared better than expected. Election-related violence left at least five people dead. On the same day, **Pakistan and India agreed to restore airline overflight and landing rights** by January 1, 2004. Also, President Musharraf offered to withdraw all of Pakistan's 50,000 troops from Kashmir if New Delhi agreed to pull back its estimated 700,000 soldiers from the disputed region. India had no immediate response to the offer.

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).

- 11/29/03 — During a joint press conference with the European Union president, PM Vajpayee said that India was already in the “second phase” of economic reforms and was concentrating on infrastructure development.
- 11/26/03 — At midnight, **Pakistan and India began a formal cease-fire** at their shared international border, as well as along the LOC and Actual Ground Position Line on the Siachen glacier. The United States hailed the move as “steps toward peace [that] offer hope for real progress in the region.”
- 11/24/03 — An Indian government spokesman announced New Delhi’s intention to match Pakistan’s cease-fire order at the LOC while extending it to the Siachen glacier area to the north. He also warned that the cease-fire would fail unless Pakistan halts its material support for Kashmiri insurgents.
- 11/23/03 — In a major address, **Pakistani PM Jamali announced a unilateral cease-fire** by Pakistani forces at the LOC to begin on the final night of Ramadan (11/26). On the same day, Indian External Affairs Minister Sinha strongly rejected the notion that warming India-U.S. or India-ASEAN ties are aimed at “containing” China. He did, however, add that the Islamabad-Beijing nuclear and missile proliferation “nexus” caused serious concerns in new Delhi. Also, India test-fired for a fifth time the BrahMos cruise missile it developed jointly with Russia.
- 11/21/03 — Representatives of the Kashmiri separatist Hurriyat Conference said they had drafted a “road map” to resolve the dispute over Kashmir. On the same day, India’s Supreme Court halted ten high-profile trials related to communal violence in Gujarat in early 2002. The action may pave the way for an indictment of the state’s Hindu nationalist BJP government, which has been accused of complicity in the rioting.
- 11/20/03 — During a visit to New Delhi, Under Secretary of Commerce Juster reiterated President Bush’s desire to further strengthen relations with India on a broad front, while noting that, from the U.S. perspective, India could do much to make the country more attractive for U.S. trade and investment. On the same day, a 48-hour house-to-house battle between Indian soldiers and two suspected separatist militants in Srinagar, Kashmir ended with the rebels, three soldiers, and a civilian dead. New Delhi held an offshoot of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist group responsible for the attack.
- 11/19/03 — Violence between Assamese- and Hindi-speaking people in India’s northeastern Assam state left 25 dead and more than 100 homes destroyed by fire. Rioting spurred by a controversial railway job recruitment program brought army troops to the region and led the separatist militant United Liberation Front of Assam to demand that all Hindi speakers leave the state.
- 11/14/03 — David Mulford, chairman of Credit Suisse First Boston, former Treasury Department official (1984-1992), and personal friend of President Bush, was nominated to be the **next U.S. Ambassador to India**. On the same day, a notable **sign of improved India-China relations** came when the two nations’ navies held their first-ever joint exercises off the coast of Shanghai. Also, PM Vajpayee arrived in Syria, where the New Delhi and Damascus governments signed nine agreements meant to boost trade in such areas as agriculture and information technology.
- 11/12/03 — A press report quoted an Indian Defense Ministry spokesman as saying that India is actively upgrading Tajikistan’s Anyi air base and has plans to

- station troops and warplanes there to support its energy security interests in Central Asia.
- 11/10/03** — India’s Supreme Court issued a stay on the arrest of six journalists imprisoned on the orders of the Tamil Nadu state assembly in what was described by many as an egregious attack on press freedoms.
- 11/09/03** — Press reports indicated that Air India plans to buy a total of 28 new aircraft from both Airbus Industrie and Boeing over the next five years in deals worth \$2.1 billion.
- 11/07/03** — Pakistani President Musharraf vowed to rectify “through all means possible” the “imbalance” being created by India’s “massive acquisition of arms.” On the same day, authorities in Indian Kashmir said that suspected militants had shot and killed a prominent member of the state’s governing People’s Democratic Party.
- 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, 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.”
- 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.
- 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. On the same day, a press report indicated that a retired top Indian nuclear scientist is believed to have assisted in the construction of Iran’s nuclear power plant.
- 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, 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.
- 10/10/03 — 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.
- 10/08/03 — **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.
- 10/06/03 — 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.
- 10/03/03 — Secretary of State Powell said 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.
- 10/01/03 — Apparent leftist rebels attempted to assassinate the chief minister of India's southern Andhra Pradesh state in a landmine attack.
- 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 separatist groups, 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.

- 09/25/03** — 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” because of continued links with Pakistan.
- 09/15/03** — **The Hurriyat Conference of Kashmiri separatists formally split** after a dispute between hardliners and moderates.
- 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.
- 09/09/03** — 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.
- 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, the majority of which are to be built under license in Bangalore.
- 09/01/03** — The **first-ever session of Indian’s Nuclear Command Authority** met to “consolidate India’s nuclear deterrent.”
- 08/03** — **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. Also, apparent Independence Day-related separatist violence left 34 civilians and 6 rebels dead in India’s northeastern Tripura state.
- 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**, 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.
- 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.