



Country Profile: India

India: The Basics

Size (square miles)	1,269,346 - Roughly one third the size of the U.S.
Population	1,147,995,898 - Roughly three times the population of the U.S.
Major Ethnic Groups	Indo-Aryan 72%, Dravidian 25%, Mongoloid and other 3%
Major Religious Groups	Hindu 80.5%, Muslim 13.4%, Christian 2.3%, Sikh 1.9%
GDP Growth Rate 2007	9.2%

Government Overview

The Republic of India is a democracy structured similarly to the United States as a federal republic of states, governed under a constitution and incorporating various features of the constitutional systems of the United Kingdom, the United States, and other democracies. The power of the government is separated into three branches: executive, parliament, and a judiciary headed by a Supreme Court. Like the United States, India is a union of states, but its federalism is slightly different. The central government has power over the states, including the power to redraw state boundaries; but the states, many of which have large populations sharing a common language, culture, and history, have an identity that is for some Indians more significant than that of the country as a whole.

Freedom House Political Rights Score: Free

Key Players



Manmohan Singh: Current Prime Minister of India and member of the left-leaning Indian National Congress Party. He is considered one of the most influential figures in India's recent history, mainly because of the economic reforms he initiated in 1991 when he was Finance Minister under Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. These reforms transformed India's closed, socialist economy into a more liberal, open market and heralded significant economic growth. Singh has been the image of the Congress Party's campaign to defuse religious tensions and conflicts and bolster political support from minorities such as Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs.



Pratibha Devisingh Patil: Current President of India, a largely ceremonial office. Patil is a member of the Congress Party, and is the first woman to hold the office. Since Pratibha Patil's nomination as a presidential candidate, the right-leaning Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has highlighted her past activities, accusing her of corruption. BJP leader Arun Shourie authored two articles published as a booklet titled "Does This Tainted Person Deserve to Become President of India?" Another BJP leader, Arun Jaitley, announced the launch of a website called "Know Pratibha Patil," which contains various media reports and documents concerning the questionable financial dealings of both Patil and her family.

Indian-U.S. Relations: A Counterweight to China?

Many U.S. policymakers see India as a potential ally in the event of a conflict with China. The relationship is often referred to as one between the “world’s oldest democracy and the world’s largest democracy,” and the two countries have extensive and growing economic ties, especially since the liberalization of India’s economy in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Growing ties between the United States and India also tap into a long-standing rivalry between China and India for influence in Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and Tibet. China and India are also competing for energy resources, and both are seeking expanded control of the Indian Ocean by increasing the range and effectiveness of their navies, and developing bases on small islands throughout the region, often referred to as the “string of pearls.” The two countries fought a border war in 1962, in which China defeated India but then retreated to its side of the disputed border. In the words of University of Washington Professor John Garver, relations between China and India can best be described as a “protracted contest.”

Although this “protracted contest” makes the United States a natural partner for democratic India, relations between the United States and India are marred by historical suspicions and present day controversies that call into question the extent to which the United States and India can forge a deeper partnership:

- During India and China’s brief border war in 1962, India asked for U.S. assistance in case of a larger Chinese attack, but U.S. leaders were preoccupied with the Cuban Missile Crisis and didn’t respond until the war was over. Consequently, Indian leaders have never quite trusted the United States to come to their aid in times of need, especially regarding China.
- During the early Cold War India was a major player – along with Egypt and Indonesia – in the Non-Aligned Movement, an international organization founded in 1955 whose member-states did not wish to formally ally themselves with either the United States or the Soviet Union. This created significant tensions in the U.S.-India relationship, as the U.S. wanted India to ally with them against the Soviets.
- Instead, India’s arch-rival, Pakistan, allied with the U.S. against the Soviet Union. Decades of U.S.-Pakistan alliance have deepened Indian distrust of the United States.
- Today, India’s strategic relationships with Iran and Myanmar are also points of contention between Washington and New Delhi. In recent years, India and Myanmar have expanded their economic ties and signed a memorandum of understanding on intelligence exchange. Regarding Iran, India’s growing energy needs and its mostly benign view of Iran’s intentions stands in stark contrast with the U.S. evaluation of Iranian intentions.

The U.S.-India Nuclear Deal



The most recent attempt to deepen U.S.-Indian ties began in 2005 when President Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh signed an agreement on a “U.S.-India Strategic Partnership.” As a sign of his commitment to improving U.S.-Indian relations, President Bush hosted a rare state dinner for Prime Minister Singh, invited him to address a joint session of Congress, and signed a joint statement opening the doors of U.S.-Indian nuclear cooperation. This cooperation had been frozen since India’s unauthorized testing of a nuclear bomb in 1998, signaling its public entrance into the world’s nuclear powers after decades of nuclear development brought India an operational nuclear weapons system in the early-1990s.

According to the proposed deal:

- India would declare some of its nuclear reactors to be for civilian use only, and subject them to inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).
- The United States agreed to provide fuel for India’s civilian nuclear reactors, and other countries in the 45-country Nuclear Suppliers Group – an organization that monitors the export and transfer of nuclear-related technology – would be able to sell nuclear equipment and technology, and even build new reactors, for India.
- India would not be required to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), although they would be forbidden from conducting nuclear tests.

If the deal goes through, it would represent a major shift in U.S. policy. Since India obtained and tested its weapons after the signing of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), the international community classifies India as a non-nuclear weapons state for purposes of obtaining civilian nuclear materials on the open market (Israel and Pakistan are in the same category). Consequently, India is unable to purchase civilian nuclear equipment, and in some cases nuclear fuel, from the (NSG). The U.S.-India nuclear deal would remove India from the international community’s “blacklist.”

Nuclear Deal Pros:

- It will bring India closer to the United States at a time when the two countries are forging a strategic relationship to pursue their common interests in fighting terrorism, spreading democracy, and preventing the domination of Asia by any single power.
- It is a means of rewarding India for voluntarily abstaining from engaging in nuclear proliferation – unlike Pakistan, for example – and convincing India to accept international safeguards on facilities it has not allowed to be inspected before.
- It provides an incentive for India to maintain voluntary safeguards – although some Indian hardliners oppose such measures, so we cannot assume India will submit itself to them forever.
- Indian proponents believe the nuclear deal moves India closer to a “superpower” status in the world. They are also motivated by the need to address serious energy shortages, which they believe can be overcome through civilian nuclear power plants.

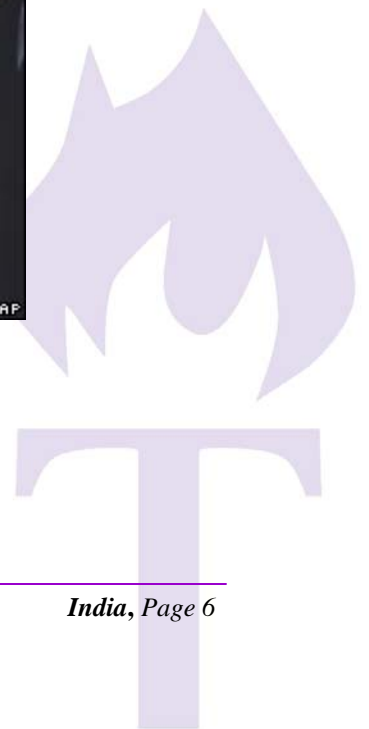


Nuclear Deal Cons:

- Critics in India tend to say that the United States is trying to buy India’s allegiance, especially regarding China, and oppose the deal because it would bring India too close to the United States.
- The deal does not require India to cap or limit its fissile material production or restrict the number of nuclear weapons it plans to produce.
- The safeguards apply only to facilities and material manufactured by India beginning when the agreement was reached. It doesn’t cover the fissile material produced by India over the last several decades of nuclear activity.
- There are far more cost-efficient ways to improve India’s energy and technology sectors.
- Critics of the deal in the United States, including Representative Ed Markey of Massachusetts, say the deal will weaken the international nonproliferation regime, and prove that if a country simply waits long enough it will be forgiven for developing nuclear weapons. This could ultimately lead the NPT to become toothless and defunct.

Status of the Nuclear Deal

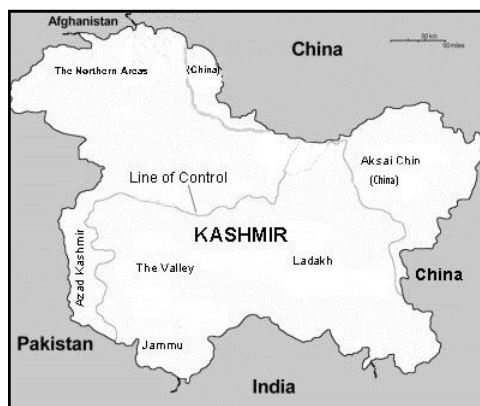
The U.S. Congress and Indian Parliament approved the basics of the plan in December 2006. However, the nuclear deal has sparked tremendous controversy in both countries. Prime Minister Singh governs through a left-leaning coalition government led by his Congress Party. After smaller parties threatened to defect from the coalition government, the Prime Minister called for a “no confidence” vote, which was widely seen as a referendum on the nuclear deal. His government narrowly survived the vote in July 2008. The IAEA recently approved a nuclear safeguards agreement, which must also be approved by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). If the NSG approves a waiver for India to resume nuclear commerce with the international community, the deal could come up for a vote in Congress in September.



Jammu/Kashmir and India-Pakistan Relations

During the 1948 partition of the Indian subcontinent into the Muslim state of Pakistan and the secular state of India, some individual states were allowed to decide which country to join. The states of Jammu and Kashmir had Muslim majority populations, but their rulers were Hindu and decided to join India. Pakistan and India went to war shortly after partition, and again in 1965 and 1971 (the 1971 war resulted in East and West Pakistan splitting into the separate Muslim countries of Pakistan and Bangladesh), but most of the territory remains in Indian control.

Numerous skirmishes have been fought over the territory since, most recently the 1999 Kargil crisis when Pakistani troops invaded part of Indian-controlled Kashmir and were later driven back, and the 2001-2002 troop build up and stand-off. The current border between the two countries is neither the original 1948 line drawn between the two countries nor the cease-fire line drawn after the 1948 war, but the Line of Control from after the 1971 war.



Both countries still claim the provinces of Jammu and Kashmir, and both sides place large numbers of troops along the border, at high cost and with frequent skirmishes along the Line of Control. Militant/terrorist groups based both in Kashmir and Pakistan itself —some of which have connections with al Qaeda— are highly motivated by the continuing Indian control, and are responsible for many terrorist attacks within India, including the December 2001 bombing of the Indian Parliament building. The Pakistani government has done little to stop these groups, and in some cases has aided them (especially Pakistan’s Inter-Service Intelligence, or ISI). India is upset that Pakistan has not done more to curb the actions of these terrorist organizations, and has accused the Pakistani government of running a proxy war against India through these groups.

A Near Nuclear War: 1998

In May 1998, India conducted underground nuclear tests in the western desert state of Rajasthan near the border with Pakistan. In response, Pakistan conducted six tests in Baluchistan. Pakistan also tested its longest range missile, the 1,500 km (932 mile) Ghauri missile, named after a 12th Century Muslim warrior who conquered part of India. Both sides were heavily criticized by the international community for the tests, as fears of a nuclear confrontation grew.

- The United States ordered sanctions against both countries, freezing more than \$20 billion worth of aid, loans and trade.
- Japan ordered a block on about \$1 billion of aid loans.
- Several European countries followed suit, and the G-8 governments imposed a ban on non-humanitarian loans to India and Pakistan.
- The UN Security Council condemned India and Pakistan for carrying out nuclear tests and urged the two nations to stop all nuclear weapons programs.

Relations between India and Pakistan improved again in February 1999 when then-Indian Prime Minister Atal Vajpayee traveled to Pakistan to meet then-Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Nevertheless, the standoff is arguably the closest any two nations have come to nuclear war since the United States and the Soviet Union squared off during the Cuban missile crisis. A nuclear conflict between India and Pakistan could kill millions, destabilize Central Asia, and disrupt the global economy. It is therefore a crucial U.S. national security interest to foster better relations between India and Pakistan.

India's "Cold Start" Doctrine

In response to terrorist attacks, especially the surprising Kashmiri militant attack on Parliament in 2001, the Indian Army has proposed a new doctrine of a quick, shallow attack into Pakistan without warning the Pakistani government first. In other words, the Indian Army will begin from a "cold start" to quickly go after militant groups. The incursion would be designed so as not to trigger Pakistani nuclear redlines – but that is easier said than done. The proposal is only in the planning stage and would require fairly extensive reorganization of the Indian Army.

India: Sources

Associated Press, “Bush Pushes U.S.-India Nuclear Deal,” CBS News, 8 July 2008.

K. Alan Kronstadt and Kenneth Katzman, “India-Iran relations and U.S. interests,” Congressional Research Service Report, 2 August 2006.

Rama Lakshmi and Emily Wax, “India’s Government Wins Parliament Confidence Vote,” *Washington Post*, 23 July 2008.

“India-Pakistan: Troubled Relations Timeline,” BBC News

Esther Pan and Jayshree Bajoria, “The U.S.-India Nuclear Deal,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 21 July 2008.

George Perkovich, Jessica T. Mathews, Joseph Cirincione, Rose Gottemoeller, Jon B. Wolfsthal, *Universal Comply: A Strategy for Nuclear Security*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 2005.

Somini Sengupta, “Indian Government Survives Confidence Vote,” *New York Times*, 23 July 2008.

Xinhua News, “Myanmar second top leader’s India visit further cement bilateral ties,” 7 April 2008.

Arvind Panagariya, *India: The Emerging Giant*, (Oxford University Press, 2008).

