



India 2016 Crime & Safety Report: New Delhi

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Theft; Rape/Sexual Violence; Information Security; Financial Security; Left-wing; Insurgencies; Anti-American sentiment; Religious Terrorism; Riots/Civil Unrest; Religious Violence; Earthquakes; Floods; Employee Health Safety; Intellectual Property Rights Infringement; Drug Trafficking; Hotels

South Central Asia > India; South Central Asia > India > New Delhi

3/15/2016

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Post Crime Rating: Medium

Crime Threats

Crimes do occur; however, they are rarely directed toward foreigners. New Delhi's largest concern of crime toward foreigners continues to be verbal and physical harassment of women. There are numerous reported incidents from Western women of verbal and physical harassment by groups of men. New Delhi specifically has been dubbed a "rape capital" in India by media sources. In 2015, 2,095 rape cases were reported, nearly the same to the 2,085 cases in 2014, but still much higher than the 1,571 cases in 2013. The number of molestation cases jumped again by 24.15 percent to 5,192. Although most victims have been local residents, recent sexual attacks against female visitors in tourist areas underline the fact that foreign women are also at risk and should exercise vigilance.

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Petty crimes (pickpocketing, purse snatching) are very common on public transport and roads.

Theft of U.S. passports is also common, particularly in major tourist areas, on trains, at airports, and metro/train stations.

Tourists have also been given drugged drinks or tainted food to make them more vulnerable to theft, particularly at train stations. Even food or drink purchased from a canteen or vendor could be tainted.

Cybersecurity Issues

Theft of financial information and identity theft have become significant concerns. The diplomatic community has numerous instances of local bank accounts being compromised. Advance fraud or 419 schemes are common in India.

Other Areas of Concern

The Department of State strongly recommends avoiding travel to Jammu & Kashmir (with the exception of the eastern Ladakh region and its capital, Leh) because of a high potential for

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terrorist incidents and violent public unrest. U.S. government employees are prohibited from traveling to Jammu & Kashmir (except for Ladakh) without permission, which is only granted by the U.S. Embassy in exceptional circumstances. A number of terrorist groups target security forces, particularly along the Line of Control (LOC) separating Indian- and Pakistani-controlled Kashmir and those stationed in primary tourist destinations in the Kashmir Valley (Srinagar, Gulmarg, Pahalgam). Foreigners are particularly visible, vulnerable, and at risk. Serious communal violence left the state mostly paralyzed due to massive strikes and business shutdowns, and U.S. citizens have had to be evacuated by local police.

The State Department recommends that you avoid travel within 10 kilometers of the India-Pakistan border. Both countries maintain a strong military presence. The only official India-Pakistan border crossing point for persons who are not citizens of India or Pakistan is in Punjab between Attari, India, and Wagah, Pakistan. The border crossing is usually open, but one is advised to confirm the status prior to commencing travel. A Pakistani visa is required to enter Pakistan. Only U.S. citizens residing in India may apply for a Pakistani visa in India. Otherwise, one should apply for a Pakistani visa in his/her country of residence before traveling to India. The Pakistani government requires that U.S. citizen residents of India must first come to the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi to sign an affidavit of intent to apply for the Pakistani visa before submitting their application.

Both India and Pakistan claim an area of the Karakoram mountain range that includes the Siachen Glacier. Travel or mountain climbing in this area is highly dangerous. The disputed area includes: Rimo Peak; Apsarasas I, II, and III; Tegam Kangri I, II and III; Suingri Kangri; Ghiant I and II; Indira Col; and Sia Kangri. Check with the U.S. Consulate General Chennai for information on current conditions.

Due to the fluid nature of the Naxalite threat, the U.S. Embassy requires all U.S. government travelers to states with Naxalite activity to receive prior authorization from the Regional

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Security Officer responsible for the area to be visited. U.S. officials traveling only to the capital cities in these states do not need prior authorization.

Certain parts of India are designated as "restricted areas" by the Indian government and require special advance permission to visit. These areas include:

- Portions of Himachal Pradesh near the Chinese border
- Portions of Uttarakh and (Uttaranchal) near the Chinese border
- Portions of Rajasthan near the Pakistani border
- Portions of Jammu & Kashmir near the Line of Control with Pakistan and portions of Ladakh
- Portions of Arunachal Pradesh
- Portions of Manipur
- Portions of Mizoram
- Portions of Nagaland
- Portions of Sikkim
- Portions of the Andaman and Nicobar Island
- All areas of Lacadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands

More information on travel to restricted/protected areas can be found at India's Bureau of Immigration website. "Restricted Area Permits" are available at Indian Embassies/Consulates abroad or from the Ministry of Home Affairs (Foreigners Division) at Jaisalmer House, 26 Man Singh Road, New Delhi. The states of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim maintain official

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guesthouses in New Delhi that can issue Restricted Area Permits for their respective states for certain travelers.

One should exercise caution while visiting Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram) in Tamil Nadu, as the Indira Gandhi Atomic Research Center, Kalpakkam, is located just south of the site and is not clearly marked as a restricted and dangerous area.

Transportation-Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

Travel by road is dangerous. India leads the world in traffic-related deaths, which have included U.S. citizens. Traffic travels on the left; therefore, it is important to be alert while crossing streets and intersections, especially after dark, as traffic is coming from the "wrong" direction. Try to use only vehicles that have seatbelts, which are not common in taxis. Helmets should always be worn on motorcycles and bicycles.

One should exercise extreme caution when crossing streets, even in marked pedestrian areas. People drive erratically, and pedestrians must be very careful. If a driver hits a pedestrian or a cow, the vehicle and its occupants are at risk of being attacked by angry mobs. Such attacks pose significant risk of injury or death to the vehicle's occupants or at least of impounding of the vehicle. If it is unsafe to remain at the scene of an accident, one should try to reach the nearest police station.

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If a person is found driving under the influence of alcohol, exceeding 30 mg per 100ml of blood detected by a breath analyzer, s/he is punishable as per Indian law.

When driving, strictly obey traffic regulations and carry your registration and license with you. Remember to keep your windows up and doors locked.

Public Transportation Conditions

Public transportation is used quite extensively among Indians. Buses and Metro rail are the cheapest, frequently used means of public transportation. When using public transportation, always exercise caution with your bags and refrain from sharing details of your identity and travel plans. If you take public transportation in the rush hours or visit crowded places, try to hold up your bag in front of you, not behind.

Avoid using private unmarked buses/taxis, as many who have fallen victim to nefarious activity that often occurs in unregulated vehicles.

Inter-state trains are safer than buses, but train accidents do occur more frequently than in other countries.

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Use pre-paid taxis since it is governed by Delhi Traffic Police. In this system, you pay in advance for taxi fare, which is already approved by Delhi Transport Authority for each destination. Do not patronize unmarked/private taxis/buses or enter any taxi/bus carrying unfamiliar passengers. Always use a commercial or official taxi/bus service. When you are in the car, sit in the rear seat, lock the doors from the inside, and do not allow the driver to accept additional passengers. Beware of taxi drivers and train porters lure travelers by offering cheap transportation and/or hotels. It is preferable to obtain taxis from hotels and pre-paid taxis at airports rather than hailing them on the street. Never take advice of taxi drivers regarding your stay/tour.

Aviation/Airport Conditions

Contact the "May I help you" counter in "Arrival Hall" at airport for help and guidance. Adequate numbers of police officers in uniform patrol outside the arrival hall and parking area. You can contact the nearest police officer to report any undesirable element that you come across at the airport. In addition, police officers in plain clothes also keep watch on suspicious activity.

Terrorism Threat

Post Terrorism Rating: High

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Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

India continues to experience terrorist and insurgent activities that can affect U.S. citizens directly or indirectly. The U.S. Embassy continuously monitors information received concerning terrorist threats to determine credibility and will advise U.S. citizens accordingly via STEP. Past terror attacks have targeted public places (hotels, trains, train stations, markets, cinemas, mosques, restaurants in large urban areas), including some frequented by Westerners. Attacks have generally occurred during the busy evening hours in markets and other crowded places; however, they could occur any time.

Maoists (“Naxalites”) are the most active insurgent group in India. The Naxalites typically attack government officials/buildings, destroy public institutions (derailing rail lines), and sometimes kidnap foreigners. They are responsible for more terrorist attacks in India than any other organization. Naxalites have not specifically targeted U.S. citizens. While Naxalite violence does not normally occur in places frequented by foreigners, there is a risk that visitors could become unintended victims of indiscriminate targeting. They operate mostly in the remote areas of the country: a large swath from eastern Maharashtra and northern Andhra Pradesh through western West Bengal; in rural parts of the states of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand; and in border regions of the states of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and Orissa.

Anti-American/Anti-Western Sentiment

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Anti-Western terrorist groups, some on the U.S. government's list of foreign terrorist organizations, including Harkat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami, Harakat ul-Mujahidin, Indian Mujahideen (IM), Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LeT), are active.

Bursts of violence targeting U.S. facilities are not uncommon, and U.S. citizens should maintain respect and sensitivity to others' political and religious views. In times of instability, seek guidance from the nearby U.S. Embassy or Consulate for appropriate action.

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Post Political Violence Rating: Medium

Civil Unrest

Demonstrations and general strikes ("bandh") often cause inconvenience. Information about routine demonstrations is posted on the U.S. Embassy and Consulates' websites, under the heading "Demonstration Notices."

Religious/Ethnic Violence

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Religious violence occurs occasionally, especially when tensions between religious communities are purposefully aggravated by political/non-political groups. Foreigners suspected of proselytizing Hindus have been attacked and killed in conservative, rural areas. Large religious gatherings that attract hundreds of thousands of people can result in dangerous and often life-threatening stampedes. Authorities occasionally impose curfews/restrict travel. One is urged to obey curfews and travel restrictions and to avoid demonstrations and rallies, as they all have the potential for violence.

Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

Parts of northern India are highly susceptible to earthquakes. Regions of highest risk include: areas around Srinagar, Himachal Pradesh, Rishikesh and Dehradun, the northern parts of Punjab, northwest Gujarat, northern Bihar, and the entire northeast. At a slightly lower risk is an area that sweeps along the north through Jammu and Kashmir, eastern Punjab, Haryana, northern Uttar Pradesh, central Bihar and the northern parts of West Bengal. New Delhi is located in this zone.

Severe flooding is common in the states of Bihar, Assam, and Orissa. With heavy rainfall, there is a potential for flooding in the rural mountainous areas.

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North India can also have extreme weather conditions. The temperature in Delhi varies from 46 degree Celsius (115 F) in summer to less than 4 degree Celsius (39 F) in winter with heavy to modest rainfall.

Economic Espionage/Intellectual Property Thefts

India has long been in disagreement with other industrialized nations over intellectual property rights. Police view these crimes as a low priority, and there is an abundance of software and music piracy. Licensing policies favor the country's generic drug manufacturers.

Privacy Concerns

India's Constitution does not guarantee a right to privacy for foreigners or Indian citizens.

Personnel-Background Concerns

Women should observe stringent security precautions (avoiding public transport after dark without known and trustworthy companions; restricting evening entertainment to well-known venues; avoiding being in isolated areas alone). Women are advised to respect local dress and customs – dress conservatively.

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Drug-related Crimes

Narcotic-related violence is infrequent, but there is a significant amount of drug trafficking through the Pakistan-India-Myanmar route. Drugs (cocaine, amphetamines) are commonly used and are widely available. These drugs are frequently found at rave parties among the higher strata of society. Methamphetamine has also been found to be widely distributed in New Delhi for foreign criminal elements.

Kidnapping Threat

Kidnappings of foreigners rarely occur, but the possibility does exist, and one must remain vigilant by maintaining situational awareness. Kidnappings of children and women in the local community are common and usually have some sort of cultural connection.

Police Response

The ratio of police officers to citizens is approximately 141:100,000, well below the worldwide average of 350:100,000. With the population of Delhi well over 21,753,486 people and a density of over 29,259 people per square mile, policing is a difficult task. While the numbers of reported incidents increase every year, many more go unreported. There is a common perception that the police are corrupt and cannot be trusted. In some cases, police officers are involved in crime, while other times police are bribed to turn a blind eye. Many victims do not

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go to the police for fear of persecution and harassment. Even those who are witnesses to crimes avoid getting involved in a judicial process that is painfully slow, inconvenient, and ineffective. These practices have corroded public confidence, and there is no certainty of punishment for criminals.

Crime Victim Assistance

If one gets involved with local law enforcement for any reason, one should comply with their requests but also contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate and ask to speak to a representative at the American Citizen Services, at: U.S. Embassy, Shantipath, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi – 110021. Tel. No.: 011-2419-8000, email: acsnd@state.gov.

The emergency line in India is 100. An additional emergency number, 112, can be accessed from mobile phones.

The U.S. Embassy or nearest U.S. Consulate General can assist you to:

- Replace a stolen passport.
- Help you find appropriate medical care if you are the victim of violent crimes (assault, rape).
- Put you in contact with the appropriate police authorities, and with consent, can contact family members or friends.
- Help you understand the local criminal justice process and direct you to local attorneys.

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If your passport is stolen, you should immediately report the theft or loss to the police in the location where your passport was stolen and obtain a copy. A police report, called an FIR (First Information Report) is required by the government in order to obtain an exit visa if the lost passport contained your Indian visa. Although the U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate General is able to replace a stolen or lost passport, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) are responsible for approving an exit permit. This process can take three to four working days. Local authorities generally are unable to take any meaningful action without the filing of a police report.

Medical Emergencies

The countrywide emergency number for ambulance service is 102. If you purchase a cellphone number in one city and intend to use it in another city, you will have to prefix the city code before 102 to call an ambulance. An English speaking dispatcher may not be available at all locations.

Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

The U.S. Embassy and Consulates in India maintain lists of local doctors and hospitals, all of which are published on their respective websites under <http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/service/other-citizen-services/medical-information.html>. We cannot endorse or recommend any specific medical provider or clinic.

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Two hospitals in Delhi and National Capital Region are:

Max Hospital Saket

2 Press Enclave Road, Saket, New Delhi-110017

Phone: 0091-11-2651-5050; Fax: 0091-11-2651-0050

Emergency No.: 0091-11-4055-4055

Medanta-The Medicity

Sector-38, Gurgaon; Haryana-122001

Phone-0091-124-4141414, 91-124-4411441; Fax-91-124-4834111

Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

Air pollution is becoming a critical concern due to major sources of wood and biomass burning, fuel adulteration, vehicle emission, and traffic congestion. In autumn and winter months, large-scale crop burning in agriculture fields -- a low-cost alternative to mechanical tilling -- is a major source of smoke, smog, and particulate pollution.

For additional information on vaccines and health guidance, please visit the CDC at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/india> or by calling the hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747).

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OSAC Country Council Information

New Delhi has an active OSAC Country Council that interacts frequently and meets on a quarterly basis. If you would like information or would like to join, please contact any of the individuals named below:

OSAC Mailbox - OSACNewDelhi@state.gov

OSAC New Delhi Chapter is chaired by Special Agent Brad A. Behselich – behselichBA@state.gov

OSAC Coordinator – Mridul Issar – IssarM2@state.gov

To reach OSAC's South and Central Asia team, please email OSACSCA@state.gov.

U.S. Embassy Location and Contact Information

Embassy Address and Hours of Operation

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U.S. Embassy, Shantipath, Chanakyapuri , New Delhi-110021

American Center - 24, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001

Normal office hours are Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Embassy Contact Number

Tel: +(91) (11) 2419-8000

Website: <http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/>

Nearby Posts

Consulate Chennai: <http://chennai.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Hyderabad: <http://hyderabad.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Kolkata: <http://kolkata.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Mumbai: <http://mumbai.usconsulate.gov/>

Virtual Presence Post Bangalore: <http://chennai.usconsulate.gov/vppbangaluru.html>

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Embassy Guidance

One should monitor local television, print media, travel.state.gov, Mission India's Facebook page, and enroll with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program for further information about the current situation in areas where you are planning to travel. For the latest security information, travelers should enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to receive updated security information and regularly monitor travel information available from the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi as well as the U.S. Consulates General in Mumbai (Bombay), Chennai (Madras), Hyderabad, and Kolkata (Calcutta). Bookmark the Bureau of Consular Affairs website, which contains the current Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Worldwide Cautions. Follow us on Twitter and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on Facebook. Download the free Smart Traveler app available through iTunes and the Android market to have travel information at your fingertips. Call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free within the United States and Canada, or a regular toll line, 1-202-501-4444, from other countries.

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Scams

Major airports, train stations, metro stations, popular restaurants, and tourist sites are often used by scam artists looking to prey on visitors, often by creating a distraction.

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Situational Awareness Best Practices

Preplan your stay and tourism in Delhi. Please follow the information given by police officers at the "May I help you" counter or any other government-recognized information centers (Delhi Tourism, etc.).

Always avoid using short cuts, narrow alleys, or poorly illuminated streets. Before entering an underground pedestrian crosswalk, be aware of who is around. Be alert for gangs of youths, con artists, and beggars, including handicapped persons.

Be aware of being bumped/pushed. Pickpockets frequently jostle their victims to distract them. Be cautious in crowds and crowded areas (on public transportation, at train stations, open-air markets, popular tourist sites). Do not put purse/wallet, keys or other valuables into external pockets or other easily accessible places. Carry a wallet in an inside jacket pocket or side trouser pocket, never in the rear pocket. Carry credit cards and minimal cash in your pockets. Carry only as much money as you need. Do not let people see how much money you are carrying and never flash a wad of bills. If you are settling accounts with a salesperson, do not take out all your money, as this can attract unwanted attention.

Carry a photocopy of your passport and visa at all times, but leave your passport in a safe place. Do not carry important documents that you do not need.

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Be wary of unexpected persons coming to your hotel room. Do not invite people into your residence that you do not know or do not completely trust. Never open the door to unsolicited room service or maintenance people. Contact the front desk if you have any doubts. Leave valuables and important papers secured in your hotel's safe deposit box. Never leave these items unattended in your room or carry large sums of cash on your person. Make sure that luggage is only given to a member of the hotel's bell staff and a receipt is issued for stored luggage. Never leave luggage or other expensive items unattended at airports or taxi stands.

If you schedule a meeting with a potential client, research the company and the individual with whom you are meeting. Meet in a public place. When in a bar/restaurant, keep a close watch over your drink and do not accept a drink from anyone you do not know/trust. Criminals often attempt to drug drinks in order to steal money and possessions.

When exchanging money, be aware of who is around you. If possible, exchange money only during daylight hours. Do not exchange money with private individuals on the street. Use only official exchange points.

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