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India: EU-India summit: EU should press India to abolish the death penalty

(Brussels, Tuesday 6 September 2005) As the largest democracy in the world, India should lead by example in human rights protection in Asia by abolishing the death penalty, and the EU could use tomorrow's EU-India summit to press India to do so, says Amnesty International.

In the lead-up to the summit Amnesty International has sent a briefing paper to the UK Presidency of the EU raising concerns in relation to the use of the death penalty in India and detailing cases such as last year's execution of Dhananjay Chatterjee, the first known execution since 1997 ("The Death Penalty in India, Briefing for the EU-India Summit, 7 September 2005 will be available on www.amnesty-eu.org from 00.01 GMT on 6 September 2005).

"As the EU is already engaged in a persistent effort to seek abolition of the death penalty around the world and has for this purpose drawn up policy guidelines towards third countries, it should take the opportunity of the Summit to engage India in this process," Dick Oosting, Director of Amnesty International's EU Office said.

"India wields tremendous influence in Asia and could encourage the abolition of the death penalty across the region if it led by example," he said.

Amnesty International urges the EU to:

- reiterate its call for the Government of India to declare an immediate moratorium on executions with a view ultimately to abolish the death penalty;
- request the Government of India to make public full information including statistics relating to current and past death sentences and executions.

"*The Death Penalty in India, Briefing for the EU-India Summit, 7 September 2005*" is available at: www.amnesty-eu.org.

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