



INSIDER

Voice of South Asian Community

Since March 2002

Vol. 15

Issue 09

Wednesday 26 Dec 2017 to 01 January 2018 \$1

www.thesouthasian.info

Some of 2017's Biggest Stories

As the year draws to a close and the news cycle continues to reset every day, let's pause and revisit some of the most important news events from 2017.

The Inauguration

On Jan. 20, 2017, Donald Trump was sworn in as the 45th president of the United States. The real estate and reality TV mogul's inauguration speech contained many of the same themes he had espoused as a candidate: taking power away from the political establishment and giving it back to the people; taking a tougher stance on crime, gangs and drugs; bringing jobs back to America; and,



As more than 22,000 people shook and shimmied at the Route 91 Harvest festival concert on Oct. 1, a gunman positioned himself high above them in a room in the Mandalay Bay resort, then opened fire on the crowd. When the gunfire ended, 58 people were dead, more than 500 wounded and the shooter had killed himself.

It was the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history, surpassing the number of people



The Women's March

The Charlottesville Protests

On Aug. 11, a group of white supremacists with lit tiki torches marched across the University of Virginia's campus to protest the removal of a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee. They chanted "you will not replace us." Counter-protesters showed up and fights broke out between the two groups.

This was foreshadowing for the violence that would explode at the next day's white nationalist "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville. A car plowed into a group of people demonstrating against the rally, killing 32-year-old Heather Heyer and injuring at least 35 other people.

The Hurricane Season

First, Hurricane Harvey dropped 60 inches of rain on



The Charlottesville Protests

hurricanes or typhoon ever recorded — bore down on Florida, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Florida had received nearly \$2 billion in federal disaster assistance as of Dec. 14.

The Las Vegas Mass Shooting

organizer of the country music festival and the shooter's estate. The shooter's use of a bump stock led Charleston, S.C., and the state of Massachusetts to ban the devices, which

(Contd on page 2)

protecting U.S. borders. "This American carnage stops right here and stops right now," he said.

The Women's March

The day after the 2017 inauguration, hundreds

of thousands of women descended on the National Mall and smaller groups gathered in other cities around the world to show resistance to Trump's agenda and express support for women's rights.



The Hurricane Season



The Las Vegas Mass Shooting

The #MeToo Movement

enables a semi-automatic rifle to fire more quickly.

The #MeToo Movement

As the number of sexual assault and harassment accusations against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein grew over the first weeks of October, a hashtag started trending on social media: #MeToo. Activist Tarana Burke launched the "Me Too" movement 10 years ago, as a way to help survivors of sexual abuse have a voice. Now, people around the world were using the hashtag to underscore how pervasive and damaging sexual abuse is for women.

The California Wildfires

On Oct.8, one of the worst fire seasons on

record erupted in California. Seven wildfires swept across Northern California, killing at least 44 people and destroying nearly 9,000 homes and other buildings. The fires weren't fully contained until the end of October. It is now the deadliest wildfire in the state's history.

Just weeks later, the Thomas Fire flared up

The California Wildfires



The #TakeAKnee Protests



The Russia Probe

on Dec. 4 and quickly became "among the top five largest fires in California history," NPR's Kirk Siegler reported a week later. The wildfire was 60 percent contained as of Dec. 20, and had already consumed 272,000 acres and destroyed more than 1,000 structures, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

The #TakeAKnee Protests

It started in 2016 with

league over his national anthem protests.

The Russia Probe

In May, former FBI Director Robert Mueller was given a new high-profile, high-pressure assignment — as the special counsel responsible for the government's investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election, and the possibility that members of the Trump campaign might have been involved. He and his team of lawyers have been digging into those questions ever since, as political feuds erupt on Capitol Hill over Mueller's actions and the future of his investigation.

Much of their work takes place behind closed doors, but the charges that Mueller has brought so far suggest that he has "flipped" several former Trump associates,

Colin Kaepernick, the San Francisco 49ers quarterback who decided to kneel as the national anthem played before NFL games, in protest of police brutality. This sparked outrage among some who accused him of being anti-American and anti-military. Kaepernick left the 49ers and became a free agent. He later filed a grievance against the NFL and team owners, accusing them of colluding to shut him out of the

persuading them to cooperate as he investigates their old colleagues. There are a mind-boggling number of people, agencies and investigations involved — NPR broke down many of the key players here. Currently there are far more questions than answers, and all eyes are on Mueller's team to see what they uncover (although it's not clear that the general results of the probe will ever be public.)

The biggest news stories from India in 2017



Ryan murder case: Eight-year-old, class II student Pradhuman Thakur was found dead in Ryan International School's toilet in Maruti Kunj in September. In latest development, in the case, a class XI student has been accused of the child's murder. After CBI's report, Ashok, the conductor who was falsely implicated in the case by the police has also been released from jail

Instant Triple Talaq

In a landmark 3-2 verdict, the Supreme Court in August set aside the centuries-old practice of instant triple talaq or talaq-e-biddat in which Muslim men divorce their wives by uttering Talaq three times in quick succession. The apex court by a majority verdict ruled that the practice of divorce through triple talaq among Muslims is "void," "illegal," and "unconstitutional." The court by 3:2 verdict held that the triple talaq is against the basic tenets of Quran.

Aadhaar Linking

The government has made it mandatory for financial institutions, including banks, to verify and link Aadhaar of their customers with their accounts. According to a notification dated June 1, 2017, the deadline for doing was set as December 31, 2017 (as of now), and



accounts where this is not done are to be made inoperable after this date till the details are updated. However, on October 25, 2017, the government gave a breather to those who still don't have the 12-digit biometric number- the deadline for them has been extended by three months to March 31, 2018.

GST tax

In a major economic reform move and biggest tax reform, the Centre introduced 'Goods and Services Tax' (GST) tax as new national sales tax. The GST will replace a patchwork of central and state levies on goods and services. It is a single tax (collected at multiple

points) with a full set-off for taxes paid earlier in the value chain. Thus, the final consumer will bear only the GST charged by the last dealer in the supply chain with set-off benefits at all the previous stages.

Women's Entry into Temples

The Supreme Court in an emphatic verdict ruled that Indian temples that deny or restrict women's entry undermine the fight for gender equality and have no constitutional right to do so. The Supreme Court comments came days after the Shani Shignapur temple in western Maharashtra opened its inner sanctum to women following a

Mumbai court ruling that it was the fundamental right of women to enter any place of worship that allows men access.

UP Chief Minister

Yogi Adityanath became Uttar Pradesh's chief minister after the state assembly elections in March. He said, that there would be no place for 'goonda raj' and corruption under his rule

PSLV-C37 Launches 104 Satellites in a Single Flight

: In its 39th flight (PSLV-C37), ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle successfully launched the 714 kg Cartosat-2 Series Satellite along with 103 co-passenger satellites in February from Satish Dhawan

Space Centre SHAR, Sriharikota. This was the 38th consecutively successful mission of PSLV. The total weight of all the 104 satellites carried on-board PSLV-C37 was 1378 kg. REUTERS/P. Ravikumar
Dera Sachha Sauda row
Gurmeet Ram Rahim Insaan, chief of Dera Sachha Sauda, was convicted in two rape cases and was sentenced to 20 years. Huge protests erupted after his conviction. At least 30 were killed in the violent protests. His successor and 'adopted daughter' Honeypreet was also convicted for enticing mob for riots and was arrested by the Haryana Police after being on the run for two months.

Modi-Trump meet

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump at the White House in Washington, DC in June. This was the first meeting between PM Modi and President Trump after the latter took the office

Five states

Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Goa and Manipur went to polls in February, March, 2017. While the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) formed government in four states,

(Contd on page 4)





Congress managed to return to power in Punjab. In Uttar Pradesh, the BJP and its allies thumped the Congress, Samajwadi Party combine by winning an overwhelming three-quarter majority of 325 seats. The BJP, which fought the UP election without naming a CM candidate, decided to handover the responsibility to 'firebrand' five-term Lok Sabha member Yogi Adityanath, 44. In the 70-seat Uttarakhand Assembly, the BJP won 57 while the Congress could win just 11 seats. Trivendra Singh Rawat was sworn-in as the eighth CM of the hilly state on March 18, 2017.

SAD combine (18 seats). The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) won 20 seats. BJP's Nongthombam Biren Singh was sworn-in as Manipur's new CM on March 15, 2017. The saffron party won 21 seats in



In Goa, Manohar Parrikar took sailed through the trust vote in the Goa assembly with the support of 22 legislators in the 40-member House. Despite emerging as the single largest party in the House with 17 MLAs, the Congress failed to form government in the coastal state. In Punjab, Captain Amarinder Singh returned for a second stint on the CM's post after the Congress (77 seats) defeated the BJP-

the 60-member Manipur Assembly.

Nirbhaya verdict

The Supreme Court rejected the plea by four convicts, challenging their death penalty, in the December 16, 2012 Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case. The apex court decided the four convicts should be hanged till death.

Dentist couple Nupur Talwar (C-R) and Rajesh Talwar (C-L) were released from Dasna Prison in

Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, after being acquitted by the Allahabad High Court in the twin murder case of their daughter Aarushi and domestic worker Hemraj Banjade.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa's death on December 9, 2016 not only sent shockwaves across the state it also triggered an ugly war of succession in southern state. During her over three months hospital stay, Jayalalithaa entrusted O Panneerselvam to

look after her official work. Panneerselvam was the obvious choice to replace Jayalalithaa after her demise, however, the former Tamil Nadu's close aide VK Sasikala refused to accept Panneerselvam as the leader of All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK). Sasikala alongwith her nephew TTV Dinarakan, who was removed from the party by Jayalalithaa in 2011, made E Palaniswami the CM. The drama took a new turn when Panneerselvam refused to accept Palaniswami as the CM claiming support of majority of MLAs. However, after Sasikala was jailed in a disproportionate assets case, the two warring

factions decided to bury their difference and join hands. After days of negotiations, the merger finally took place on August 21, 2017. According to the deal, while Palaniswami continued to be the CM, Panneerselvam was made his deputy. Both the factions also agreed to expel Sasikala and Dinakaran from AIADMK.

Nitish Kumar walked back into the NDA fold after four years. He took oath as the Chief Minister of Bihar for the second time in 2 years, splitting open the Grand Alliance and forming a government once again with the BJP.

