

Revellers Around The World Ring In New Year



Indian Christians release balloons to celebrate the New Year after offering prayers at a church in Ahmadabad, in the state of Gujarat on, Monday, Jan. 1, 2018. (AP Photo/Ajit Solanki)



Filipino revelers watch as fireworks light up the sky to welcome the New Year Monday, Jan. 1, 2018 at the seaside Mall of Asia in suburban Manila. Dozens were injured by celebratory firecrackers. (AP Photo/Bullit Marquez)

INDIA

Security was tight in the southern Indian city of Bangalore to prevent a repeat of incidents of alleged groping and molestation of several women during last year's New Year's Eve celebrations.

Sunil Kumar, the city's police commissioner, said at least 15,000 police officers were on duty and were being aided by drones and additional closed-circuit television cameras.

Revellers in other parts of the country celebrated the advent of 2018 with gusto, including releasing balloons and lighting fireworks.

AUSTRALIA

Fireworks lit up the sky above Sydney Harbour, highlighting the city's New Year's celebrations.

The massive fireworks display included a rainbow waterfall cascade of lights and colour flowing off the harbour's bridge to celebrate recently passed legislation legalizing gay marriage in Australia.

Over a million people gathered to watch the festivities. Security was tight, but officials said there was no particular alert. Nearly half the revelers were tourists.

NEW ZEALAND

Tens of thousands of New Zealanders took to streets and beaches, becoming among the first in the world to usher in 2018.

As the new year dawned in this southern hemisphere nation, fireworks boomed and crackled above city centres and harbours, and party-goers sang, hugged, danced and kissed.

In Auckland, New Zealand's biggest city, tens of thousands gathered around Sky Tower as five minutes of nonstop pyrotechnics exploded from the top of the structure.

UGANDA

Thousands of Ugandans gathered

at churches across the country to mark the end of 2017.

The raucous events, during which some preachers are known to make dubious predictions, have become such a staple of New Year's Eve festivities that the country's longtime president, Yoweri Museveni, sometimes makes time to make an appearance at a church.

Still, many in this East African country preferred to celebrate at crowded beaches on the shores of Lake Victoria or in darkened halls listening to the music of pop stars who take turns offering crowd pleasers until midnight.

BRITAIN

A major windstorm caused problems in Scotland, but Edinburgh's famed Hogmanay New Year's Eve celebration was unaffected. Storm Dylan is battering parts of Scotland with gusts of up to 80 miles per hour, with forecasters saying injuries are possible because of flying debris.

The Edinburgh celebration is one of the most popular in Britain and regularly draws visitors from many parts of the world.

CHINA

Those willing to brave the cold in Beijing will join a countdown at the tower at Yongdingmen Gate, a rebuilt version of the Ming dynasty-era landmark gate at the southern end of the city's north-south axis.

Bells will be rung and prayers offered at temples in Beijing, but the Gregorian calendar's New Year's celebrations are typically muted in China compared to the Lunar New Year, or Spring Festival, a time of fireworks, feasts and family reunions.

Authorities throughout China are also on high alert for stampedes or terror attacks at large public gatherings. Police in the central city of Zhengzhou are putting 3,500 officers on duty across the city while residents gather to



Participants of a countdown to the New Year event marking the passage into 2018 in Beijing, China., (AP Photo/Ng Han Guan)

watch a light show and cultural performance in a public square.

The official Xinhua News Agency reported that President Xi Jinping sent a New Year's greeting to his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, saying Beijing is ready to boost co-operation with Russia in 2018.

JAPAN

Many Japanese are celebrating the arrival of the Year of the Dog in the traditional way of praying for peace and good fortune at neighbourhood Shinto shrines, and eating New Year's food such as noodles, shrimp and sweet black beans.

Barbecued beef and octopus dumpling stalls were out at Tokyo's Zojoji Temple, where people take turns striking the giant bell 108 times at midnight, an annual practice repeated at other Buddhist temples.

SOUTH KOREA

After spending an exhausting year that saw a presidency toppled by a corruption scandal and nuclear-armed North Korea firing a missile after missile, South Koreans enter 2018 in need of a happy distraction. The upcoming winter Olympics just might do it.

Thousands of people are expected to fill the streets near Seoul's City Hall for a traditional bell-tolling ceremony to usher in the new year. The group of dignitaries picked to ring the old

Bosingak bell at midnight includes Soohorang and Bandabi — the tiger and bear mascots for the Pyeongchang Winter Games and Paralympics in February and March. Tens of thousands flocked to eastern coastal areas, including Gangneung, the seaside city that will host the Olympic skating and hockey events, to watch the sun rise on 2018.

PHILIPPINES

Hours before midnight, authorities had already reported that at least 86 people had been injured by celebratory firecrackers in the Philippines, which has some of the most raucous New Year's celebrations in Asia.

Although the number of injuries has tapered off in recent years, largely due to hard economic times and government scare campaigns, the figures remain alarming. President Rodrigo Duterte signed an order in June confining the use of firecrackers to community-designated areas, such as near shopping malls and parks. Many Filipinos, largely influenced by Chinese tradition, believe that noisy New Year's celebrations drive away evil and misfortune.

TURKEY

Security measures were ramped up across Turkey, which was hit by a New Year's attack a year ago that killed dozens.

In Istanbul alone, 37,000 offi-

cers were on duty, with multiple streets closed to traffic and large vehicles barred from entering certain districts. Several New Year's Eve street parties were cancelled for security reasons.

Early on Jan. 1, 2017, an assailant shot his way into Istanbul's Reina nightclub, where hundreds were celebrating New Year's. Thirty-nine people were killed — mostly foreigners — and 79 wounded. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility.

ROMANIA

Romanians ushered in a new year in which the focus was on an anti-corruption fight as the government seeks to push through legislation that critics say will make it harder to punish high-level graft.

Television stations broadcast live from supermarkets full of last-minute shoppers, while beauty salons reported full bookings as revelers geared up for traditional celebrations of copious meals that can run to hundreds of euros (dollars).

Others meditated and prayed at Orthodox churches and monasteries. In rural eastern Romania, villagers danced traditional pantomime-like jigs to welcome the new year, wrapping themselves in bear furs or dressing as horses.

LAS VEGAS

Tens of thousands of revelers rang in the new year in Las Vegas under the close eye of law enforcement just three months after the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history.

Tourism officials said 330,000 people had come to Las Vegas for the festivities, anchored by a roughly eight-minute fireworks display at the top of seven casino-hotels. Acts including Bruno Mars, Britney Spears, Celine Dion and the Foo Fighters kept partiers entertained before and after midnight at properties across Sin City.

Trudeau Calls For Inclusion And Compassion In New Year Message

OTTAWA: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is calling on Canadians to put the values he says unite the country — openness, compassion, equality and inclusion — into practice heading into the new year. In a New Year's statement released Sunday, Trudeau says the 150th anniversary of Confederation in 2017 celebrated how people of different backgrounds, origins, cultures, and faiths came together to make Canada the country it is today.

But he says it was also a chance to reflect on the moments when Canada has not lived up to its ideals.

Trudeau says Indigenous Peoples, and

many Canadians, have faced prejudice and oppression and the country must continue to work to right those wrongs in the years ahead.

He says his government made progress in 2017 on issues such as creating new opportunities for young people and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, but notes there is still a lot of work to do in 2018.

Trudeau says every Canadian should have a "real and fair" shot at success.

"Let's move forward together, put those values into practice, and work to build a better future for all of us," Trudeau said.



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