

Highlights Of Celebrations Ringing In The New Year



Hundreds of intrepid bathers including Father Time take part in the Courage Polar Bear Dip for World Vision in Oakville, Ont., on New Year's Day, Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2019. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Frank Gunn



People run in and out of the waters of English Bay during the 99th annual Polar Bear Swim, in Vancouver, on January 1. The event was hosted by the Vancouver Polar Bear Swim Club. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Darryl Dyck

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of New Year's Eve, when many across the Philippines set off powerful firecrackers in one of Asia's most violent celebrations despite a government scare campaign and threats of arrests.

The Department of Health said it has recorded more than 50 firecracker injuries in the past 10 days, which is expected to increase overnight when Filipinos usher in 2019.

JAPAN: Japanese usually welcome the New Year with a visit to a temple or shrine, but some 30,000 people at Saitama Super Arena did it with Floyd Mayweather. The American boxer soundly defeated his opponent, Japanese kickboxer Tenshin Nasukawa, in the first round of what was billed as three rounds of entertainment with no official record, meaning both fighters still retain their undefeated tallies. "I told Tenshin to hold your head up high," Mayweather said of his advice after the bout.

CHINA: New Year's Eve isn't celebrated widely in mainland China, where the lunar New Year in February is a more important holiday, but countdown events were held in major cities, and some of the faithful headed to Buddhist temples for bell-ringing and prayers.

Beijing was holding a gala with VIP guests at the main site of the 2008 Summer Olympics. The event looked ahead to the 2022 Winter Games, which also will be held in the Chinese capital.

Outdoor revelers in Beijing had to brave temperatures well below freezing. In Hong Kong, festive lights on skyscrapers provided the backdrop for a fireworks, music and light show over Victoria Harbor on a chilly evening.

KIRIBATI: The Pacific island nation of Kiribati was the first in the world to welcome the new year, greeting 2019 with muted celebrations after spending 2018 on the front line of the battle against climate change.

Kiribati is made up of low-lying atolls along the equator which intersect three time zones, the first of which sees the new year 14 hours before midnight in London.

Much of the nation's land mass, occupied by 110,000 people, is



Fireworks explode in the sky over Rome's Colosseum during New Year's celebrations, in Rome, Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2019. (AP Photo/Andrew Medichini)



Two men watch the fireworks exploding over Copacabana Beach during the New Year's celebrations in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2019. (AP Photo/Léo Correa)

endangered by rising seas that have inundated coastal villages. The rising oceans have turned fresh water sources brackish, imperiling communities and raising doubts the nation will exist at the next New Year. The new year was welcomed in the capital, Tarawa, with church services and mostly quiet private celebrations.

NEW ZEALAND: In Auckland, New Zealand's biggest city, tens of thousands gathered around Sky Tower as fireworks exploded from the top of the 328-meter (1,076-foot) structure.

Across the Southern Hemisphere nation, thousands took to beaches and streets, becoming the first major nation to usher in 2019. Fireworks boomed and crackled above city centres and harbours.

AUSTRALIA: An estimated million people crowded Sydney

Harbor as Australia's largest city rang in the new year with a spectacular, soul-tinged fireworks celebration. One of the most complex displays in Australia's history included gold, purple and silver fireworks pulsating to the tune of "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman," made famous by Aretha Franklin, who died in August. The show used 8.5 tons of fireworks and featured more than 100,000 pyrotechnic effects.

In Melbourne, 14 tons of fireworks deployed on the ground and on roofs of 22 buildings produced special effects including flying dragons. In Brisbane, people watched as fireworks exploded from five barges moored on the Brisbane River.

SOUTH KOREA: Thousands of South Koreans filled the streets of the capital,



Revellers celebrate in Times Square in New York, Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2019, during a New Year's celebration. (AP Photo/Craig Ruttle)



Fireworks explode over the Sydney Harbour during New Year's Eve celebrations in Sydney, Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2019. (Brendan Esposito/AAP via AP)

Seoul, for a traditional bell-tolling ceremony near City Hall. Dignitaries picked to ring the old Bosingak bell at midnight included famous surgeon Lee Guk-jong, who successfully operated on a North Korean soldier who escaped to South Korea in 2017 in a hail of bullets fired by his comrades. A "peace bell" was tolled at Imjingak, a pavilion near the border with North Korea.

PARIS: Parisians and tourists gathered on the Champs-Elysees to celebrate New Year's Eve under heavy security. Paris police set up a security perimeter in the area, with bag searches, a ban on alcohol and traffic restrictions. The Interior Ministry said Sunday that the heavy security measures are needed because of a "high terrorist threat" and concerns about "non-declared protests."

Before midnight, a light show

illustrating the theme of brotherhood took place on the Arc de Triomphe monument at the top of the Champs-Elysees.

NEW YORK: Snoop Dogg, Sting and Christina Aguilera welcomed 2019 in a packed Times Square along with revelers from around the world who come to see the traditional crystal ball drop. Spectators began assembling early in the afternoon for the made-for-TV extravaganza. The celebration took place under tight security, with partygoers checked for weapons and then herded into pens, ringed by metal barricades, where they waited for the stroke of midnight.

New Year Babies

Families across Canada are welcoming some of the country's first babies of 2019. In Montreal, the McGill University Health Centre says baby Mariella was born at 12:02 a.m.

A hospital network in east Toronto tweeted that baby Fatima was born at Scarborough General at the stroke of midnight. Meanwhile, parents in Saskatoon and Regina welcomed babies at 1:55 a.m. and 4:40 a.m. respectively. Saskatoon's first baby of the year, Alya, shares a birthday with her big brother Emery, who was the second baby born in the city in 2017. In New Westminster, B.C., a baby boy was born at 12:01 a.m.

UNICEF has estimated that 999 babies would be born in Canada on New Year's Day.

NEW DELHI: India is estimated to have welcomed 18 per cent of the total babies born globally on January 1, 2019. According to UNICEF, 69,944 babies were expected to be born on New Year Day out of 3,95,072 babies likely to be born across the world.

Over half of these births have taken place in seven countries, along with India - like China (44,940), Nigeria (25,685), Pakistan (15,112), Indonesia (13,256), the US (11,086), Congo (10,053), and Bangladesh (8,428).



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