

# Cities in Asia ready for New Year parties after COVID hiatus

December 31 2022

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People dressed as Ded Moroz, Grandfather Frost, the Russian Santa Claus, attend an annual flash mob in Moscow's Metro (Subway) in Moscow, Russia, Friday, Dec. 30, 2022. Credit: Sergei Kiselev, Moscow News Agency photo via AP

Revelers began gathering in major city centers across the Asia-Pacific

region to celebrate the first new year without COVID-19 restrictions since the pandemic began in 2020.

While COVID-19 continues to cause death and dismay, particularly in China, which is battling a nationwide surge in infections after suddenly easing anti-epidemic measures, authorities are now treating the virus as a threat people are living with.

Celebrations are being held at the Great Wall in Beijing, while in Shanghai authorities said traffic will be stopped along the waterfront Bund to allow pedestrians to gather on New Year's Eve. Shanghai Disneyland will also hold a special fireworks show to welcome 2023.

More than 1 million are expected to crowd along Sydney's waterfront for a multi-million dollar celebration based around the themes of diversity and inclusion.

Organizers have said a rainbow waterfall will be a prominent feature of the New Year's Eve party. More than 7,000 fireworks will be launched from the top of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and a further 2,000 from the nearby Opera House.

It is the "party Sydney deserves," the city's producer of major events and festivals Stephen Gilby told The Sydney Morning Herald.



The New Year's Eve ball sits atop One Times Square in New York on Friday, Dec. 30, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Ted Shaffrey

"We have had a couple of fairly difficult years; we're absolutely delighted this year to be able to welcome people back to the foreshores of Sydney Harbor for Sydney's world-famous New Year's Eve celebrations," he said.

In Melbourne, Australia's second largest city, organizers have arranged for a family-friendly fireworks display along the Yarra River as dusk falls before a second session at midnight.

The Pacific nation of Kiribati will be the first country to greet the new year, with the clock ticking into 2023 one hour ahead of neighbors

including New Zealand.

In Auckland, large crowds are expected below the Sky Tower, where a 10-second countdown to midnight will precede a fireworks display to welcome the [new year](#).

The celebrations in New Zealand's largest city are expected to be well-received after COVID-19 forced them to be canceled a year ago. Authorities expect revelers to gather at several vantage points across the city including Devonport, which enables a view of the festivities across the harbor.



Members of a Turkish dance club perform during New Year's Eve celebrations in a public garden in Turkish capital Ankara, Turkey, Friday, Dec. 30, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Burhan Ozbilici



Palestinian girls take photos of themselves in front of illuminated numbers for the new year 2023, at the main road in Gaza City, Friday, Dec. 30, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Adel Hana



People dressed as Ded Moroz, Grandfather Frost, the Russian Santa Claus, attend an annual flash mob in Moscow's Metro (Subway) in Moscow, Russia, Friday, Dec. 30, 2022. Credit: Sergei Kiselev, Moscow News Agency photo via AP

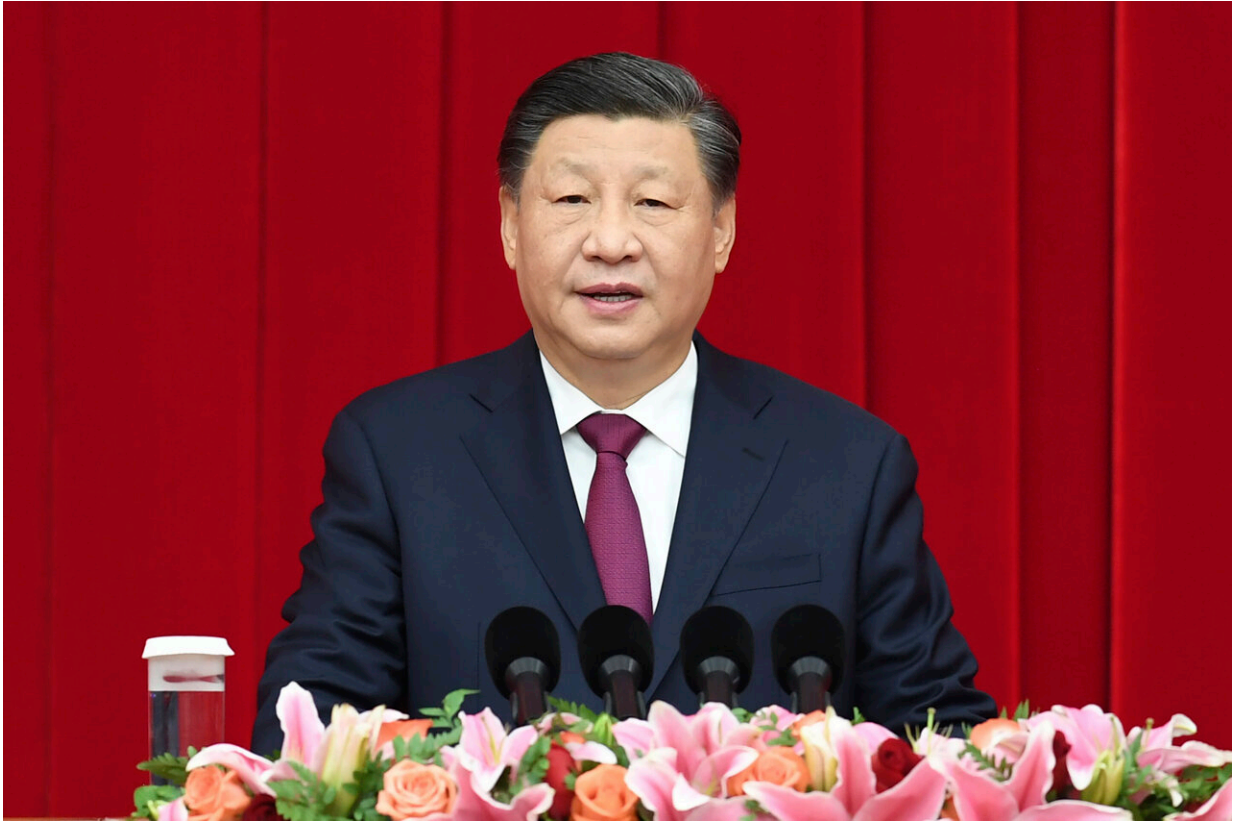


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In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency Leaders of the Communist Party of China including Chinese President Xi Jinping, center and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, third from right attend the New Year gathering organized by the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in Beijing on Friday, Dec. 30, 2022. Credit: Li Xueren/Xinhua via AP





In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, Chinese President Xi Jinping speaks during the New Year gathering organized by the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in Beijing on Friday, Dec. 30, 2022. Credit: Zhang Ling/Xinhua via AP



People wearing and not wearing face masks shop around at a shopping street famous for a year-end shopping before New Year holidays in Tokyo, Friday, Dec. 30, 2022. Japan on Friday started requiring COVID-19 tests for all passengers arriving from China as an emergency measure against surging infections there and as Japan faces rising case numbers and record-level deaths at home. Credit: AP Photo/Hiro Komae



A sales person, center, tries to sell fruits at a shopping street in the Ueno district famous for a year-end shopping before New Year holidays in Tokyo, Friday, Dec. 30, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Hiro Komae



People walk at Zaryadye Park decorated for the New Year and Christmas festivities with the Kremlin Wall, the Spasskaya Tower, and the St. Basil's Cathedral in the background in Moscow, Russia, Thursday, Dec. 29, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko



A boy reacts after receiving a gift from a man dressed as Santa Claus in Tallinn, Estonia, Thursday, Dec. 29, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Pavel Golovkin



People enjoy skating on the ice skating rink with the Tallinn Town Hall tower in the background, in Tallinn, Estonia, Thursday, Dec. 29, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Pavel Golovkin

Other features include a laser light and animation show, which will take in several landmarks in Auckland.

Most of Australia's state capitals have enjoyed good weather in the lead-up to midnight, but predictions of severe thunderstorms and winds doused celebrations in Darwin in the Northern Territory.

Flooding in Australia's tropical top end, which is currently experiencing its wet season, forced the evacuation of some two dozen people living in the Outback Queensland town of Urandangi.

Other towns across the nation are also dealing with flood concerns leading into 2023 after higher than usual rainfall across large parts of Australia.

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