



WORLD REVIEW OF 2012

Clockwise, starting from top left corner, US President Barack Obama hugs Michelle Obama after his reelection; a scene of destruction in Syria where 45,000 people have died in civil war; Nasa's Curiosity rover in Mars; Israeli occupied territories in Palestinian land; China's first aircraft carrier; Delhi gang-rape protest; an attacker of US embassy in Benghazi, Libya; a Chinese ship in the disputed South China Sea; Hurricane Sandy's devastation in US and a daredevil, Felix Baumgartner, jumps off the edge of the space, from 127,000 feet of altitude all the way back down to Earth, making history.

FILE PHOTO



World welcomes 2013

AFP, Sydney

Spectacular fireworks exploded over Sydney in a blaze of light and colour Tuesday to ring in the New Year, as the city kicked off a wave of global celebrations from Dubai to London to welcome 2013.

Australia's famous harbour city brought in the New Year on a balmy summer night with a US\$6.9 million display curated by pop icon Kylie Minogue, who pressed the button to start the pyrotechnics.

To the roars of the crowds, the sky erupted in light at midnight as fireworks shot up from barges and jet skis in the harbour and cascaded from the Harbour Bridge and burst and glimmered overhead.

Officials were expecting up to 1.5 million people to gather in the city and crowds jammed all vantage points along the waterfront to watch the seven tonnes of fireworks ignite the sky.

Fireworks will also light up the Thames in London, Moscow's Red Square and Kremlin and Hong Kong's Victoria Harbour, as well as central Kuala Lumpur, Taipei, Stockholm, Amsterdam and cities across China.

Revellers in New York will celebrate the stroke of midnight with the traditional New Year's Eve ball drop over Times Square, where South Korean Internet and pop sensation Psy will join a host of American music stars.

In Rio de Janeiro 24-tonne display opposite Copacabana Beach while in Germany, fireworks will cap a party at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate with the Pet Shop Boys, Bonnie Tyler and Blue.

US Election

Obama got what every president wants: A second term. With his place in the history books secure -- and no concerns his initial win will be seen as fluke -- Obama, who took 51 percent of the popular vote and won 332 electoral votes, will begin his second term on Jan 20. The 2012 election -- the most searched news topic on Yahoo! -- dominated news coverage and online conversation this year.



Suu Kyi's End of Isolation

Myanmar's democracy icon ended her long isolation form the rest of the world this year. She received a rock star reception in her Europe tour where she received her Nobel Prize for peace after 21 years of waiting. She also visited US and became more active in politics.

'Innocence of Muslims' and Benghazi Attack

"Innocence of Muslims," a low-budget US film that mocked the Prophet

Muhammad, sparked a violent international response.

The 14-minute film trailer was posted on YouTube, prompting riots throughout Muslim communities killing dozens. Libyan protesters were said to have exploited the situation after the US Consulate in Benghazi was attacked by al-Qaeda terrorists on Sept 11 which resulted in the death of US Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three others.

The attack on the US consulate in Benghazi, Libya, derailed the ambitions of one of Obama's closest advisers, UN Ambassador Susan Rice, and could impact the 2016 presidential race if Secretary of State Hillary Clinton opts to run.

Syria Civil War

As the war is entering its final stage as suggested by reports that rebels are gaining grounds and pushing towards the capital, the humanitarian crisis is mounting rapidly.

More than 45,000 people have been killed and tens of thousands of refugees have fled to neighboring countries since the conflict broke out in March 2011. Nearly 90 percent of those who have died in the 21-month conflict were killed in 2012.

Malala and Girl's Education

On Oct 9, Malala Yousafzai, a 15-year-old Pakistani women's rights activist, was shot in the head and neck by Taliban gunmen for campaigning for girl's education.

Yousafzai was hospitalized in critical condition and eventually transferred to a UK hospital, where she continues to recover.

In November, Time magazine nominated Malala as one of its 2012 "Person of the Year" candidates. Malala, Time said, "has become an inspiration not only in her native Pakistan—where the culture wars over women's rights and religious diversity have taken many violent turns—but all around the globe."



Bo Xilai ouster

China's Communist Party was rocked by one of the biggest political scandals in decades when Bo Xilai was ousted from the party in April. Bo is accused, among other things, of abusing his power in the case of a British businessman who the authorities say was killed by Bo's wife, and of taking "massive bribes" directly and through his family.

David Petraeus Scandal

The admission by the CIA director of an

extramarital affair led to his resignation and ended the career of a man once talked about as a possible presidential candidate.

Jump from Space!

A crazy man from Belgium, Felix Baumgartner, jumped off the edge of the space; from 127,000 feet of altitude all the way back down to Earth, breaking some world records and getting vital information for NASA in the process.

Gangnam Style

For the first time in history, a South Korean dance track, Gangnam Style, became the first video to clock up more than one billion views on YouTube.

The was posted online in July, propelling pop star Psy to worldwide fame. It has inspired hundreds of parody clips, from members of the British army, Thai navy and Minecraft gamers, among others.

Mass shooting in US

America had already been roiled by eight rampages in 2012—among them the shootings at Oikos University in Oakland, Calif., (7 dead); the movie theater in Aurora, Colo., (12 dead); and the Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wis., (6 dead). The horror in Newtown unfolded among its most vulnerable residents. The gunman, Adam Lanza, shot his mother, Nancy Lanza, in her bed. With his mother's guns, Lanza allegedly shot 20 children and six adults in a school, then killed himself after police arrived.

Chavez suffers new complications

AFP, Caracas

Venezuela plunged into political uncertainty Monday after the government announced that President Hugo Chavez had suffered a new setback after cancer surgery in Cuba and the situation he was facing was "tough."

"We have been informed of new complications that arose as a consequence of the respiratory infection we already knew about," Vice President Nicolas Maduro said Sunday in a TV and radio broadcast from Havana, where Chavez underwent his operation. Cuba is Chavez's closest regional ally.

Chavez, the face of the Latin American left for more than a decade and a firebrand critic of US "imperialism," has been in power since 1999 in Venezuela, an OPEC member that sits on top of the world's largest proven oil reserves.

Hillary hospitalised with blood clot

AFP, New York

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was at a New York hospital yesterday, receiving treatment for a blood clot discovered in the aftermath of a concussion suffered earlier this month.

The latest health scare for the globe-trotting Hillary will likely keep her out of the public eye a bit longer, just as she prepares to step down after four years as America's top diplomat.

Hillary, 65, fell ill with a stomach bug on her return from a trip to Europe earlier this month that caused the former first lady to become severely dehydrated and faint, suffering a concussion.

"In the course of a follow-up exam today, Secretary Hillary's doctors discovered a blood clot had formed, stemming from the concussion she sustained several weeks ago," her aide Philippe Reines said in a statement.

"She is being treated with anti-coagulants and is at New York Presbyterian Hospital," he said.



BERC panel for 3pc power price hike

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increase its power price by 11.31 percent while Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd submitted another proposal four days later for a 11.69 percent increase.

After the hearing, BERC Chairman Mohammad Imdadul Haque urged the stakeholders to give their opinions regarding power price hike by January 3.

"The commission will make a decision after an evaluation of the opinions."

A representative from the Consumers Association of Bangladesh, Prof Shamsul Alam opposed a further increase in the power price as, he said, the step would cause people to suffer more.

"We do not want any hike

in the power price again," he said, adding the commission at the time of the previous hike in September stated that it would not go for another increase within a year.

Mahtab Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury, a director of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, expressed fear that the country's ready-made garment sector would lose competitiveness in the global market for the increased power price would push production costs up.

"The commission must not accept the proposals for a price hike of electricity now."

Mahtab, Joint Secretary of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry MA Rahim Khan said that if the power price was increased the prices of other consumable items would also increase in the domestic market.

Managing Director of DESCO Arzad Hossain and Managing Director of DPDC Nazrul Hassan, however, said they would find it difficult to run the companies and ensure uninterrupted power supply if the prices were not increased.

The BERC's committee on Sunday recommended a 4.84 percent increase in the power price at retail level for the Power Development Board.

23 killed in wave of Iraq attacks

AFP, Baghdad

A wave of bombings and shootings across Iraq killed 23 people yesterday as the country grappled with anti-government rallies and simmering political crises ahead of major Shia commemoration rituals.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks in more than a dozen towns and cities that wounded 83 people, but Sunni militants such as Al-Qaeda's front group in Iraq regularly target officials and security forces in a bid to destabilise the government, and also often attack Shiite pilgrims.

The violence comes after anti-government protesters blocked a key highway to Syria and Jordan, amid political tensions between Shiite Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and a secular Sunni-backed party in his fragile national unity government.

Much of Monday's violence targeted Shiite pilgrims, ahead of Arbaeen commemoration ceremonies due this week.