

1597

First Dutch East India Company ships return from the Far East

1741

Alaska is first sighted by a Russian expedition led by Danish explorer Vitus Bering



1905

Chinese revolutionary Sun Yat-sen forms the first chapter of Tongmeng-hui, a union of secret societies determined to bring down the Qing dynasty

1968

250,000 Soviet and Warsaw Pact troops invade Czechoslovakia at night to suppress the Prague Spring

U-TURN WITH UK

The Art of Understanding...



P. UNNIKRISHNAN

I couldn't believe my eyes when I first saw the video. I looked again. And then once more.

A Bahraini fisherman was in the sea, seemingly riding alongside a shark. To most of us, the sight is frightening — a shark is one of the ocean's most efficient predators, its instincts and senses honed over millions of years. Yet here was a man completely at ease in its presence.

Perhaps he understood the animal's behaviour better than most of us ever could, knowing exactly when to approach and when to keep his distance. Either way, it was a memory that would stay with him for life.

It reminded me how little we really know about the sea. We have explored only a fraction of our oceans, yet beneath the surface exists an extraordinary world of intelligence, communication, instinct and survival.

One creature that fascinates me most is the orca.

Orcas are the largest members of the dolphin family and are apex predators that are remarkably intelligent, with sophisticated social structures. They have distinct hunting techniques, diets, and calls and clicks passed down through generations.

In some ways, their societies feel surprisingly familiar. Female orcas can live for decades after they stop reproducing, and scientists believe these older females play a vital role — helping younger members locate food and navigate difficult conditions, their accumulated knowledge becoming a survival tool for the whole family. In an ocean where survival depends on intelligence, cooperation and experience, knowledge passes down through generations.

Orcas also have a particular fascination with sharks, with some populations targeting the nutrient-rich livers and leaving much of the rest untouched.

And despite their fearsome reputation, there is no established pattern of wild orcas hunting humans for food. The nickname "killer whale" says more about their power as predators than about their relationship with us.

Perhaps the greatest lesson here is that instinct does not always mean aggression — it means understanding the environment well enough to survive within it.

I have swum in beautiful seas across many countries — the Maldives, Zanzibar, Langkawi. Yet I have always regretted not properly exploring the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, despite their relative closeness to my hometown in India.

A photographer friend once showed me images from his travels through those islands — among them, North Sentinel Island, home to the Sentinelese, one of the world's few remaining uncontacted Indigenous peoples.

For thousands of years, they have lived in remarkable isolation. Their population isn't known with certainty, but is thought to be small. They hunt, fish and gather using traditional methods, and have consistently made clear they want no contact with outsiders.

Their isolation isn't simply a matter of choice — it's a matter of survival. The Indian government strictly protects North Sentinel Island, recognising that people cut off from the modern world for generations may have little or no immunity to diseases ordinary to us, where even a mild infection could be devastating.

In 2018, American missionary John Allen Chau illegally travelled to the island attempting contact, and was killed — a tragic reminder of the danger of ignoring those boundaries. The story is disturbing, but it raises a difficult question: why do we assume every isolated community needs to be contacted, changed, or brought into our way of life?

This brings me back to the shark, the orca and the Sentinelese — at first seemingly sharing nothing: a predator, an extraordinarily intelligent marine mammal, and a human community deliberately separated from the modern world. Yet a common thread may run through all three.

We often think communication means speaking, approaching, touching. It doesn't always. Sometimes it means understanding another being's boundaries — knowing when to come closer and when to stay away. It is about learning how to swim and live together in the short life we have.

P. Unnikrishnan is the Chairperson and Managing Director of The Daily Tribune.

Sri Lanka unearths golden Buddha statues in ancient capital

AFP | Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan archaeologists have excavated 17 gold-plated Buddha statues from a UNESCO World Heritage site believed to have been a monastery more than 2,000 years ago, an official told AFP yesterday.

The rare find on Tuesday came during excavations of a rampart of the Abhayagiri temple complex in Anuradhapura, an ancient capital in the island's centre north.

Project manager Thusitha Herath, of the government's Central Cultural Fund, said this was the most significant discovery in the archaeologically protected area in more than three decades.

"We have found artefacts before, but this is the first time we have seen such a large number of statues," Herath told AFP

from the excavation site, 210 kilometres (130 miles) north of Colombo.

The 17 bronze statues plated in gold have features similar to artefacts from the seventh and eighth centuries, and are estimated to be about 1,200 to 1,300 years old, Herath said.

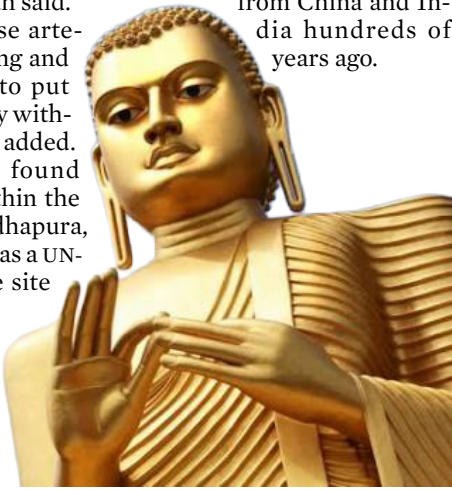
"We have sent these artefacts for further testing and we hope to be able to put them on public display within about a month," he added.

The statues were found buried at random within the Sacred City of Anuradhapura, which has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1982.

Sri Lanka's Central Cultural Fund has been carrying out excavations following the international recognition, which

also imposed conservation responsibilities on the government.

The area is known to have embraced a diverse mix of Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana doctrines of Buddhism, attracting scholars and pilgrims from China and India hundreds of years ago.



Israel army admits firing on car in death of five-year-old Hind Rajab

● The Israeli military had previously denied its troops were present in the area

● Alongside the Hind Rajab case, the military published reviews into four other high-profile incidents in Gaza

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

The Israeli military on Wednesday admitted its troops fired on a car carrying five-year-old Hind Rajab in Gaza in 2024, saying it had ordered a criminal investigation into the killing which drew international outrage.

Hind Rajab's body was recovered from a car riddled with bullets in Gaza City days after she was last heard from in a desperate, hours-long phone call to the Palestinian Red Crescent on January 29, 2024.

The Israeli military had previously denied its troops were present in the area near the incident.

"Following review of the findings and due to alleged failures in the coordination of the movement of the Palestine Red Crescent ambulance, it has been decided to initiate a criminal investigation of the incident by Military Police Criminal Investigation Division," the military said on Wednesday.

Alongside the Hind Rajab case, the military published reviews into four other high-profile incidents in Gaza, saying it was also launching a criminal probe into the 2025 killings of 15 Palestinians including medics and humanitarian personnel.

Hind Rajab had made the emergency call after her family's car came under fire during an attempt to flee Gaza City amid an Israeli advance in the Palestinian territory's north.

Her body was eventually re-



5-year-old Palestinian girl Hind Rajab has been found dead. (Palestine Red Crescent Society)



Israeli soldiers stand guard during the demolition of a Palestinian building, citing the lack of a building permit, in Qalandia south of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank

covered along with those of six relatives and two Red Crescent rescue workers sent to find her.

Her death sparked international outrage and calls for an independent investigation, and the original audio recordings of her emergency call were incorporated into the Oscar-nominated feature film "The Voice of Hind Rajab".

Upon publishing its review into the incident on Wednesday, the Israeli military said its findings indicated troops had "fired at a vehicle that was approaching them while travelling contrary to the advance notice" that had been given to residents in the area.

"As a result of the fire, five of the vehicle's passengers were killed, and two survived: Hind Rajab and her cousin Layan Hamada," it said.

The military said that following a call to rescue authorities in which the girls participated, the movement of a Palestine Red Crescent ambulance had been coordinated in order to evacuate the casualties.

"However, according to the allegations raised, upon the ambulance's arrival at the scene of the incident, a shell was fired toward it, resulting in the deaths of the two paramedics travelling in it," it added.

The Hind Rajab Foundation, a Brussels-based legal organisation seeking to address alleged Israeli violations in Gaza, said it had "no confidence" in the move by the Israeli military.

"These reported investigations, even if they do occur, should not be mistaken for a genuine step toward justice," it said in a statement.

X

TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Serving others has become more dangerous than ever. More than 1,000 humanitarians have been killed in the last 3 years. Humanitarian workers stand up for people in need. We must stand up for them. We must #ActForHumanity.Now.

@antonioguterres

02



Music fosters communion. It helps unite our hearts to overcome differences between people and bring everyone together in praise of God through a symphony of voices. #GeneralAudience

@Pontifex

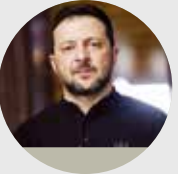
03



Last month, I launched a diplomatic campaign to dismantle the ICC's threat to our national sovereignty. The Trump Administration is sanctioning ICC President Tomoko Akane and Senior Trial Lawyer Abdoulaye Seye in our unwavering mission to protect Americans from this sham of a court. In honor of our Declaration of Independence, Americans will never be transported beyond seas to be tried for pretend offenses.

@DrTedros

04



Today, 103 Ukrainian warriors are returning home from Russian captivity. They are defenders from the Armed Forces, the State Border Guard Service, and the National Guard.

@ZelenskyyUa

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stance)