

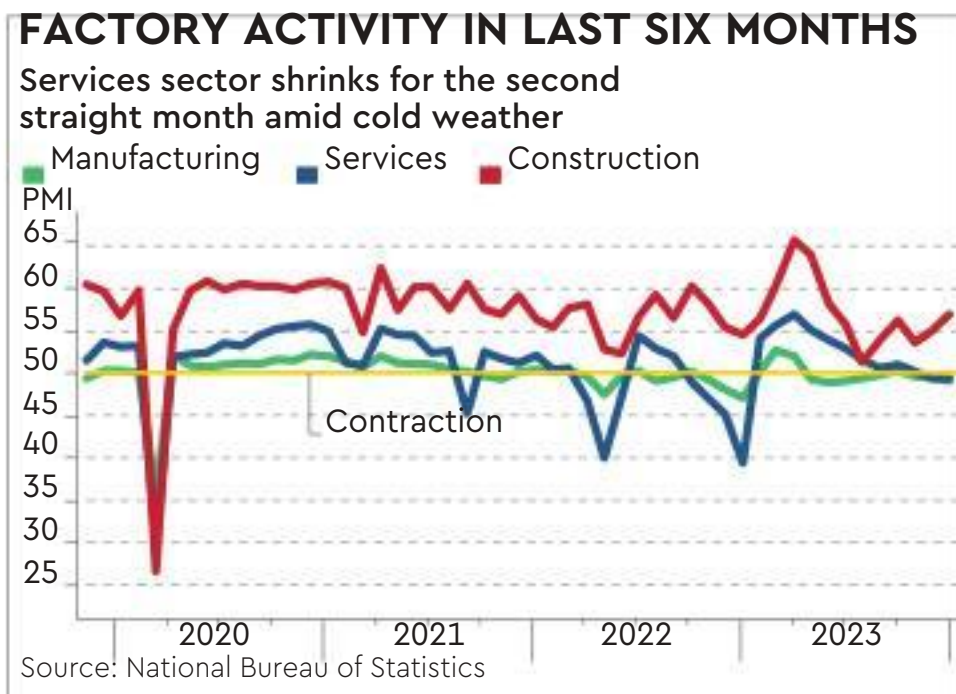
THIS IS THE LOWEST LEVEL IN SIX MONTHS

China's factory activity decline deepens in Dec

The official manufacturing PMI declined to 49, the NBS said.

BLOOMBERG December 31

CHINA'S FACTORY ACTIVITY shrank in December to the lowest level in six months...



Xi pledges to strengthen economic recovery

PRESIDENT XI JINPING said on Sunday that China will consolidate and enhance the positive trend of economic recovery...

may cut rates in early January," he said. NBS analyst Zhao Qinghe said in a separate statement...

The weaker-than-expected PMI data showed growth momentum has declined further amid a low season and the cold weather...

The PMI figures provided more signs of weakness in China's economic recovery in the final months of the year.

"We can't rule out the possibility that the central bank

demand, Zhao added.

Weak demand and sluggish confidence has also been reflected in deepening consumer price deflation and shrinking imports.

The worst property downturn in modern China is expected to persist, which will further curb demand for goods from furniture to home appliances.

A sub-index for factories' new orders fell to 48.7 as demand weakened, while a gauge measuring new export orders contracted to 45.8.

For non-manufacturing sectors, a gauge of construction activity climbed to 56.9 from 55 in November, according to the NBS.

-BLOOMBERG

NEW YEAR'S EVE BASH



Fireworks are seen over the Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge during New Year's Eve celebrations in Sydney, on Sunday.

REUTERS

Saurashtra Gramin Bank advertisement including contact information and details about the Empanelment of Corporate Business Correspondents for Financial Inclusion.

NOTICE from ECL Finance Limited regarding the sale of Security Receipts, including details of the company and contact information.

PUBLIC NOTICE regarding mortgage matters, detailing the bank's policies and procedures for loan security.

THE SCHEDULE ABOVE REFERRED TO: 1. On Lease: Suasth Health Care Foundation... 2. On Ownership: Ms. Mrunal Amarnath Rajurkar...

Advertisement for 'THE BUSINESS DAILY' newspaper, mentioning 'FINANCIAL EXPRESS' and contact details for Sd/- Kochhar & Co.

INFINITY SOLUTIONS advertisement for Securitisation Notice under S. 13(2) of SARFAESI Act, 2002, listing borrower details and property descriptions.

ICICI Home Finance advertisement for Corporate Office and branch office, including details about the auction of secured assets.

Maersk pauses sailings through Red Sea again

JACOB GRONHOLT-PEDERSEN & AHMED ELIMAM Copenhagen/Dubai, December 31

IRANIAN-BACKED HOUTH MILITANTS attacked a Maersk container vessel with missiles and small boats, prompting the company to pause all sailing through the Red Sea for 48 hours, Maersk said on Sunday.

The crew of the Maersk Hangzhou crew was safe and there was no indication of fire onboard the vessel, which was fully manoeuvrable and continued its journey north to Port Suez, Maersk said.

The attack was the latest by Houthi militants in Yemen, who have been targeting vessels in the Red Sea to show their support for Palestinian Islamist group Hamas fighting Israel in Gaza.

The Red Sea is the entry point for ships using the Suez Canal, which handles about 12% of global trade and vital for the movement of goods between Asia and Europe.

The United States launched Operation Prosperity Guardian on December 19, saying more than 20 countries had agreed to participate in the efforts to safeguard ships in Red Sea waters near Yemen.

Image of a Maersk container ship with the caption 'HOUSHI SCARE' and a sub-headline 'The crew of the Maersk Hangzhou crew was safe and there was no indication of fire onboard the vessel'.

World trade is disrupted, with major shipping firms taking the longer & costlier route around Africa's Cape of Good Hope rather than through the Suez Canal.

Maersk, one of the world's major cargo shippers, said on Sunday it would delay all transits through the area for 48 hours, after the Maersk Hangzhou was struck by a missile at around 1730 GMT on Saturday 55 nautical miles southwest of Al Hodeidah, Yemen.

Singapore's economy avoids recession in 2023

KARTHIKEYAN SUNDARAM December 31

SINGAPORE'S ECONOMY AVOIDED a recession in 2023 as Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong warned of a "troubled" international environment that will weigh on growth and security.

For 2024, he reiterated an official projection for growth of 1% to 3%. Lee called 2023 a "challenging year" where tensions between the US and China remain and the war in Ukraine is at a "strategic stalemate with no resolution in sight."

He pointed to global "revulsion and anger" over the human suffering in the Israel-Hamas conflict.

"For some years to come, we must expect the external environment to be less favorable to our security and prosperity," Lee said.

Lee, 71, has served as prime minister since 2004 and plans to hand over the reins to his deputy Lawrence Wong in 2024. In what is likely to be his final New Year's message, he urged Singaporeans to extend their full support to the new leadership.

"This is not the first time we are having a leadership transition," he said.

North Korea to launch new satellites

NORTH KOREA VOWED to launch three new spy satellites, build military drones, and boost its nuclear arsenal in 2024 as leader Kim Jong Un said U.S. policy is making war inevitable, state media reported on Sunday.

Kim lashed out at Washington in lengthy remarks wrapping up five days of ruling party meetings that set economic, military and foreign policy goals for the coming year.

"Because of reckless moves by the enemies to invade us, it is a fait accompli that a war can break out at any time on the Korean peninsula," he said, according to state news agency KCNA.

Trump, who traded in both threats and historic diplomacy with Kim.

"Pyongyang might be waiting out the US presidential election to see what its provocations can buy it with the next administration," said Leif-Eric Easley, professor of international studies at Ewha Womans University in Seoul.

President Joe Biden's administration says it is open to talks, but it imposed new sanctions as North Korea pushed ahead with more missile tests banned under United Nations' sanctions.

-REUTERS