

Recovery stays ragged and vulnerable

The World Bank pared its 2022 growth projections for South Asian economies to 6.6 percent earlier this week, from an estimate of 7.6 percent released in January, emphasising that post-pandemic growth was already uneven and fragile before the Russia-Ukraine conflict triggered fresh challenges. The ripple effect of high oil and food prices that prevailed even before the war and were exacerbated since February 24, are key factors worrying the Bank as people's real incomes take a hit. India's GDP, the Bank reckons, may now grow by 8 percent in 2022-23, not 8.7 percent as it had earlier forecast, before dropping further to 7.1 percent in 2023-24. The Bank's chief economist has said that their overall assessment is that GDP growth could actually be 1.3 percentage points lower, or 7.4 percent, but they refrained from making an adjustment of that magnitude in their headline projection due to some positive surprises in recent data such as strong digital services exports. The tepid post-COVID recovery in India's household consumption will be further hemmed in by high inflation and the incomplete labour market revival. Monetary and fiscal policy mandarins need to address inflation more aggressively, lest it derails the recovery. There is a need to rethink growth engines as well — the pursuit of free trade agreements indicates a fresh stance. The shunning of RCEP needs a revisit, as advised by key ally Japan — lest rivals like Vietnam dent India's future exports in job-intensive sectors such as textiles. The farm sector, that has so far been resilient through the pandemic's worst phases and could now gain due to high global food prices, needs careful handling too. While the normal monsoon forecast bodes well for the kharif crop and hopefully, rural demand, the cost of inputs — be it fertilizers or chicken feed — is rising sharply for farmers too.

LETTERBOX

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Winning Your Goal is not the Toughest Victory, but, Winning Your Patience to Achieve that Goal is the Most Toughest one.

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SUSHANT SINGH EXPLAINS HOW RESETTING TIES WITH CHINA WILL ALTER INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH US

Beijing's move, India's turn



Looking at the long list of diplomats, officials, and ministers from across the globe rushing to New Delhi in the last few weeks, one would assume that India was playing an active role in resolving the crisis in Europe. Despite his ambitions to be hailed as a global statesman, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has scrupulously avoided engaging with the crisis. India has refused to condemn Russia's military invasion, continues to trade with Russia, and has abstained from voting on United Nations resolutions.

India is the centrepiece of the Joe Biden administration's Indo-Pacific strategy. Indian Foreign and Defence Ministers recently held the '2+2' meeting with their American counterparts. The Japanese Prime Minister was in New Delhi last month. The Australian Prime Minister held a virtual summit with Mr. Modi days before the two countries signed an interim trade deal. He had to then explain that he had not betrayed Ukraine by signing the deal with India.

Even as India's Quad partners (U.S., Japan, Australia) impose trade sanctions on Russia, condemn Russian President Vladimir Putin and provide military aid to Ukraine, India recently welcomed the Russian Foreign Minister to New Delhi. The signalling was unmistakable: he was the only visiting foreign official among the many in New Delhi to get a personal meeting with Mr. Modi.

A shift is nevertheless discernible: India has chosen to increase, rather than reduce, import of its meagre crude oil supplies from Russia, being offered at a discount. Despite a warning by the U.S. Deputy National Security Adviser Daleep Singh in New Delhi that there will be "consequences to countries that actively attempt to circumvent or backfill the sanctions," India and Russia are exploring ways of conducting bilateral trade by bypassing the dollar-based financial system.

India's Quad partners have been exceptionally sympathetic towards New Delhi's case so far, but the underlying stress in their ties with India will come to the surface as the crisis drags on. These tensions have been noted in Beijing, which has praised India for pursuing an independent foreign

policy. In recent years, Chinese officials had looked at Indian moves in the region through the prism of their U.S. policy, but India's stance on Ukraine has triggered a rethink in Beijing. Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to New Delhi in March was driven either by the need to wean India away from the Quad or as an exploratory step towards a larger strategic reset with New Delhi.

It would be erroneous to focus on the minimal outcome of the visit to deem it a failure. That the visit took place is itself a big success given that some 90,000 soldiers from both armies have been deployed in Ladakh for nearly two years now, after Chinese troops moved in to occupy certain territories that were hitherto in Indian control. Despite 15 rounds of negotiations between senior military commanders, China continues to occupy at least three such areas. From other such areas, both the armies have disengaged i.e., moved their soldiers a couple of miles behind, but there has been no de-escalation i.e., they have not moved the troops to their bases.

In his meetings with Mr. Wang, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar did not demand the restoration of status quo ante of April 2020 in Ladakh; disengagement from remaining "friction points" was the only precondition for return to normalcy in China-India ties. In a rush to declare the crisis as

resolved, India made further concessions to China by seeking disengagement only from Patrolling Point 15, suggesting that the other two areas — Depsang and Demchok — are "legacy issues". This is in keeping with Mr. Modi's stance since June 2020, when he first denied Chinese occupation of Indian territory in Ladakh and has since kept silent on the matter. Questions on the border crisis have been denied in Parliament. No official media briefings have taken place in two years. The government has thus successfully kept the truth of Chinese ingress hidden from the Indian public.

Mr. Modi's desire to downplay Chinese bellicosity was confirmed by former U.S. Ambassador to India, Kenneth Juster, when he said that the Indian government had instructed the U.S. officials to neither mention the Chinese aggression in any joint statement nor raise it in a strong manner otherwise. While New Delhi is being excessively accommodative of Beijing, China is unconcerned about Indian sensitivities. Before coming to New Delhi, Mr. Wang signed a provocative statement on Kashmir in Islamabad with the Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation countries and asserted China's strong ties with Pakistan. While it has allowed South Korean and Pakistani students to return to China, Beijing has not extended the same

courtesy to over 23,000 Indian students. If China is extending a handshake to India, it is only on its own terms.

Despite the border crisis, India's trade with China reached a record high of \$125 billion in 2021. India remains the biggest recipient of loans disbursed by the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank. The Modi government did not criticise China's clampdown in Hong Kong and has never raised the issue of mistreatment of Uighurs in Xinjiang, although it may have been driven by a defensiveness about the criticism of its own strong-arm policies in Kashmir. The activities of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan community in India have been calibrated to remain within limits that do not provoke Beijing.

China is the glue that binds the Quad together. While Indian and American policies are at variance in countries such as Myanmar, Iran and Afghanistan, China is the one interest that aligns the two countries together. That basic premise of a collaborative partnership with India will be tested by these recent moves from Beijing towards New Delhi. Questions have always been raised in whispered tones in Washington about the relative power gap between the two Asian powers (China's economy is nearly six times India's size). This notwithstanding, it has been an article of faith in Washington in the past couple of years that having suffered from Chinese military aggression in 2020, India realises that it needs the U.S. to counter the threat from Beijing. This was the thrust of Mr. Singh's blunt counsel in New Delhi.

During Mr. Wang's visit, China offered to create a virtual G-2 in Asia by protecting India's traditional role and collaborating on developmental projects as 'China-India Plus' in South Asia. Once India's limited preconditions for declaring the border crisis resolved are met, the offer will seem more alluring and real than it does today. When Mr. Modi as Chief Minister of Gujarat was denied a visa to travel to the U.S. owing to his association with the 2002 Gujarat riots, he made regular visits to China.

Sushant Singh is Senior Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research. Views are personal.



DR KR ANTONY BELIEVES ADDRESSING UNDERNUTRITION IS KEY TO REDUCE TB AND MORTALITY IN INDIA

The food vaccine as right, more so for TB patients

In the past, there was a belief that every ill had a pill and the pill killed the germs that made you ill. That germ could be a bacteria, virus or a parasite. Factors such as genetic and metabolic causes, hormonal imbalance and altered neuro-chemical transmitters causing illnesses were less known then. But there was fairly good knowledge of how good air and nutrition reduced consumption illnesses such as tuberculosis (TB).

This is why sanatoriums/sanatoria were set up in mountain terrain, with fresh air, pure water and good food, in the quest for a cure for TB. There were no drugs for TB till the discovery of streptomycin in 1943. With improved wages, better living standards and the accompanying higher purchasing power for food, the TB mortality rate came down from 300 people per 1,00,000 population to 60 in England and Wales. TB disappeared from socio-economically developed countries long before the advent of chemotherapy. After the Second World War, in 1946 G.B. Leyton reported a 92% reduction in the incidence of TB among British soldiers who were fed an additional Red Cross diet of 1,000 calories plus 30 grams of protein when compared to Russian soldiers who were fed only a camp diet. This historical importance of good nutrition was ignored by the modern therapist who tried to control TB initially with streptomycin injection, isoniazid and para-aminosalicylic acid. In the ecstasy of finding antibiotics killing the germs, the social determinants of disease were ignored.

With more drug arsenals such as rifam-



picin, ethambutol, pyrazinamide, the fight against TB bacteria continued, which became multidrug resistant. Sharper bullets were fired into the frail body of patients. It was bacteria targeted, not patient-centric. The regimes and the mode of delivery of drugs were changed to plug the loopholes of alleged "non-compliance of illiterate and irresponsible patients". Blister packs of a multi-drug regime were provided at the doorstep, and the directly observed treatment/therapy (DOT) mechanism set up. There was little done to try to understand where patients lived, what work they did for a living, how much they could afford to buy food, and how much they ate.

Many of the poor discontinued blister-packaged free drugs thinking that these were "hot and strong" drugs not suited for the hunger pains they experienced every

night. They coughed up virulent bacteria from their emaciated body to infect many around them. It is no wonder that TB was never brought under control.

Let me narrate this example. I was defending a project proposal to provide nutritional supplementation of additional rice, dhal and cooking oil for TB patients in the tribal areas of Bastar-Chhattisgarh as part of the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) plan in 2009-10. But it was rejected twice by the central technical team as "an intervention without proven benefit".

"The nutrition of the individual, is the most vital factor in the prevention in tuberculous disease," said Dr. J.B. McDougall of the World Health Organization (WHO), in 1949. And, Dr. René J. Dubos in the Journal of the American Medical Association, in 1960, said, "It is most unlikely that drugs alone, or drugs supplemented by vaccination, can control TB in the underprivileged countries of the world as long as their nutritional status has not been raised to a reasonable level."

The fact is that 90% of Indians exposed to TB remain dormant if their nutritional status and thereby the immune system, is good. When the infected person is immunocompromised, TB as a disease manifests itself in 10% of the infected. India has around 2.8 million active cases. It is a disease of the poor. And the poor are three times less likely to go for treatment and four times less likely to complete their treatment for TB, according to WHO, in 2002. Scientists like Rudolph Virchow (before 1902), Sir William Osler (before 1919) and Dr.

Dubos (from 1960) have been saying the same thing.

The work and the findings of a team at the Jan Swasthya Sahayog hospital at Ganiyari, Bilaspur in Chhattisgarh (led by Dr. Anurag and Madhavi Bhargava, Yogesh Jain, Biswaroop and Madhuri Chatterjee, Raman Kataria, Gajanand) established the association of poor nutritional status with a higher risk of TB. In the period 2004-09, among the 1,695 pulmonary TB patients they treated, men had an average body weight of 42.1 kg and a body mass index (BMI) of 16. For women, the average body weight was 34.1 kg and a BMI of 15. With these levels of undernutrition, there was a two to four-fold rise in the mortality associated with TB.

In 2014, research led by Dr. Anurag Bhargava (professor of medicine) showed that undernutrition in the adult population was the major driver of India's TB epidemic. Subsequently, the central TB division of the Ministry of Health came up with a "Guidance Document - Nutritional Care and Support for Patients with Tuberculosis in India" after a national workshop held in February 2016 at Yenapoya Medical College, Mangaluru, Karnataka. The 2019 Global TB report identified malnutrition as the single-most associated risk factor for the development of TB, accounting for more cases than four other risks, i.e., smoking, the harmful use of alcohol, diabetes and HIV.

Dr. K.R. Antony is a paediatrician at Kochi, Kerala and former Director of the State Health Resource Centre (SHRC) Chhattisgarh

BOOKS: REVIEW

New book features artefacts of Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum in Jaipur

The latest book in a series on the collections at the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, City Palace, Jaipur, brings to readers some of the most exquisite images of artefacts, paintings, monuments and historical treasures of the Jaipur Court.

A tribute to the Museum's collections, "Masterpieces at the Jaipur Court", published by Niyogi Books, also features contributions from several Indian and international scholars — who contributed two-thirds of the entries in this volume. It is edited by historians Giles Tillotson and Mrinalini Venkateswaran.

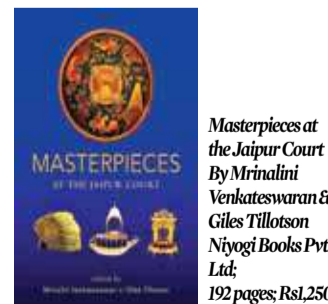
Other books in the series include "Festivals at the Jaipur Court", "Textiles & Garments at the Jaipur Court", "Arms & Armour at the

Jaipur Court" and "Painting and Photography at the Jaipur Court".

"But it is also a beautiful book — almost gorgeous enough to eat, one person said to me — so it's meant to be enjoyed too, whether before or after a visit to Jaipur!" said Venkateswaran, museum consultant at the City Palace in Jaipur.

While previous books in the series covered one aspect of the collections, the new book showcases the highlights of the collection as a whole.

Other books in the series include "Festivals at the Jaipur Court", "Textiles & Garments at the Jaipur Court", "Arms & Armour at the



Masterpieces at the Jaipur Court By Mrinalini Venkateswaran & Giles Tillotson Niyogi Books Pvt. Ltd. 192 pages, Rs.1,250

Jaipur Court" and "Painting and Photography at the Jaipur Court".

and will be of interest to both the expert and the general reader.

"It showcases a range of treasures from the Museum across its vast collection of exquisite artefacts. The pieces written by a range of eminent scholars make this book a true collector's item," said Trisha Niyogi, COO and director, Niyogi Books.

The book, priced at Rs 1,250, is currently available for sale on offline and online stores.

Masterpieces at the Jaipur Court is the sixth in a new series of books initiated by the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, City Palace, Jaipur. Written by leading specialists, they are designed to be accessible and attractive for a new generation of readers and researchers.

Each of the other volumes covers one aspect of the collections. But the need was felt for something handier, which would showcase the highlights of the collection as a whole.



Sikh devotees pay respects on the occasion of Vaisakhi at Sri Harmandir Sahib in on Thursday. Vaisakhi celebrate as a harvest festival and Khalsa Saajina Diwas (Foundation Day-1699) PHOTOS-PRABHJOT GILL



Youths perform the traditional Punjab folk dance "Bhangra" at a wheat field on the outskirts of Amritsar on festival of harvest of Vaisakhi. PHOTOS-PRABHJOT GILL



4 Indian girl students bag bronze at Mathematical Olympiad in Hungary



All four contestants who represented India at the 11th European Girls' Mathematical Olympiad held in Eger, Hungary, during April 6-12, 2022, have won bronze medals. 12th standard students

Ananya Rajas Ranade from Pune, Anushka Aggarwal from Delhi and Sanika Amol Borade from Nashik and tenth standard student Gunjan Aggarwal from Delhi are the winners from the country.

Anushka and Gunjan are sisters to represent India at the EGMO 2022. Both Ananya and Anushka missed silver by 1 point. This year India participated in full-strength onsite after a hiatus of two years forced by the pandemic. AGENCIES

Saina Nehwal decides to skip selection trials for CWG, Asian Games

NEW DELHI: Saina Nehwal's chances of defending her title at the Commonwealth Games looks bleak as she has decided to skip the selection trials for the upcoming multi-sport events.

The big-ticket events include the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham and the Hangzhou Asian Games.

The selection trials are scheduled here from April 15 to 20. The 32-year-old Hisar-born shuttler, a two-time CWG gold medalist and 2012 London Olympics bronze medalist, has informed the Badminton Association of India (BAI) about her decision to skip the trials.



"Saina has written to BAI, informing her decision to not play in the trials which will be the only tournament to pick players for CWG, Asiad and Thomas and Uber Cup." AGENCIES

The CWG squad will consist of 10 members with equal number of men and women, while the Asian Games and Thomas & Uber Cup contingents will have 20 members each, including 10 men and 10 women.

The BAI has made it clear that players inside the top 15 in the BWF rankings will be picked directly, while the rest will be chosen from the trials which will see participation of shuttlers ranked between 16 to 50 in the latest world rankings, released on March 29. The national governing body will also be "finalising probables for the senior core group for the 2024 Olympic Games" during the trials. AGENCIES

KRISTEN STEWART to star in romantic thriller 'Love Lies Bleeding'



Hollywood star Kristen Stewart is set to top line a romantic thriller film from director Rose Glass.

Titled "Love Lies Bleeding", the film has been set up at Hollywood studio A24 and examines a romance fueled by ego, desire and the American Dream.

Glass, best known for her 2019 indie hit "Saint Maud", is directing from the script she co-wrote with Weronika Tofilska. The story centers on the extreme qualities it takes to succeed in the competitive world of bodybuilding. Stewart will take on the co-lead part, the protective lover of a female bodybuilder.

Neetu remembers Rishi on the wedding of Ranbir-Alia



MUMBAI: Veteran actor Neetu Kapoor on Friday penned a heartfelt note for late husband Rishi Kapoor following son Ranbir Kapoor's marriage to Alia Bhatt in a private ceremony.

Congratulatory messages continue to pour for the star couple, who tied the knot after five years of dating at their 'Vastu' apartment in Bandra on Thursday in presence of Kapoor and Bhatt family, besides close friends such as Karan Johar, Ayan Mukherji, Akash Ambani and Shloka Ambani. AGENCIES

Alia Bhatt, 29, posted a series of loved-up pictures with Ranbir Kapoor, 39, on Instagram post the wedding to announce that they were now husband and wife.

Taking to Instagram a day after her son's wedding, Neetu Kapoor said her late husband, Bollywood actor Rishi Kapoor's wish has been fulfilled.

This is dedicated to Kapoor Saab your wish has been fulfilled, she wrote along with a photo of her with Ranbir Kapoor from the wedding. AGENCIES

England's MP Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi pays obeisance at Harmandar Sahib with family



AMRITSAR: England's Sikh Member of Parliament Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi paid obeisance at Sachkhand Sri Harmandar Sahib with his family members including wife Bibi Manveen Kaur Dhesi, sons Joga Singh Dhesi and Toshab Singh Dhesi and listened to the divine Gurbani Kirtan. Tanmanjeet Singh said that he got an opportunity to pay obeisance at the Guru's house with his blessings and while congratulating the Sikh Sangat for Khalsa Sajina Diwas appealed the youth to connect to their heritage. He said this day is a symbol of the glory of dastar (turban) and the entire Sikh youth should move forward in the country and world while staying Sabat Soorat (in Sikh appearance with unshorn hair). On this occasion, SGPC assistant secretary Tejinder Singh, information officer Jaswinder Singh Jassi honoured Tanmanjeet Singh and his family members with Siropaos (robes of honour) and a photo of Sachkhand Sri Harmandar Sahib. AGENCIES

Ishaan Khatter wraps war drama 'PIPPA'



MUMBAI: Bollywood Actor Ishaan Khatter on Monday said he has finished filming for his upcoming war drama movie "Pippa". Backed by producers Ronnie Screwvala and Siddharth Roy Kapur, the film is directed by Raja Krishna Menon of "Airlift" fame. "Pippa" is billed as a heroic tank battle film that underscores the bravery of Brigadier Balram Singh Mehta (Khatter), a veteran of the 45th Cavalry tank squadron, who, along with his siblings, fought on the eastern front during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971. AGENCIES

Hollywood Actor Frank Langella fired from Netflix show after sexual misconduct probe

Hollywood veteran Frank Langella has been fired by Netflix from its upcoming limited series "The Fall Of The House Of Usher" following an investigation into his alleged misconduct on set.

The 84-year-old actor was cast to play Roderick Usher in the eight-episode horror project, inspired by multiple Edgar Allan Poe tales.

However, the role will be recast, even though the show was about halfway through production. The scenes that were filmed with Langella will now be reshot, reported Deadline. Netflix and Langella have not yet commented on the investigation or the allegation that was levelled against the actor.



Family members of martyrs of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre pay their tribute on the 103rd anniversary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre at the memorial in Amritsar on Wednesday. The Amritsar massacre, also known as the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, where on April 13, 1919, British Indian Army soldiers opened fire on an unarmed gathering, killed at least 379 men, women and children according to official records. PHOTO-PRABHJOT GILL

Kangana Ranaut's 'DHAAKAD' to release on May 20

MUMBAI: Bollywood actor Kangana Ranaut-starrer "Dhaakad" will be released theatrically on May 20, the makers announced on Tuesday.

The action movie is directed by Razeesh Razy Ghai and produced by Deepak Mukut and Soheli Maklai.

The 35-year-old actor stars in the movie as Agent Agni. I enjoyed the love and admiration that came my way for the way I pulled off the action scenes in 'Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi'. In our cinema, we rarely have heroines performing action scenes in the real sense.

When 'Dhaakad' came my way, I felt happy to see that someone had dared to visualise a woman in a hardcore commercial film as an action heroine. I'm all for dare-devilry and doing something that



pushes the envelope. There's nothing that does it like a good commercial film," the 35-year-old actor said in a statement. The film also features Saswata Chatterjee, Arjun Rampal and Divya Dutta in pivotal roles. Razy Ghai lauded the National Award-winning actor, saying that she has worked hard for the movie. While constructing this character, we were clear that Agent Agni had to be one of a kind. We've seen no one as feisty and bold as her. It was reassuring to have someone like Kangana Ranaut with us who not just worked on the looks of her character, but went all out to get in perfect form for 'Dhaakad'. She also got into the mind space of the character wonderfully," the director said. Mukut said he hopes "Dhaakad" sets new standards in how women-led actioners are designed in Bollywood. We wanted a slick and engaging action thriller and we went all out to just make that with full gusto and all heart. The film has a sensitive subject at its core and I laud at how it's been rendered on screen. It's entertaining and a rollercoaster ride that I relished making," the producer said. Maklai said he is happy that Ranaut has taken the film to the heights that the team had envisioned. "Dhaakad" is presented by Soham Rockstar Entertainment Pvt Ltd in association with Kamal Mukut, Soheli Maklai Productions and Asylum films. AGENCIES

A complete **KNOWLEDGE CAPSULE**

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