

The Blend.

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A RAY OF LIGHT
IN THE DARKEST
OF TIMES

A RAY OF LIGHT
IN THE DARKEST
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Photography by Rahul Agarwalla

OF 2021 AND FUTURE

Amidst the waves of Covid 19 pandemic, humanity is hustling to anchor itself in the new normal. With each year passing like the tides, it brings to the shore the unexpected and takes with it a part of us. 2021 was no exception. Never has been the world so close yet isolated, wildfires consumed the land as the Evergreen ship blocked the Suez Canal. The Farm Laws fell (repealed) while Taliban rose to power in Afghanistan, Musk took us to Mars while Lakhimpur Kheri violence buried humanity in shame. The list goes on, but as we look towards dusk of 2021, perhaps the most intimate to humanity remains the word of the year 2021: "Vaccine". The second wave put us through grief, insecurities, panic, and a sense of emotional vulnerability. Living with the threat of infection, isolation, rising cases, pandemic stress, falling infrastructure, uncertainties of life and a lack of social connect we have shared fear and hopelessness. In the darkest of times, the slightest ray of light can move mountains. The development of vaccines was what the world needed. In the history of medicine, COVID-19 vaccine takes the place of the fastest developed vaccine. By September 14, 5.7 billion-plus doses were administered globally. The COVAX initiative (WHO) managed to vaccinate more than 100 underdeveloped countries by April. The biggest shot of the vaccine was harnessing the rise of COVID-19 cases. WHO reveals 1,57,000 lives



were saved in England (over 60s) by vaccines, in 33 European countries this accounts for 4,70,000 lives. For India, it marks significant importance, with a population living in intimate proximity and labor employed majority, absolute shutting down is an evil in itself. Vaccination is more than a need, it is a necessity and right. As the mental pressure seems to fade as we put hope on the 'Vaccine' and booster dose, the world sets to prepare for another tougher one. Year 2021 is tainted as a nightmare, but the blessing of vaccines ties humanity together with the hope of a normal future.

*Khushi Shrivastava
Sem 5
USLM*

2021 REVISITED

THE YEAR OF NEW BEGINNINGS

The year 2020 folded with sports stadiums being graveyards. Footballers all around the globe had no home advantage as every stadium was the same without the supporters, batsmen had no one to catch their sixes in crowd, and basket nets were louder than ever. Despite the postponement of major sports, the pandemic wasn't a stalemate for chess. Chess found its ancient roots and passion back as India witnessed a huge rise in its active player base during the pandemic and chess witnessed a new beginning. 2021 opened grandly, football season started with Italy winning the euros and Messi and Ronaldo starting new beginnings in Paris and Manchester. Packed with cutthroat rivalries, the crowd in cricket was ready for its first major tournament in 2 years. Supported by diehard fans, Australia emerged victorious in the T20 world cup in a dominating fashion. It was a new beginning for Aussies after the image tarnishing ball tampering scandal in 2018.

Olympic flame burned brighter for India as athletes grabbed multiple medals and succeeded in putting Olympics in the mainstream. 2021 might turn out to be a new chapter for India in the Olympics. Red bull flew over Mercedes and Ferrari when Max Verstappen topped the standing of the year 2021, red bull definitely found its wings back in F1. When sports events resumed, a spark of joy was always missing, for a year like 2021 all hopes and excitements were dampened by the impacts of the deadly virus. There was a noiseless change in every domain of sports and the stillness was embraced by every sports enthusiast. Changes in sports are exemplary symbols that even after a tragic time no one can stop humans from bringing change.

Pranshu Kumar
Sem 5, USLM

*Olympic flame burnt
brightly for India.*



DVAIT-ADVAIT



*Eko Brahma
Dvitiyo Nasti*

Looking back at the year, I can say it was a mixed bag. With a lot of things happening for the good, some made sure to teach us another lesson. Compelled us to reflect and explore more about oneself. With each individual and their perspective being different, our range and horizon of thinking varies. What one might find right, some might find wrong. Similarly, one might look at something as fake, the other might perceive it as original as the creation itself. This forms the basic thought behind dualism (dvait) which exists all around us even in ourselves, especially inside ourselves. The mind-body debate exists till date. Whether they are two separate entities or one. Many theories have been put forward to explain this relationship between your mind ('you', your thinking) and our brain (part of your body). Monoism here suggests that consciousness (mind) is a function of the brain, combining together to form one entity.

In spirituality, we notice a lot of people calling the god with different names, might also mean different things to everyone. Some refer to the one as god, word, sound (naad), energy, form, parmaatma, brahman, allah, bhagwaan etc. Humans create conflict on this basis. Not wanting to accept others's idea of god. We fail to understand that the supreme power must be beyond what we can imagine and that it might be unknown to us in this human form, given our range of thinking and reasoning is very limited. This limit varies from person to person, some might not be willing to accept others ideas at all and form preconceived notions about the same. This is referred to as dvait. "Agyaanta, mazhab, gunaaho aur pinjre rupi vichaaro mein phaskar rehena hi dvait hai."

There's a famous saying, self realization before god realization. Knowing and fully understanding oneself will only lead to us realizing that there might be a supreme power above us. We call that power niraakaar. In this creation, every living organism will be a part of the supreme. Understanding this better with an example, when a pot is broken, the sky within the pot remains the same as the element sky, just as before. Advait suggests, jeev (soul) is identical to Parmaatma (the supreme) just separated. The jeev has a different identity and form in the current state, but once the soul reemerges in the supreme, forms one entity with the same. Dvait-Advait forms a clear distinction in our mindsets and beliefs. Where it's up to us to form them with a clear understanding of each.

*Ishwari Raut
Sem 4, UID*

TATA'S REGAINED GLORY BLACK

In 1932, the first mail service by an Indian Company was carried out successfully by JRD Tata from Karachi to Mumbai by air. In 1946, Tata Airlines became a public company and was renamed Air India. Ever since then, Air India has been through chute-the-chute on intervals, from JRD Tata stepping down as the chairman of Air India to evacuating 116,000 Indian passengers from Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The working and non-working staff of Air India airlines have endured political, economical, and social changes. Once when the Star Alliance took over the operations of Air India Airlines, the Airlines had seen their growth for a short term which flunked nevertheless.

It was in 2021, when the Government announced Tata Sons as the winning bidder for a 100 percent stake in Air India for as good as Rs. 18,000 Crore. After 68 Years, the countdown had begun for the Tata Group to re-acquire Air India.

Subsequently to winning the competitive bid for owning the Airlines, N. Chandrasekaran, Chairman, Tata Sons Pvt Ltd said, "At the Tata group, we are delighted to be declared as the winner of the bid for AIR INDIA. This is a historic moment, and it will be a rare privilege for our group to own and operate the country's flag bearer airline.

It will be our endeavor to build a world-class airline that makes every Indian proud. On this occasion, I would like to pay tribute to JRD Tata, pioneer of Indian aviation, whose memory we cherish." Having said that, The Tatas are supposed to get ownership of Indian Airlines and 'Maharajah' the Mascot as well. The latter is now looking for officials to successfully run the Airline. Fred Reid, the aviation industry veteran is set to be the Chief Executive Officer of Air India, Fred is not an outsider for the Tata group, and has worked for the Taj Group of Hotels back in the 1970s.

The Tata Sons have started working on the blueprint suggested by Fred Reid, and the response of the citizens of this country is still a divulge. For that matter, the countrymen expect to regain the lost glory and respect the courage of Tata's!

*Saurabh Chopra
Sem 4, UWSL*



**ALWAYS AIM AT
PERFECTION FOR
ONLY THEN YOU WILL
ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE**

WE'RE MADE OF CRIMSON COURAGE

The pandemic has been constantly pushing us into undying depths of desolation. With every new year comes a new wave, a new variant of concern, making our lives bereft of cheer. Though vaccines and booster doses have come to armor us, they stand no chance against the grenade showers of the everlasting pandemic. The past two years have been a crazy rollercoaster ride. From sitting at home with no social interaction to wrapping our lives and throwing it out there into a virtual world we all had to get accustomed to a new normal. Each one of us with our own unique experience, with its highs and lows. But there's one experience that we all share in common, the pandemic fatigue.

Constantly dreading the threat of infection has drained our batteries beyond charge. The uncertainties of life and the lack of social connection make everything twice as hard and unbearable. But it gets better with time, patience, and self-care, talking to a friend who's ready to listen to your rants and with no judgments. With deep breaths and medicines in some cases, with kind words and kinder intentions, we can deal with the pandemic fatigue. We're all built differently, so a little empathy can go a long way. Seek help if you need it, don't hold yourself back from prioritizing your mental and physical wellbeing over anything else. Somehow we held fast against these furious winds of grief, relief, guilt, and pride, for so long now, it's okay to take a moment to be silent, it's okay to know that we're resilient. We'll stand and stretch and we'll keep moving forward together to heal. Under the tires of tomorrow, the sharpest teeth can't bite away our collective efforts to win over the pandemic. It can all feel like too much but acknowledging that can help.

*Sri Sharanya Sateesh
Sem 4, UID*

*We're all going to be fine,
it's just a matter of time.*

JUSTICE ONLINE

The global catastrophe of COVID-19 had a huge impact on the entire nation, including the judiciary. Courts across the nation were forced to shut down physically and shift to a virtual mode. Courts were forced to make this shift in their working with immense urgency brought about by the pandemic. Even in such troubling times, the Supreme Court paved the way for uninterrupted access to justice through court hearings via video conferencing. In a contrasting opinion, is this mode of justice really uninterrupted? Currently, video conferencing is being used for extremely urgent matters whereas the e-filing facility is available for all matters. Unfortunately, even before the COVID crisis, many people faced difficulty accessing justice through courts due to a variety of reasons including a lack of financial means, physical disabilities, and other unavoidable circumstances. A major benefit of this method of hearing matters is that it does not require a physical presence of the parties, for which people had to travel several kilometers. Hence, this mode of delivering justice will help in reducing the carbon footprint. Such digitalisation will reduce the number of pendency of cases before courts and will be an effective remedy for delayed justice.

However, in mid-2020, when the courts were just barely adapting to the new mode of conduct, the Chairman of BCI had addressed a letter to the Hon'ble CJI, opposing virtual hearing of matters post-lockdown, highlighting the gap between resources available to lawyers from humble or rural backgrounds, as compared to lawyers belonging to the elite class of developed urban cities. He proposed that the courts should be shifted to the virtual mode in phases. However, High Courts and



the Supreme Court stood by the idea of sticking to virtual courts for extraordinary and urgent matters. In the aforementioned letter, the BCI Chairman claimed that 90% of advocates and judges are unaware of the technology and its nuances used for these virtual hearings. He also claimed that the persons making these decisions are quite far from the grassroots level realities, which is why they are advocating such a process.

In conclusion, virtual courts have its pros and cons, but the mode of operation is not yet something that's open to question. As the courts are shifted to a virtual mode again in 2022 as the nation is in the grapples of the third wave of the pandemic, there is no option but to be restricted to a mere discussion of the topic, and no change to be brought.

*-Diya Dalwadi
Sem 4, UWSL*



THE EVOLUTION OF DESIGN AS A DISCIPLINE

What exactly do we interpret from the term design? Is it more about aesthetics than it is about strategy?

Design is certainly not about prettification, it is a functional process that is present from the very inception of the project, a process that not only solves various problems for humankind but also makes our lives easier and more efficient. A career in design permits one the autonomy of thought. It bestows the ability to surge one's cerebral muscles. It is an institution that provides an opportunity to guide, motivate, inspire and get inspired on a daily basis. Designing is a consistent wellspring of an adrenaline rush, as no two days in this field are the same.

Have you ever wondered about the products we use today, how they were used hundreds of years ago and how they became significant? The history of design tells us how and in what circumstances objects come into existence and how and why do they change over time.

Let's look at how this happens with a familiar object, an orange squeezer. Perhaps the earliest example would be a simple, handmade wooden tool. With the introduction of new materials and technology, new versions were produced using steel. As the advancement in technology grew, we now have an electric version which eliminates human labour altogether. For industrial use, another progressive model was designed for the production of larger quantities of juice. Apart from domestic and industrial use, there have been models of an orange squeezer which demonstrate that designers can be playful as well as ingenious. For example, the orange juicer started getting produced as a children's toy through which kids could learn how to make juice for themselves.

This is how a minimalist orange squeezer has evolved over time. Designers play a major role in creating these products as well as building a lifestyle surrounding them.

Consumers become acquainted with these products, buy them and use them and in the process, augment cultures around design. Consequently, design shapes culture and is also shaped by it.

Up until now, we have looked at history as an account of how things change. However, an interesting aspect of design is that it is not always about change, it is also about how things remain the same. For instance, there is a tradition in Kutch that encourages painting motifs on pots. It has been discovered that these motifs resemble the pot shards from the Indus Valley excavations. A manual dosa grinder, which is owned by most of the south Indian households, corresponds to what archaeologists have found in house sites in Harappan settlements.

Clearly, there is a deep cohesion between these objects. When it comes to design, we can think of history as a dialogue between the past and the present which connects to the future as well. So, the act of designing in the present is all about having a dialogue with the past, even as a dialogue with the future is initiated.

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