2020: THE MOST UNIQUE ACADEMIC YEAR

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AMITY SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

Expressions



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PANDEMIC SHROUDS 2020

World prays for normalcy

Drishti Vanaik

anuary 2020 marked the commencement of a brand-new decade that many looked at with sanguinity and as a chance to do something different. People took resolutions and believed that 2020 is going to be a year full of new opportunities and hopes. Alas, in came Covid and changed the entire paradigm.

However, before Covid hit the country, the first two months of 2020 witnessed clash on the Jawaharlal Nerhu University (JNU) campus; violence in the national capital-Delhi following a clash between pro and anti-CAA protestors{Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019} thus leaving the country in a flux.

And then came the mother of all problems-Covid-19— resulting in a complete lockdown thus forcing a paradigm shift not just in the way of living but also viewing life.

Even as all of us were trying to

come to grips with this unprecedented global pandemic, other problems like stock market crashing, rapid escalation of unemployment, GDP decline all kept pointing towards a recession that the country was headed towards. And this was officially confirmed by the Reserve Bank of India in November.

In addition, other events like death of prominent Bollywood personalities, particularly, suicide by actor Sushant Singh Rajput and the resultant spilling of the can of worms—drugs, nepotism row; rape of a minor Dalti girl in a rural hamlet of UP, farmers' protest on the contentious three agricultural bills passed by the Modi government, locust swarm outbreak etc rocked the country.

As of this wasn't enough, natural and man-made disasters in the form of cyclone Amphan leading to flood-like situations in south-eastern states, petroleum gas and oil leak in Indian Oil's Baghjan Oilfield, Assam; Cyclone NISARGA hitting

"Those were the days when everyone of us were soothed and allayed

When everything seemed amazingly perfect

Until the back-breaking year 2020 came, and everything went defunct

It certainly was a year with warnings and relentlessness

But somehow it did evoke serendipity and dauntlessness

We are going to remember the unique year of 2020 forever

It is embedded in our hearts
and souls

The endured pressure the year gave, and instead of a diamond, it proved to be a black coal"

the western coast and causing damage in of Maharashtra; Air India Express Flight 1344 crash leaving 19 people dead- all adding to the woes of the junta reeling under Covid-induced lockdowns, unlock and so on.

Continued on P3

Editor's Desk

s we herald the New Year, there are hopes that 2021 will be better with the vaccines that are almost ready for us and are currently under trial! Yes! We're finally about to leave this dreadful



2020 behind as it has been year with Covid-19 virus spreading pandemic across the globe resulting in natural and man-made disasters, economic and mental collapse, bleeding healthcare and the untimely and unnecessary

deaths of hundreds of thousands.

Hoping the devastation at all level during 2020 come to an end and we find some peace of mind that it will all be over soon – and that 2021 will be better. Pandemic has certainly brought amazing advances with hope that rose in science, technology, digital health, leadership and in basic human care and kindness.

Initially in March 2020, when the pandemic started; it was unrealistic even to think that we would have a COVID-19 vaccine available within a year, let alone a few months but scientists and researchers all over the world made it a reality for the mankind!! The Covid -19 infection rate is already lower than before and number of cases are decreasing now.

The recovery rate is also good in India - more than 95 percent now- proving the point Indians are have better immunity.

Students are keen to return to campus saying: "We are sick of Zoom or MS Team learning'. Aditya, a student, wants to be back in classroom but with all the health and safety guidelines in place. He appealed to the management to work out a plan. Nancy, a Masters student says: "We don't have a problem attending offline class as well as online. A hybrid education system will give us best of both the world."

Meanwhile, another student Sameer has mixed feelings about returning to campus. "The past several months of virtual learning have taught me the importance of face-to-face teaching. We are also stressed and wish to return to the campus but with all safety precautions."

Honestly speaking we've been through a hell. Let us introspect for a moment, take a deep breath and unwind for a second. We've made it so far and it wasn't easy. We do hope we will be back to work but yes with strict health protocols.

Wishes for a New Year full of hopes and excitement.

Prof (Dr) Sanjay M Johri

'From a blogger to entrepreneur'

was an introvert and so when I joined Amity University, it was a bit different trying to adjust to the new surroundings. However, little did I know that one word 'blog', which



I was introduced to in my first semester, would change my life completely.

Till then I had no idea what a blog was leave alone something like this existed. And that is where my professional journey began. I started my blog with the name, 'One Girl, Her Journey' where I began writing/sharing my experiences.

Deep down inside I always had this urge for fashion, I liked acting and always wanted to speak/perform in front of a camera. Later I got to know that I can pursue my passion through blogging itself, so I converted my literary blog into a fashion blog but with the same name. I was lucky enough to be already pursuing a course



that gave me all the basic knowledge needed to start this work like camera,

lighting, setup, editing, and a lot more.

After a year of blogging, I started my YouTube channel as well where for the first time I started making videos. I didn't even realize when from an introvert I had become an extrovert, confident person. I worked with many brands, travelled, and did anchoring as an influencer for TVF (one of the best experiences). Today it's been more than 4 years since I am in this field. Starting from scratch wasn't easy and I never thought I would come so far where this is now my full-time carrier and I am my boss. It is just like building my own business and I am trying to make it better each day.

For everyone willing to start a carrier in online content creation as an influencer, here's what I learned personally. You have to be consistent, choose quality over quantity, make sure to never quit and keep trying hard but go for it only if you feel you are passionate about it and not because someone else is doing it.

> Ananya Walia Batch of 2015-2018 Company & Position: One Girl, Her Journey- Owner

2020: The most unique academic year

Vaishali Gautam

aking up early to get ready, having breakfast in a hurry and rushing to school or college to be on time for the lecture became outdated when we stepped into the lockdown to curb the spread of COVID-19. The unique academic year of 2020 introduced the concept of waking up right around the time of first online lecture of the day and that too in the comfort of our homes.

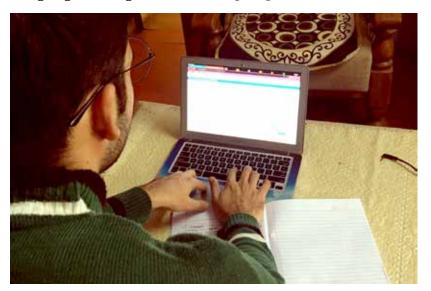
It is true that this year gave us a break from the normal, but it is also a fact that we miss the normal now. Online classes is no replacement of campus life

Before 2020, nobody could imagine attending classes without going to college or school

even once, but this year has been one of a kind.

The advent of online classes has been quite interesting. Studies revolved around the most popular questions like "Am I audible?", "Is my screen visible?" etc. At times we had to wrestle with poor connectivity and technical glitches, but education never stopped. The academic vear was characterized by webinars, online competitions and even annual events like farewell and freshers' induction— all on virtual platforms. The online examinations taught us the importance of time management because running late due to poor internet connectivity has been the biggest nightmare of the students.

However, soon we all realized that no matter the convenience of online classes; it could not replace the satisfaction achieved during classroom teaching. Hopefully, things will get better in the upcoming year, but we can't deny the fact that this will remain in our memories as the most unique academic year that taught us a lesson to not take the traditional classroom teaching for granted.



Pandemic shrouds 2020 as world prays for normalcy

Continued from P1

Covid brought into focus the shortage of medical infrastructure not just for the country but world over as even the most developed nations crumbled under the increasing number of Covid patients and limited health facilities. While the world and India tried to come to grips with the situation praying for the challenging year to end and a possible cure for the pandemic— a vaccine (developed by Pfizer-BioN-Tech) in sight, everyone was hoping that it would usher in a new dawn, but alas it was not to be.



In the third week of December alarming news from the United Kingdom (UK) started coming of a new strain of the Coronovirus, which was named: VUI-202012/01 that was spreading 70% faster as compared to the earlier variant of the virus. The world went into a panic and most nations including India banned flights from UK. Simultaneously, news of another Covid variant spreading rapidly in South Africa also started making rounds thus throwing the entire holiday season into a flux with most countries announcing strict lockdowns even during Christmas and New Year holidays. In Maharashtra, the worst Covid-hit state in the country, the government announced night curfews till January 5, 2021.

As a result, the year seems to end on grim note and as the world braces for the new year, here is to hope that it proves to be a better one that its predecessor.

Year 2020 taught us life's new lessons

Sanjana Saxena

he year 2020 has been a rollercoaster ride that had a lot more to it than meets the eye. It also upped the vocabulary quotient as words like: 'Pandemic, Lockdown, Unlock, New Normal, sanitisers', became a part and parcel of daily lives. This year made us learn and how!

Till mid-February for us, Corona was a virus affecting people in China, and life went on normally. However, by Holi the situation had turned grim and the country's most colourful festival was much toneddown affair as Covid-19 cloud loomed large. And of course when PM Narendra Modi announced

2020 has been a wake-up call for the people that used to take medical staff and frontline workers for granted and did not pay them the respect they deserved.

Dr. Manas Shukla

"Lockdown" in March last week initially it felt like a few days of vacation. We spent time with our families, caught up with the trending lockdown challenges online and binge watched our favorite TV series. The new normal finally granted us the freedom to do everything we kept piling up because of our school, college or office work.

The year had us struggling to create "work-life balance" and saying "checkmate" to all our trips and plans, but the flip side consists of the valuable lessons that this year

Even with all the time It is true that the year 2020 came and freedom, a lot of with ups and downs but it will always people suffered from be memorable for imparting a mental illness and deeper perspective about life. We depression during learnt about life the hard way, but this year. For the it has made us wiser, stronger first time in our lives and more we learnt that social thoughtful media alone, cannot for the keep us going for long coming year. and reinstated the importance of mental health.

taught us for life. Dr. Manas Shukla from Lucknow says, "2020 has been a wake-up call for the people that used to take medical staff and frontline workers for granted and did not pay them the respect they deserved."

Lockdown gave us a break from the busy schedule we loathed but at the cost of a hard pill to swallow. The consecutive lockdowns taught us that as much as we hated our "normal" life and schedule, it kept us going and became our missing piece. Small things like meeting friends, going to college, office or even stepping out of our homes to feel the soft breeze on our faces, became "forbidden fruits" and left us craving. We learnt that the small things that we take for granted are

everything that matter in the long run.

Another life lesson, as rightly pointed out by journalism student Riya Mishra: "No amount of money can buy you love, friendship, health and the most valuable asset, that is, your family." Last but not the least, 2020 taught us that no matter how many limitations, there is no limit to what you can do as long as you never give up.

The year 2020, indeed, has been a rollercoaster ride that has given us a taste of a steep fall, doing things in unprecedented ways and powering through something as dreadful as a pandemic and yet we are progressing forward collectively with the hopes of a vaccine that seems like the light at the end of the tunnel.

Masks, sanitisers mark wedding season

Riddhi Bhargav

arriages are made in heaven, but it is the big fat wedding ceremonies that make it public! And for naught has the country's wedding industry touched \$50 billion, as per Business Insider, albeit Covid this time definitely took away the sheen from this glittering business.

Both wedding organisers as well as the bride and groom's families felt the Covid heat when the wedding season began in November that continued till mid-December this year.

Wedding organisers and/or planners who look after decorations, venue, catering and so many other departments admitted their losses. Akash Gupta, an event manager in Delhi, says: "Due to guest restrictions it is really becoming a small affair. Pre-Covid-19, the bride and groom's families would go for big venues and lavish arrangements but now due to restrictions on the number of people the events are becoming smaller thus less business."

While Shivam Pandey, owner of an event company, said: "Marriages do have their charm. It's just that the number of people attending



them has gone down." However, the precautions, he said had gone up as instead of rose water, guests were now sprayed with sanitisers and were told to wear masks before entering the venue!

For Prerna Bhargava, a wedding guest too it was a novel experience. "It was a different experience seeing people wearing masks and carrying sanitisers but this is how it is these days," she quipped.

Another guest Pragati B. Mahajan whose wedding was hekld before Covid said she noted the difference between then and now. "My wedding was organized before Covid and recently I attended a relative's wedding. One of the major differences, which I could see was the precautions- masks etc and limited guests. Everything else was the same."

Even as the marriage season was

in full swing there were several memes and jokes doing rounds on the restricted guest list at the venues as the government kept on revising the number of people allowed to be at the venue depending on the size of the ground/marriage hall. A popular joke that kept people in stitches was "STAY HOME, STAY SAFE", line that was mentioned on e-invite wedding cards! 'Are they inviting or asking us to stay home," said an elderly relative with a grin on reading an e-wedding invite.

However, despite these memes and restrictions weddings were held during the entire season with full band, baaja and limited guests. Now, with the wedding season ending and the next season expected to begin in April 2021, only time will tell whether it will be a 'masked' affair or not.



CHRISTMAS AMID COVID-19: Celebrated safely

Lensman: Trilochan S Kalra





Of Yuletide season & hope for better 2021

Shifa Dutt

he joyous spirit of Christmas envelops everyone. Every person regardless of religion is engulfed by the celebratory events that take place as we observe Christmas and say goodbye to the year. This particular year we have waited for the goodbye part quite eagerly.

As the year ends and we raise our heads to witness a new sunrise, with the hope that every single person would be healthy and walking the earth without having to care about sanitizers and face masks. While that reality seems far-fetched for now, but it is the light of hope everyone wished for this Christmas.

As with all festivals, this year Christ's birthday too was celebrated under the pandemic cloud. There were no Christmas carnivals nor bonfires after the midnight church service where people would meet. The tepid celebrations hit hardest the bakers, Christmas confectionary/gift/decoration sellers and others who otherwise did brisk business during this festi-



val-cum-holiday season.

Sample this: Before Covid every year hundreds of families visited the bakeries and got plum cakes, walnut cakes and pastries made, which is a Christmas staple. However, this year most people held back due to shortage of finances or limited festivity.

Zahreen, owner of a renowned bakery, when asked about how different this year recalled how earlier hundreds of families came in big numbers and baking of the traditional cake was an activity itself and not just a chore. "But this year, a single member of every family was allowed, and that too with the quantity of cake each family got made was very limited. While customers cited financial limitations, others said that there was no point in getting the usual number of cakes made as there would be no get-togethers." She said more than the financial loss, it was a celebration for them too being a non-Christian family to watch people enjoy and sing carols, however, it was very different this time.



Even popular eatery stalls saw less business due to less crowd coming to see Christmas celebrations at churches. Rajan Singh, owner of a Chaat Stall 'Maa Durga Chaat Corner', shrugged helplessly. "Christmas used to be a big-time for my family as I would bring my kids to the Christmas carnival that would be held near my chaat corner. My children played on the grounds all day," he said wistfully. For someone who has spent most of his life trying to feed his kids so much so that he never really could sit and watch them play, it was a big deal for him to work and watch over as his kids enjoyed the carnival. In the end, he said he had enough money to give the kids a ride on the giant wheel. "I felt like Salman Khan that time, because



that's how my kids looked at me— I was their hero. But this year it was just me sitting with my stall on the roadside with lesser and lesser earnings every single day."

While Christmas was a festival celebrated by every individual around the world regardless of religion, the night hasn't been this silent for a very long time. The pandemic did take away most of the ways in which the festival was celebrated but even when all was calm, it was still bright as people held on to the last bit of hope through the last days of a year that hasn't been anything but bad news.

Pandemic tests relationships in 'virtual mode'

Adeeba Lari

"I found this healthy tea leaf that you will love", my best friend cuts me off before I can even finish, as she shakes her head on our video call. I frown when she tells me that she doesn't drink tea anymore and for a moment I was zapped as I recalled our conversations over endless cups of tea in pre-Covid era.

I am not entirely sure if she notices the surprise on my face because the network in her area is shaky and I might as well be a blurred blob of pixels in her life- and all of this can be attributed to the pandemic.

It has been more than nine months since our normal lives halted and we all were forced to readjust to newer settings and routines- and even many long-distance relationships. Long distance relationships bloomed as virtual communication only grew in leaps and bounds. Before video calling services were limited to certain apps and platforms but since the pandemic, it is now available everywhere.

For example, Instagram allows you to scroll through memes or watch videos on a video call, while Netflix has a feature to watch movies together. There are games to play and virtual dates to set up-but does this equate to real interactions?

Virtual communications are often planned, and no matter how far technology spreads itself- it can't battle the presence of real-life human breathing next to you.

Before the pandemic, I was cautiously aware of every little thing my roommate did- of her spoken and unspoken words, her cautious reactions, and the ones that slip by

her- all of this led to a bond that was strong and personal. I could make her a cup of coffee or tea on stressful days and just go for a walk on other days. Now, of course none of these activities can be done virtually.

While the pandemic did manage to connect some of us with our family, but what about friendships that were converted to question mark. A famous cliche saying "Friends are the family we choose" stands true for most of us. We often connect with people beyond filial relations and their presence is valuable if not necessary in life.

Virtual communications are often planned, and no matter how far technology spreads itself- it can't battle the presence of real-life human breathing next to you.

The pandemic acted as an unprepared test of friendships.

The close ones survived but the many distant ones just withered away. Covid victims have many symptoms but all of us certainly suffered the one prominent symptom-loneliness. All of us at some point went through separation anxiety and many of us lost important connections that might have survived lest the forced distancing.

The pandemic taught my grandmother how to use a smartphone, my brother how to cook, and me how to live by myself.

With the vaccine dream still a little far, we never know how many tests await our relationships, and if we have the strengths to pass or fail.

Drug scam exposes Bollywood's

underbelly



"O Chitta Ve, O Chitta Ve, Kaiyaan nu hai khush kitta ve..."

The song from the film 'Udta Punjab,' which was based on drug abuse has its deep root in cinema itself both on and off the screen. The hidden secret of Bollywood drug consumption came into the limelight after actor Sushant Singh Rajput's demise, this year.

The revelation of A-listed actors' names in this matter grabbed the national attention. Deepika Padukone, Rhea Chakraborty, Shraddha



Kapoor, Sara Ali Khan, **Rakul Preet Singh**, Arjun Rampal, and many other Bollywood stars were summoned by NCB (Narcotics Con-

trol Bureau) for questioning. Few were arrested while others were left as no evidence was found for the charge-sheet. The question is not of dismantling the whole film fraternity but to establish accountability that an artist must have towards the society.

In the past, we heard many glorified stories of the actor's drug addiction & how they overcome it. Actors like Vijay Raaz and Fardeen Khan got arrested with substances albeit for consumption. Sanjay Dutt, whose life was rocked by drugs and rehabilitation for many years, was trending in news of those times. Youths who follow their favourite actors on social media are easily influenced by their glamorous lifestyle and start copying the same. For them, drug consumption becomes a part of their daily agenda



Film fraternity needs to clean the drug usage among them first before preaching to the audience

too. Alcohol, cannabis, opium, and heroin are the most commonly injected drugs misused in India.

Could anyone ever imagine that famous comedian Bharti Singh too consumed drugs? She is a wellknown personality among children. She got arrested along with her husband following the seizure of cannabis (ganja) from her house and office. The usage of substance is most common on film sets and B-Town parties. Struggling newcomers consume drugs to get relief from anxiety and isolation whereas established actors do so for excitement. According to clinical psychologists, most stars don't know how to park their money. They spend millions quickly by resorting to alcohol and drugs as celebration or

solace to their financial woes.

Apart from this, India has a messy drug law that is not enough for small peddlers. And its complex, wide web is entirely untraceable. The nexus between police and politics make it easier for big mafias to penetrate. Though, all in Bollywood are not druggies nor are the drugs only in fashion in cities. Actors who set a standard in terms of maintaining fitness are accountable to set an example for youth by a healthy lifestyle. Akshay Kumar is one of the few who has done so. On the one hand industry gave us films such as Dum Maro Dum, Fashion, Shaitan, Pankh, Go Goa Gone, Dev D and many others on the prevalence of drugs and its prevalence in everyday life.

Meanwhile, when the matter arises among industry for drug consumption, no one wants to broach the subject. Bottomline: If a film-maker can represent the problem of drug abuse of a state through his cinema, the same film fraternity needs to clean the drug usage among them first before preaching to the audience.

'Sound mental health is must to beat daily blues'

Aniali Singh

nxiety, stress and depression are one of the many reasons behind mental illness, but the year 2020 made it to the top of that list, courtesy COVID-19 pandemic. The threat of lethal novel coronavirus and unpredictable lockdowns disrupted our lives, both physically as well as mentally.

The mandatory enforcement of social distancing, loss in jobs or businesses and struggling relationships impacted a lot of people resulting into isolation, anxiety, depression, and loneliness. To top all of that, fear of being tested positive

People mostly had the stress of jobs and financial problems and found it hard to deal with stress due to lack of socialization

Dr. Rahul | PSYCHIATRIST

with no vaccine or cure left one and all in panic. Meanwhile, on the one hand the year contributed to mental illness, but on the other, it highlighted the importance of not taking mental health for granted.

Riya Saini, a university-going student stressed on the importance of mental health. "Covid-19 is just another crisis that has thrown light on the importance of mental health. I really felt stressed when the lockdown period started as I was in great fear of losing bonds with my close friends, but I have somehow found ways to relieve my stress by being there for myself," she said.

Dr. Rahul, a psychiatrist in Farid-



Being mentally

healthy starts with gaining

to oneself and reaching

medical help whenever

needed

abad remarks about the influx of large number of patients during the pandemic. He added, "People mostly had the stress

of jobs and financial problems and found it hard to deal with stress due to lack of socialization." This shows a relationship between the sense of loneliness and mental illness, reinstating the importance

of talking about mental health with fellow neers.

Pandemic or no pandemic. the year 2020 has this into put perspective that mental health shouldn't he taken for granted. A conversation with Dr. Meena Sharma reveals that an individual can maintain good mental health by being busy or investing time in hobbies, meditation and sharing things with friends or family. Also, having a bal-

anced diet and avoidconsumption ing of rumours help maintaining good mental health.

your own attention, listening 2020 has taught us that out to others. Don't allow it is high time negative thoughts and get the stigma around mental illness is driven away by talking about it. All of us are human beings and a little push is sometimes all we need to climb back to the top of the

mountain. We might be distant or isolated. but if we can fight a global pandemic, we can surely beat mental illness by staying together.

Normalise conversation about depression and mental health. If someone is willing to talk about mental illness, don't ignore them and reach out to people when you need help too

2020: Roller-coaster ride for Dalal Street

Aakarsh Baipai

'Risk hai toh ishq hai', the now famous one-liner from the hit web series Scam 1992 showcasing the rise and fall of 'Big Bull' Harshad Mehta has become the mantra of young stock investors albeit with caution in a Covid-ridden year.

The year 2020 was both one of the most horrible and successful year for the Bombay Stock Exchange. This year clearly showed how volatile stock markets can be. after all there is a reason it is called 'Dalal Street'.

Every person with his money in the stock markets went into a paralytic shock and panic with the crash of the stock markets due to the Covid-19 pandemic early in 2020. This year Dalal Street witnessed a gut churning roller coaster ride. Having to face four of the biggest single day declines in the history of the market in March 2020 due to the

I won't keep my money in a fixed deposit or a savings account. I could do only one job, but I could invest my money in multiple portfolios where it would earn money back for me.

Ayush Mishra | ENGINEER, BANGALORE

global market meltdown and explosive domestic conditions. To be precise, the crash of 3,934.72 points or 13.15 per cent on March 23 was one of the steepest in recent years.

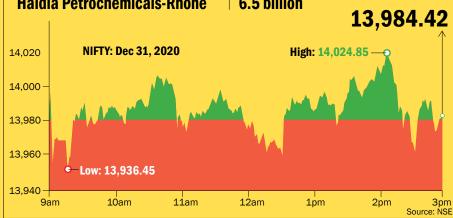
However, the market crash could not keep the Indian market in the gloom for long as young professionals seeking to increase their wealth saw investment as the way forward

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE INDIAN MARKET

- Jio Platforms-Facebook deal of USD 5.7 billion for a 9.9 per cent stake
- Jio-Google deal for USD 4.5 billion for 7.7 per cent stake
- USD 3.3-billion takeover of **Future Enterprises by Reliance** Retail
- The Lummus Technology-**Haldia Petrochemicals-Rhone**

- Capital deal of USD 2.7 billion as another major deal
- Telecom replaced technology in the top position by attracting investments worth USD 11.2 billion
- The retail sector was another new entrant, attracting investments worth USD

6.5 billion



as phase Unlock began and news of Covid vaccine trials becoming successful started doing rounds.

Ayush Mishra, a well earning software engineer from Bangalore, who is keen to invest in the stock market said: "I won't keep my money in a fixed deposit or a savings account. I could do only one job, but I could invest my money in multiple portfolios where it would earn money back for me."

Certainly, the mindset of the new generation has shifted a lot from being conservatives to being risk takers. Ayush further added: "Now we have companies that can take your money, do the planning and thinking on how to invest it according to the objectives of your investments." Such optimism or we could say bull behaviour resurrected the Indian market giving Sensex largest-ever Single session gain of 2,478.26

points in April itself.

Reliance industries rose as the Rambo of the market with big ticket sales attracting FDI worth total USD 10.2 billion from Facebook and Google. Thus the Dalal Street managed to grow at 7% in 2020 over 2019 despite the pandemic to about USD 80 billion.

The vaccines are on rollout and hopefully the world will overcome the virus in 2021 but the economies also have to catch up with the market projections. If they fail to do so there is a chance of creation of a 2008 like financial bubble with inflated prices.

However, 2021 carries great optimism and is likely to prove an incredible year for the market according to the experts who feel it's only a matter of time as stock markets would surge once again fuelled by gutsy risk-takers and young professionals.