

ANNIVERSARY
ISSUE SPECIAL



RHYVERS BEAT

VOLUME 02 | EDITION 07 | JULY 2023 | ₹ 100



Triumph



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A RHYVERS PUBLISHING
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FROM THE DESK OF GROUP EDITOR

The most beautiful of all triumphs is the triumph of the human spirit. To seek, to strive, to find. Triumph is when the journey becomes as beautiful as the destination.

One year of Rhyvers Beat has been that magical journey for us. Beat has given us the wings to fly. We are exploring new spaces. Rhyvers group is now publishing quarterly magazines in Punjabi and Hindi, titled Lafznama and Aabhas respectively. This is a source of immense pride for us.

There is a beautiful thing about triumph. It is said that the strong survive, but the courageous triumph.

Life does not become magical and glorious when we restrict it to mere survival. When man reaches for the stars and does everything possible to achieve his desire, triumph ultimately defines him.

Let me state with humility that triumph may also define those who may have lost. The effort of trying to reach for their goal makes their attempts sublime.

We bring to you our anniversary edition – a mix of triumph and celebrations. We look forward to glorious years ahead. We look forward to creating ripples that reach far and wide.

Let us continue to enjoy our beautiful journey together.

Affan Yesvi
Affan Yesvi



FROM THE EXECUTIVE EDITOR'S DESK



DR. SONIKA SETHI

“Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful.”

- Albert Schweitzer

Dear Readers, we are thrilled to present the Anniversary Issue Special of Rhyvers Beat, marking a significant milestone in our journey. Over the last one year, we have strived to create a publication that sparks curiosity, ignites passion, and fosters a sense of community among our readers. This special edition is a testament to the remarkable support and contributions we have received from individuals like you who have made this magazine a cherished part of their lives.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all the contributors who have shared their remarkable talents and insights with us. Your words, art, and expertise have made Rhyvers Beat a true masterpiece. We are immensely thankful to our dedicated team, whose unwavering commitment has brought this vision to life.

Within the pages of this magazine, we tried to weave a tapestry of captivating stories, thought-provoking articles, and insightful interviews. We also curated a selection that encapsulated the essence of our magazine, showcasing the diverse perspectives, talents, and experiences that make our community so vibrant.

As we celebrate this milestone, we remain committed to delivering exceptional content that continues to inspire, enlighten, and provoke meaningful conversations. Thank you for joining us on this remarkable journey. Here's to many more years of exploration, discovery, and inspiration!

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Against All Odds

I confronted death's unforgiving jaws on multiple occasions, emerging from the wreckage battered, but undefeated. With each narrow escape, a profound appreciation for the precious gift of life etched itself deeper within me.

It was December. My journey on a bus was shrouded in a thick blanket of fog that stirred a sense of anticipation within me. I eagerly pre-lived the forthcoming four days of holidaying with my beloved family and friends. But fate had other plans in store for me. Within moments, chaos erupted as I struggled to break free from the wreckage. Near Dera Bassi, our bus collided catastrophically with two others, transforming seats into twisted metal, shattering and scattering glass from the windows all around.

The aftermath left me with crushed lumbar ligaments, a hairline fracture on my tailbone, and knees that bore the brunt of the impact, crushed between rows of seats. Forced to endure three months of complete bed rest, I faced a crucial ultimatum: either return to university or lose my seat altogether.

Return to Bombay, I did, under guidance by expert spine doctors and thus began my arduous journey to reclaim normalcy.

Or, so I thought!

A few months later, in the bustling streets of Bombay, as I was heading towards Dadar in a cab, a speeding tempo careened towards us, resulting in a brutal head-on collision. The impact was devastating. I was admitted to a hospital with a fractured right cheek and facial paresis.

Countless visits and treatments became my new routine. Yet, I refused to surrender to despair. Instead, I embraced the healing process with unwavering faith in my heart.

Little did I know, the journey ahead would be even more daunting. As part of the treatment, I required shock therapy, necessitating daily trips from Powai to the Hospital in Sion in the institute's ambulance. A few weeks into the treatment, on that particular day, a sense of unease gnawed at me,

compelling me to change seats in the ambulance. Moments later, the ambulance collided head-on with a bus as we made a turn towards our campus gate. The seat I had previously occupied now lay mangled and twisted, reduced to strips of metal and scrap.

As if the string of near-fatal incidents were not enough, my eyesight began to blur and double during the treatment for paresis. Urged by my uncle, a renowned eye specialist, I boarded the next available flight to Amritsar.

As the plane circled the city for an hour, tension permeated the air. The pilot's announcement requesting passengers to assume the emergency landing position sparked panic that spread like wildfire. Clinging to our seats, we braced ourselves for the worst. Gazing out of the window, I saw the airport cloaked in a surreal palette of white and red, with ambulances and fire brigades scattered about.

Miraculously, the plane made a successful landing. Later, we came to know that the aircraft had suffered a hydraulic failure- a story that made headlines the following morning, recounting the passengers' narrow escape from disaster.

The successive brushes with death left an indelible mark on my perspective of life. They ignited a burning determination within me to seize every fleeting moment with unwavering zeal. I now cherish each sunrise and sunset, finding solace in the breathtaking beauty that envelops me. I pursue my passions with unwavering enthusiasm, immersing myself in the simple yet profound joys that bring me happiness. Connecting with others, I recognize the transformative power of every interaction, knowing that even the smallest gesture has the potential to brighten someone's day.



**DR. SUNEET
MADAN**

is a poet, storyteller
and artist of
international acclaim.
Poinsettia is her
maiden poetry book.

I Should've Known...

They say, time is a great leveller. It has its own way of balancing things- physical or emotional.

She opened the front gate and parked her scooter in the driveway. The corner of an envelope peeked out of the mailbox. There it was. Lying like a ticking time bomb, ready to explode. The wedding invitation. He was getting married. To someone else.

Fifteen days ago, he had held her hand and laid her fear to rest. "Very soon I'll be at your place with a wedding proposal." His words were nectar to her soul but somehow her heart pounded with an indescribable apprehension. The wedding invitation in her hand was the proof. She didn't call him for an explanation.

Perhaps she was too tired of his consistent lies or she felt too proud to ask. She severed all ties with him and left the city to nurse her wounds.

For two decades, she never once tried to reach out to him. There was no need to enquire about his well being from friends or foes. The morning paper brought with it a beaming mugshot and details of his meteoric rise to fame and power. At times, too disconcerted, she would put the newspaper directly in the waste bin without bothering to open it. When his presence became a regular feature on TV channels, she stopped watching it. And life moved on...

The wound began to heal but every wound has a memory of its own. Some wounds though healed would ache occasionally, others at a specific time or mention and yet others would hurt when the



Dr. SONIKA SETHI

is an Associate Professor of English in Ambala. An established author, newspaper columnist and poet, she is the Executive Editor of Rhyvers Beat.

trauma resurfaces. She had learnt to live with this dull ache resonating in her heart's chambers from time to time.

She was making slow but steady progress in life. Nothing grandiose like his, yet recognisable. Today morning when she woke up, she received a text from one of her friends. "Open the newspaper! Immediately! Page 6!" She picked up the newspaper thrown recklessly on the terrace by the vendor. Before her trembling hands could turn to page 6, page 4 got her attention riveted to it.

Like previous years, there, sprawled in the centre of the page, was his beaming mugshot. The only difference was, the headlines delineated nothing of his success but carried

out the story of his being embroiled in multiple cases of corruption, malpractice and misuse of his office and power. She read the whole piece, word by word, let out a deep sigh,

"I should've known. Once a cheater, always a cheater!"

She turned the page to read her own success story with her beaming picture.

Miles away, exasperatedly, he turned the page of the newspaper after having read news of his own ignominy.

His body stiffened at the warm and bright face staring back at him. The article below the picture related her success story. Was that remorse or guilt that made him sigh when he said, "I should've known..."



The Conquest

*Dream, believe and act
Perspire to earn what you aspire for
Have faith in yourself
You will get your rays of sunshine
Hail the challenges in the journey of your conquest
Learn to swim and be a winner
Hold the rudder in your own hands
Be the king of your lands
Not give up till the end
Feel high to ascend
Now It's a day of festivities, celebrations, merry making
Fragrance of victory is spreading everywhere
The roads are full of bliss, joy and pleasure
Flowers have bloomed
Adorned in finery your dreams rejoice
These clouds of struggle bring showers of happiness
Call upon the moon and gather all dazzling stars
Let us spread happiness
Let every heart be filled with joy*



**DR. MANISHA
MOR**

is an Associate
Professor of
English Govt.
College, Aharwala
(Haryana).



Victory Wish

Heads covered in the sari *pallu*
Eyes striving to meet the sacred
Feet slowed down by the queue
Where are you going?
The point of the river
At the narrow opening
Between the jutting shops
You are told is holy
Sanctified by the reiterated steps
Of the pilgrims centuries old.
Present close to you is beyond reach
Credit the past, pure and pellucid
Tunnel through it.
Tread on the marks buried beneath
Feel the past or imagine it
In the rituals of gatherings.
Realise the site of River
The oldest deity of the city
Will meet you there.
Rise up victorious from the dolour
Of compulsions after the holy bath.



**DR. MANJIT
KAUR**

is a former
Professor of English
from Chandigarh
and is the author
of two collections
of poems.



The Bitter Sweet Truth

*Those sleepless nights and stressful years,
When I used to break down in tears,
Feeling succumbed by the hardships of life,
I had no more hope left to strive*

*But I, never stopped
And challenged myself to cross the storms,
With perseverance and determination to aim for the sky,
Nobody could stop me to spread out my wings and fly,*

*And then, I was unstoppable, although for a while,
Overtook the others, only for a mile,
Before I tumbled down again,
Screaming and crying, for it all went in vain,*

*For a moment, I ceased,
Interpreting what had happened to me,
Realized I was blinded by the glint of triumph,
The introspection was worthwhile,
As I unraveled a significant aspect of life,*

*Ecstasy brought by triumph is evanescent,
Subsequently, time testifies if you're still persistent,
If not, then you unknowingly invite problems
and adversity,
And dig your own grave, to write your own,
vexatious destiny.*



NAVYA AHUJA

studies in Class IX,
Mind Tree School, Ambala



Murder He Wrote

From being a celebrated producer of the longest running crime thrillers *Savdhaan India* and *Crime Patrol*, to a best-selling author, **Anirban Bhattacharaya** in conversation with our Features Editor **Preeti S. Manaktala** talks about his journey and his latest book *The Hills Are Burning*

When and how did your journey as a writer begin?

I always wanted to be a writer. When I was 8 years old I remember writing a play about how a boy is looking for his lost dog – it was just two or three scenes and I even performed it for my aunt! So, writing or rather the power to tell stories through words always

enamored me. I wrote my first book when I was in class 6 – I must have been 11 years old. That book got published as my 3rd book last year. It is called *The Adventurous 6: The Sinister Summer Holiday*.

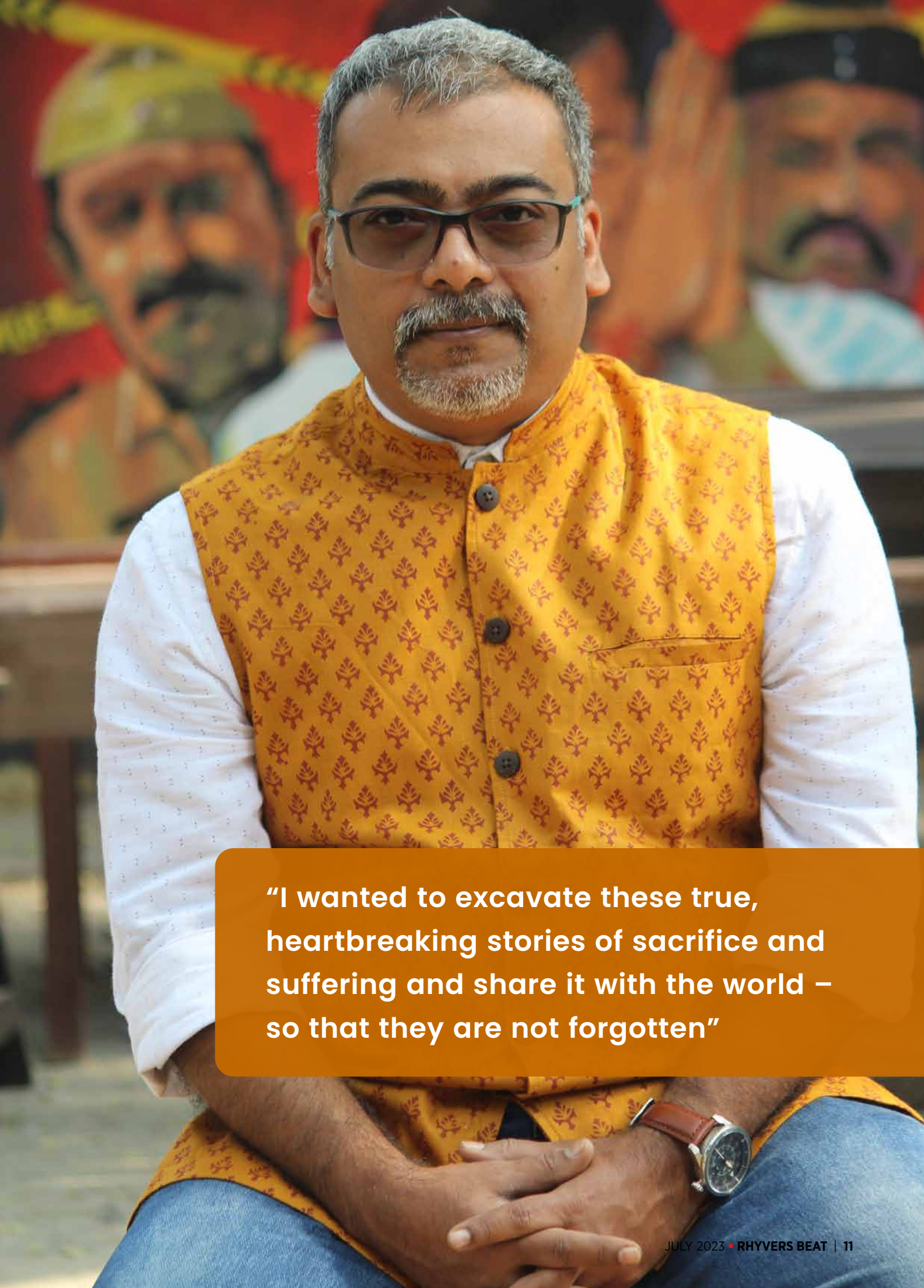
Your favorite genre to write is definitely crime. Tell us why?

I think I am one of the few authors in India who writes across genres. My first book was true crime – *The Deadly Dozen: India's Most Notorious Serial Killers*. It was followed by my debut collection of poetry *Mumblings & Musings*.

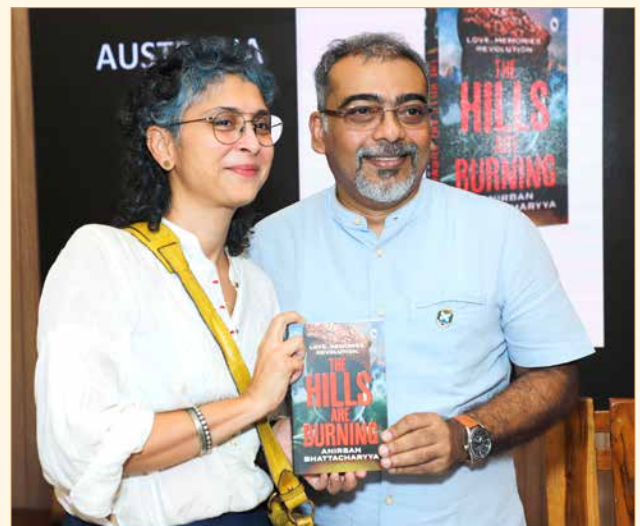
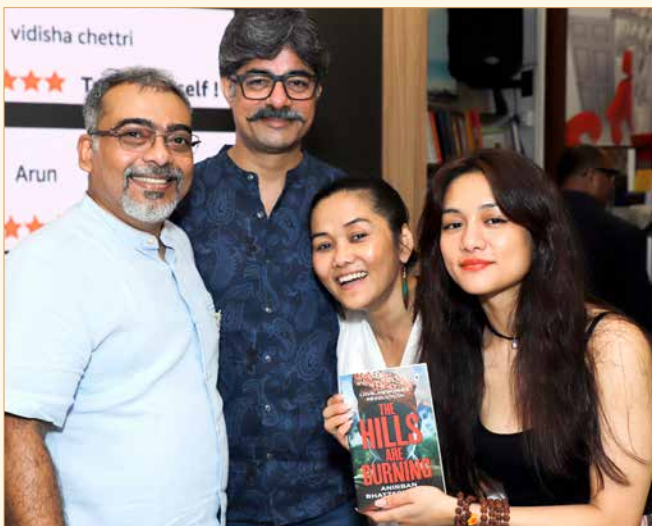
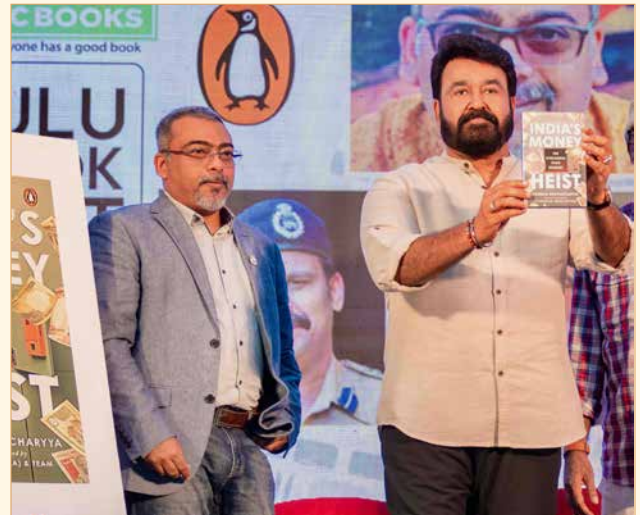
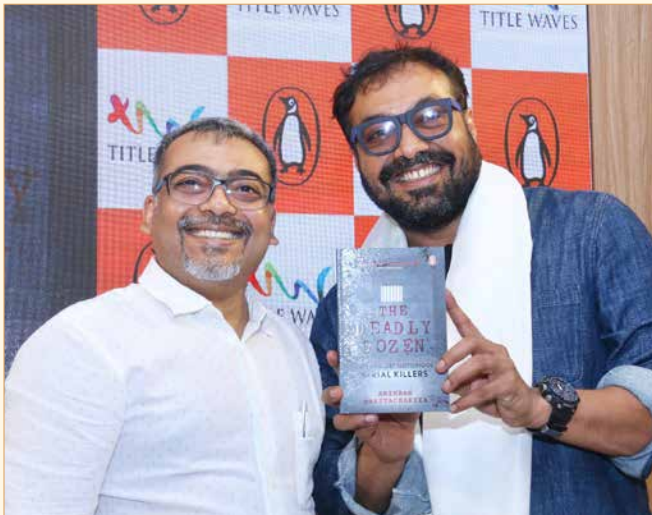
I came back to true crime and wrote about the biggest bank robbery of India – *India's Money Heist: The Chelembra Bank Robbery*.

True crime is a genre I love writing in. But I don't limit myself to a genre. If I have a story to tell I will tell it.





“I wanted to excavate these true, heartbreaking stories of sacrifice and suffering and share it with the world – so that they are not forgotten”



A celebrated author and a celebrated producer. Which of these two roles are closer to your heart?

Both. Even as a Producer, I am creating and sharing stories with the world. Any kind of communication or artistic endeavour has to be done with integrity and honesty, or it shows in the product or output. The viewer or the reader will catch it. So in both roles I try and tell the stories as best as I can, with passion and commitment.

How do you research for a story? Tell us about your process of writing a book.

Different genres have different approaches. Research is key when it comes to writing true crime stories. Trying to explain my methodology in a few words would be

impossible. To simplify it I can say it is very organic in nature. I trust the ether to show me the way and open up doors and information. As much as writing is a journey – research is like packing well for the journey. If you don't pack well and appropriate things, the journey is not going to be good.

What advice do you wish to give aspiring writers?

Write. Don't think about writing. Many writers wait for the muse or the right moment or mood to start. There is none. Writing like any other job or chore is mechanical – the process of it. Writing is not magic – it cannot happen by itself. You will have to sit down every day and write.

What is that one thing that you would want the world to know about you as a person?

That I was a good storyteller and that I loved life.

Tell us about your latest book *The Hills Are Burning*, which is a bestseller.

It is my memoir of my friends and me growing up in a boarding school in Kalimpong, set against the violence of the Gorkhaland Revolution that erupted in 1986. It is a true, bittersweet coming of age story that has love, loss, longing and the desperation to hold on to memories.

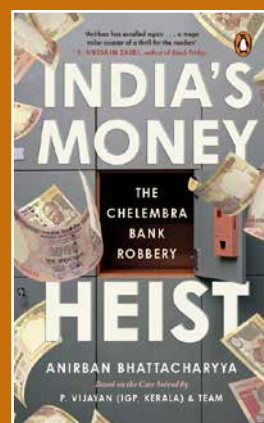
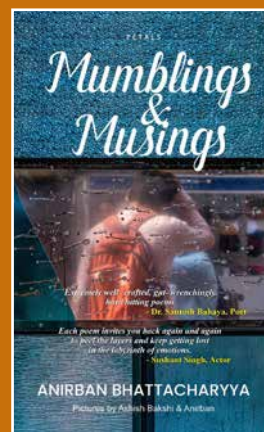
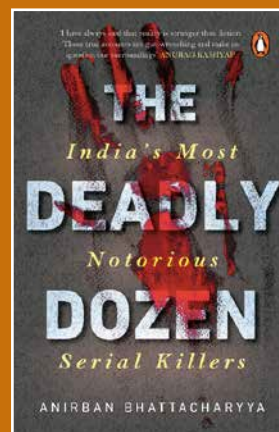
People have embraced the book with much love. The book is being read by Superstar Aamir Khan, Booker Award winner Shehan Karunatilaka, my literary guru Amitav Ghosh, Benga;’s superstar Prosenjit Chatterjee, my childhood friend and director Kiran Rao, my dear friend Sushant Singh and the amazing supporter of books – actress Sonali Bendre.

What was your reason for writing this memoir – was it for personal reasons or to capture that political era?

Both personal and socio-political. I wanted to document the events, the history and the suffering before it all vanished from the collective memory and conscience of the people. We are amongst the last few remaining generations who saw the genesis of the revolution or the andolan (called agitation by the Govt to control the narrative) in 1986.

The generation of today have grown up hearing the stories - but the stories have become a blind-spot, an urban legend or hearsay. Many of the incidents had been erased, denied, modified by the then Govt to suit its own narrative and agenda.

I wanted to excavate these true, heartbreaking stories of sacrifice and



Write. Don't think about writing. Many writers wait for the muse or the right moment or mood to start. There is none. Writing like any other job or chore is mechanical – the process of it

suffering and share it with the world – so that they are not forgotten. And the personal reason was to capture our growing up years of friendship in the boarding school as a tribute to my friends and school. This is a book dedicated to Kalimpong and her people.

Is there another book-in-progress?

I am busy editing my horror anthology, and am also writing a celebrity autobiography.



Finding Myself

*Hunting far and beyond
With hopes as high as the Alps
In search of a true bond
But all was elusive, zilch truth
My hopes went rolling down.
Standing tall, I found my feet
I ambled ahead...so complete!*

*I looked in the mirror
And broke it into fragments
A different me in each was cast
Striving to fathom each expression
I finally learned to read a heart.*

*I whipped the flour and cream
Awaiting my lover from the dream
The whirls and twirls of the dough
Were whirlpools in a spring
The truth reflected, brutally bleeding!
The hurdles...a teaching
Diving in the deep waters
Now gleefully I am swimming!!*



PARMINDER SONI
lives in Chandigarh
and has 3 books to
her credit.

C'est la vie

*Uncertain life,
the curtains shall draw soon,
death being the biggest truth, still
unwary, undying life lives.*

*Streets filled with buzzing minds,
each hiding pain, earns a living,
still, unafraid, unmoved life lives.*

*Your nest shall be empty one day
the kids born to you will head away
you shall still keep your cocoon alive
a warm kitchen and hopes alive
unbiased, unconditional life lives.*

*A broken heart, a failure, a fraud
those impending bills
shifting triumphs and debacles
unsteady, uncured life lives.*

*Nothing shall last forever,
Yet, we go on building nests.
A safe haven where we can rest.
Life is harsh but we still survive
why die before it's time?*

Because, life lives!



**PREETI
MANAKATALA**

is a published author,
poet, blogger and
freelance editor.
She has 4 books to
her credit.



The Light
Within...

These days when I sit down to reflect, my thoughts start backpedalling, taking me to the enchanted realms of my childhood. From tender years, I nurtured an unwavering faith in the concept of victory, envisioning myself as a resplendent figure, surmounting challenges that blocked my life's course. Raised within a traditional, male-dominated Hindu family, I defied societal expectations, boldly displaying my prowess as a student and later as the co-provider for my in-laws. I possessed an indomitable spirit, refusing to yield, and this propelled my pride in the countless triumphs I achieved. However, with the passing of time, this unyielding determination gradually transformed me into an individual somewhat tainted with excessive pride and exuberance.

As I enter my fifties, with the spheres of work and family tranquilly settled, I find myself graced with moments of deep introspection. It is during these moments, I truly grasp and embrace the tapestry of blessings and losses woven intricately into the fabric of my existence. As I delve deeper into this reflective journey, I perceive a poignant hollowness in my heart. A dawning realization caresses my soul that, fervently engaging into lengthy debates or incessantly striving for academic superiority was not the triumph that I longed for. Instead, I mourn the loss of cherished relationships along the path, recognizing that my relentless pursuit of perfectionism not only burdened me with undue stress but also cast its shadow upon those dearest to me.

This newfound awareness has summoned forth an innate curiosity, propelling me towards novel approaches in my daily endeavours.

Acknowledging the ache of loneliness within, I embarked upon a voyage of self-experimentation. More frequently now, I find solace in the gentle art of forgiveness, choosing to release the shackles of grudges and resentments that bind my spirit. I embrace each person I encounter as a reflection of my own being, fostering a sense of empathy and interconnectedness.

I consciously cultivate gratitude, savouring the presence of others in my own existence. The trifling issues that once provoked distress gradually relinquish their grip on my soul, for I have learnt to cease fretting over inconsequential matters. The principle of detachment has become my guiding light, enabling me to liberate myself from the fetters of expectations and outcomes, thereby discovering contentment in the tender embrace of the present moment.

With every passing day, I find myself basking in the warm glow of heightened joy, contentment and inner serenity. I have come to understand that authentic triumph lies in conquering the inner demons of desire, anger, attachment, and greed. Inspired by great luminaries such as Mahaveer and Buddha, who renounced worldly trappings, I now dedicate myself to treating all sentient beings with boundless compassion and reverence.

True triumph, as I now perceive, resides in living a life infused with love, compassion, and profound understanding, forging soulful connections and leaving an indelible imprint upon the lives of others.

With this profound paradigm shift, I aspire to depart from this earthly realm with a triumphant smile.



DR. SANGEETA JAIN

is a renowned
Gynaecologist from
Ambala, Haryana.

The Reign of Destiny

*In the distant horizon where ambitions take flight
The saga unfurls, soaked in incandescent light
A charismatic damsel with heart ablaze
Vanquishing odds, in the journey of enigmatic maze.*

*Through silhouette dark she sallied forth
Her spirit untamed, furiously created wrath.
The world tested her, as she refused to yield
The chain of destiny failed to fasten her demeanour bold.*

*Hostile adversities gripped, yet she blossomed through
Ripples of hurdles challenging the preposterous dreams pursue
Each defiance met with unfaltering face
Immense potential emerged from her inner grace.*

*Her persona bloomed, like a flower rare
The smile of triumph illuminated a fervent flare.
From the little battles of life to the catastrophic mutiny,
She vehemently seized the reign of her destiny.*



SHIVANI GHOSH

is an educator, motivational speaker, an established Personality Development Coach, a Podcaster and a Life Coach from Mohali, Punjab.

Crossing Boundaries

*He stood clutching the ticket in his wet palms,
Looking acrimoniously at the merry crowd on the ride
Feeling their adrenaline rush as they zoomed
In and out of sight as others watched with pride.*

*His invisible torment rose and ebbed with every turn
As he inched closer to it with 'devils' who dared to go,
He wished for a miraculous escape route to open
On which he can travel unseen, against the flow.*

*He dwelled unconsciously among the 'ifs' and 'buts'
Till the colourful gates slammed behind him in a trice,
He yearned for someone to take his trembling hand,
And not sneer at his muffled cries of fright.*

*Having closed his eyes to the sky, now below,
And his ears to a wildly thumping chest
He felt his breath reach unexplored spaces
To soothe his warring nerves, it tried its best.*

*Soon, a whiff of freshness filled every strained pore
Urged him to open his eyes, then realize the truth
We triumph when we cross boundaries drawn by fear,
The absence of fear in anyone is just a myth.*



**SRIVIDYA
SUBRAMANIAN**

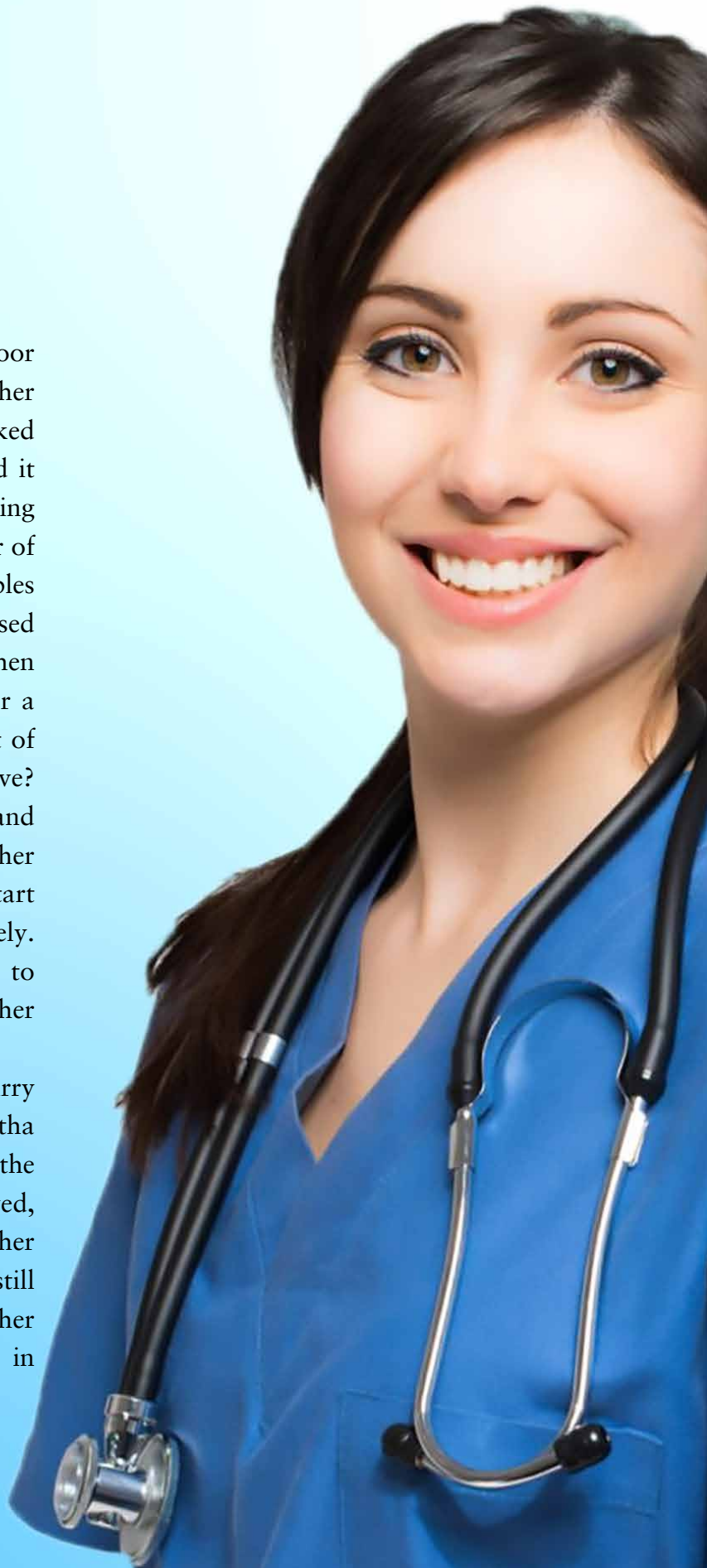
is a school teacher by day and a writer by night. She hails from Chennai.



A Resilient Spirit

She approached the unfamiliar door and nervously took the key from her pocket, took a deep breath, unlocked the door, paused, and then pushed it open. To her horror she saw cobwebs hanging from every inch of the ceiling, a thick layer of dust covered the floor, the chairs, the tables and the cots. It certainly hadn't been used for ages. Martha hadn't expected this when she had requested the local authorities for a space, to set up a small hospital as a part of the war effort. But what choice did she have? She allowed the initial feeling of panic and horror to settle down. She, along with her team of trained nurses would have to start working to spruce up this place immediately. She hadn't come all the way to give in to obstacles now. The thought of convincing her team weighed heavily on her shoulders.

The next couple of weeks went in a flurry of activity. The day arrived when Martha and her team of nurses stood staring, at the transformation they had jointly achieved, with sheer awe. Later, Martha sat in her room, lost in thought. It had been weeks, still she had no idea as to the whereabouts of her fiancé, who had been declared "Missing in action".



She recalled, vividly, their last parting words and the day she had received the telegram. For weeks she had been miserable and then she had taken the decision to travel to war torn France to find out for herself. A knock on the door aroused her from her reverie. One of the nurses stood there, nervous.

“The first set of wounded soldiers has arrived” she gushed.

All the nurses were summoned, and were given a briefing. This was the first time that they would tend to wounded soldiers. Suddenly the task seemed daunting.

They took their oath jointly, then Martha opened the door, asking the men to bring the wounded ones inside.

The sight before them was horrible. Blood was everywhere, some were with broken legs, some with burnt faces, and some with only one arm. They were in unimaginable pain. The team of nurses got down to work with an iron heart.

There was no time to stop, or take a break. Martha worked as fast as she could. She had just finished operating on a soldier with a broken leg. She wiped her forehead and turned to tend to the next patient.

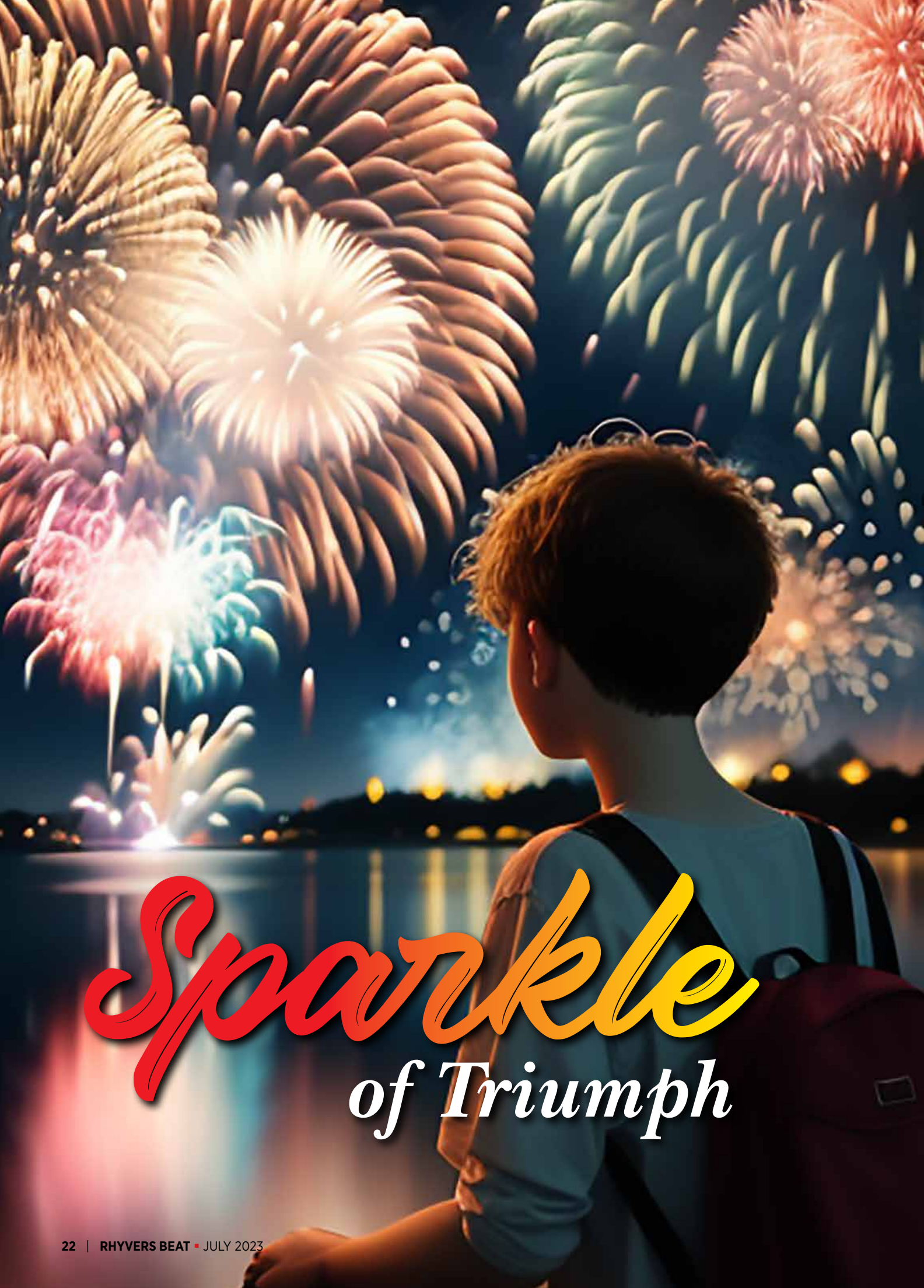
For a moment, the entire room seemed to swim around her. Was this real or was she dreaming? She saw Robert lying on the table, unconscious. Her beloved fiancé was right in front of her. The feeling of shock quickly turned into unbelievable joy. He was alive, and now she would take care of him.

Suddenly she felt lighter and incredibly proud of herself. In that moment she manifested a profound feeling of triumph, that came from her contribution towards the war efforts, and being there to take care of Robert.



SRIVIDYA GUPTA

quit her corporate career to pursue creative writing, and writes blogs, short stories and poems on various online platforms.



Sparkle *of Triumph*

Diwali was a couple of months away. So, the day dawned early for Shambu. The *gulleys* of Sivakasi were like the nerves of his backhand-gnarled and twisted. The double *idli* packet wrapped in leaf and paper sat nestled in work-weary shorts, his meal for the day. Every day of the week he and his siblings worked in the near-by cracker factory for a living. Today, he was instructed to be cautious as there would be inspection of the factory premises.

The strong pungent odour of the chemical gave an initial cough as always. He rushed into his spot on the tiny mat and the chemical filling that was heaped in the front beckoned his expertise.

He rolled out gently the red tissue expertly flattened did the filling, completed the cracker in a jiffy, pushed it to the next counter to be wrapped in brilliant colours of marketing splendour, promising to give you your five second high on a dark night, marking your festivities- be it a wedding or a funeral or a meagre prank. 'Did people realise how much pain and tears went into the making of crackers?' the seven-year-old often thought. Every time he saw the coloured fireworks in the sky, he only felt pain. People laughed, enjoyed the blast, the sound, the colours, the

sparks but he only saw red spots of blood in the sky. These boys who worked day and night, rolling crackers for a few rupees, never had the money to burst the sparklers. How ironic!

There was a group of people a while ago who tried to put him into school. Some NGO. He was sent to the local school. He was excited, too. But his fingers and hands refused to stretch, black and diseased by their constant exposure to the chemicals. The fingers couldn't even hold the pencil. Then his sister got married and he became the breadwinner for the family with his father dead. The saga continued.

Shambu looked out of the tiny window to see a completely different scenario. It was Diwali night. It was the first time he saw fireworks from an aeroplane. It was as if a million stars exploded, all at once. No wonder the kids loved to burst crackers! All his angst disappeared. He couldn't believe the rapid proceedings in his life after that fateful day. The kind NGO Aunty who had visited their factory promised to get his hand fixed and provide him with education and opportunity.

The brilliant sparkles in the night sky created ripples of light reflected in the eyes of the kid as HOPE dawned in his Life. The steel bird steered his future into an unknown yet bright destiny. A Triumph of Spirit, of Hope!



SUREKHA SRINIVASAN

is an English Aptitude Trainer by profession, working for the T.I.M.E. Institute, and has 8 anthologies to her credit.

When Life Beckoned

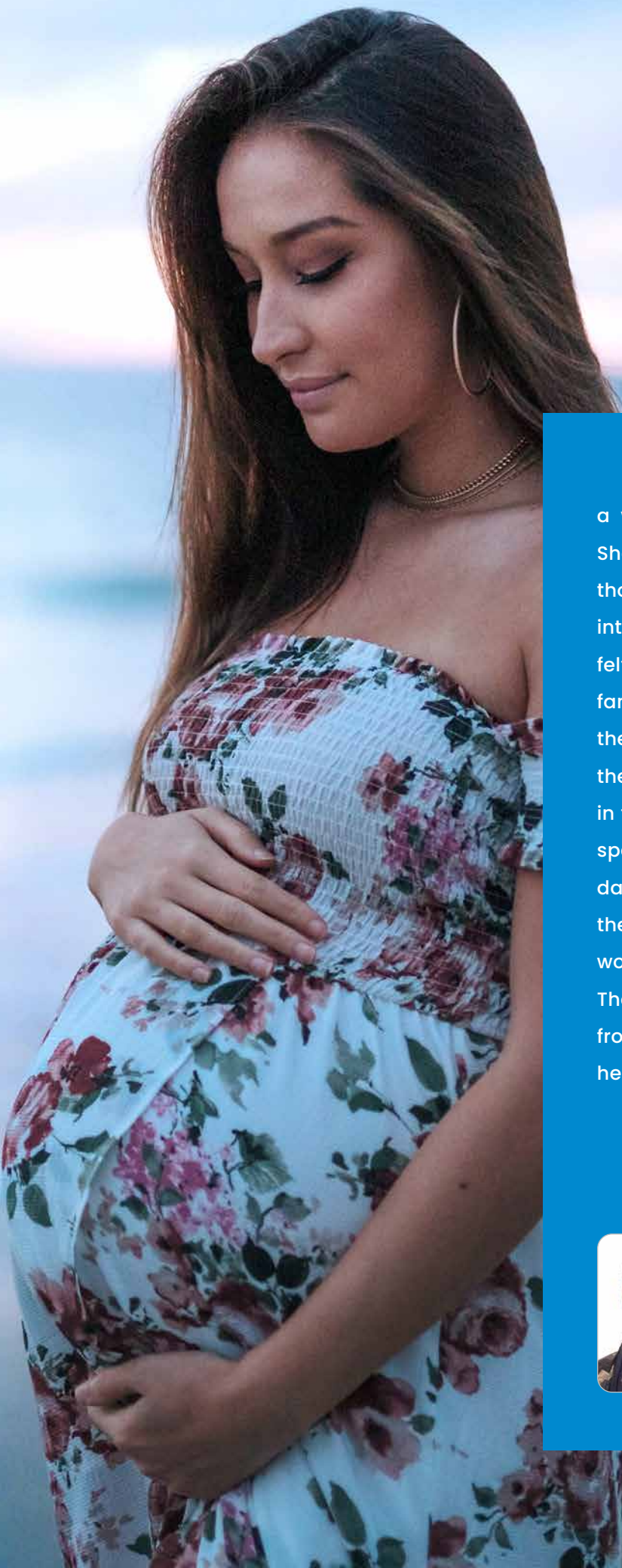
"No, No, No! I will not do it" wailed Sumitra, wringing her hands in sheer despair. Her tears had all been expended, leaving a trail of dried salt along her leathery, shrunk cheeks.

"See, there is no point in railing and ranting. It has been decided by Amma and in this household, we all do what she wants. Why are you creating such a fuss?" Ravi asked nonchalantly, least concerned about his wife's apparent trauma and agony. He could not understand what the fuss was all about. The foetus was just four weeks old. Not formed into even a semblance of a being. They could always have another one but hopefully, this time, a boy to appease Amma. Then everything would go back to being 'calm and placid', just as things had been before all this ruckus that Sumi started after the visit to the clinic.

The visit had been harrowing in itself. The last technician had been transferred and the present one had proved to be a hard nut to crack. She drove a hard bargain. Pretended to be squeamish about the last three abortions, said the next one could prove fatal for the

mother. Whoever heard of women dying from 'bacha girana!' It has happened since times immemorial. Huh! Trying to pull wool over his eyes! Ravi had upped the money and meekly she had acquiesced to the deal. He knew that Sumi too would capitulate, she had no other options.

Sumitra looked stonily at her husband of eight years, the reluctant father of her only living child, her daughter Raji, an unwanted appendage in their lives. It seemed she was seeing him for the first time. The swaggering, moustache-twirling hunk of a man over whom her friends had swooned, during her marriage. Her elderly relatives had not lost a chance to rub it into her skin that she was lucky to have him as her husband, it must have been a result of her good karma in her previous birth! She, too, had basked in smug glory at the propitious turn of events. Now, she saw him for what he was. A weak, spineless man unable to stand up for his family or for what was right. An unknown man who had given her four pregnancies but had allowed only one child to survive.



A strange resolve crossed her mind like a whiff of breeze in the stagnant desert. She was rather surprised by her own thoughts. Having never been called to tap into her resolve for self-determination, she felt unprepared for the task at hand. Her family, which now comprised of Raji and the Unborn, would live life with the freedom they deserved. When the house slumbered in the afternoon siesta, she bundled up her sparse belongings, subduing her surprised daughter into silence and stepped out of the house (had it ever been a home?). The world seemed to beckon her welcomingly. The train journey took her far, far away from the killing fields— of her children and her dreams...



RUMA CHAKRABORTY

is a senior English faculty in a premium institution in Kolkata. A painter, a budding poet and compulsive story-teller, currently she is in the process of writing a compendium of short stories and poems

THE ETERNAL FLAME

*In the realm of triumph, where dreams collide,
A tapestry of courage, woven deep inside.
Through trials and tribulations, we stride,
Triumph's symphony, our hearts cannot hide.*

*From darkness we emerge, like dawn's first light,
Defying the odds, igniting our might.
With unwavering belief, we take flight,
Triumph's resolute spirit, shining bright.*

*In the face of adversity, we find our way,
Unyielding in purpose, come what may.
With steadfast resolve, we do not sway,
Triumph's anthem echoes, leading the way.*

*Through battles fought, with sweat and tears,
We conquer our doubts, dispel all fears.
With unwavering passion, we persevere,
Triumph's sweet victory, drawing near.*

*In the depths of struggle, we find our power,
A flame within, growing stronger by the hour.
With resilience as our armour, we tower,
Triumph's flag unfurled, in this defining hour.*

*Through shattered dreams and broken chains,
We rise from ashes, embracing the pain
With indomitable spirit, triumph remains-
A testament to strength, where victory reigns.*

*So let us celebrate each triumph's embrace,
In moments big or small, with joy we chase.
For within our souls, triumph finds its place,
A beacon of hope, a journey we trace.*

*Embrace the triumphs, let them be known,
In the victories achieved, seeds are sown.
With gratitude in our hearts, we have grown,
Triumph's legacy, forever has shone.*

*For triumph resides in the human will,
A testament to resilience, unyielding, still.
Through every test, we rise and fulfil,
Triumph's eternal flame, our souls fulfil.*



**MONOLINA
DUTTA GUPTA**

is an avid reader and finds solace in the written words. She also translates literary works from Bengali to English

BEST OF BEAT

The Editorial Team of Rhyvers Beat has selected the following contributions that most suitably represent the theme of each issue as 'Best of Beat'. Congratulations to all !!!

1. July Edition
Mystic Rain (Dr. Sumita Misra)
2. August
Gamble with Time (Samrudhi Dash)
3. September
There Will Come an Autumn Too (Pooja Aggarwal)
4. October
Celestial Fiesta (Geethanjali Dilippe)
5. November
A Learning Curve in Depravity (Alka Kashyap)
6. December
Sacred Reflections (Shalini Rawat)
Homecoming (Daljit Kaur)
7. January
New Beginnings (Surekha Srinivasan)
8. February
Magic (Alka Kansra)
9. March
The Elixir (Sarbani Chakravati)
10. April
I Dare to Dream (Sreyashi Ghosh)
11. May
Yellow Pages, Sepia Images (Arun Hariharan)
12. June
Holiday Palette (Dr. Deviyani Singh)

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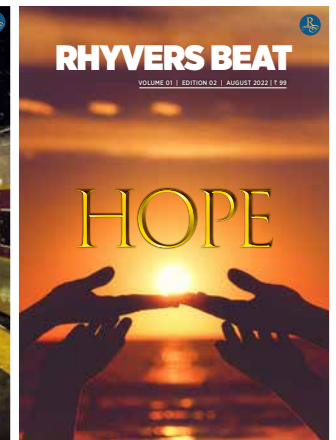
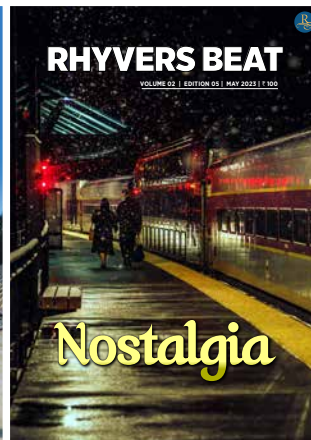
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