

# THE NEXUS

A FUSION OF HISTORY, LITERATURE AND ART

RANI BIRLA GIRLS' COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY



2024-2025 Edition

# From The Principal's Desk



It gives me immense pride and pleasure to introduce the first issue of our History e-Magazine—‘The Nexus’, a monumental step in celebrating the intellectual endeavours and creative talents of our students and faculty of the department of History, Rani Birla Girls’ College. This magazine is more than just a compilation of historical narratives; it is a vibrant space where ideas, art, and critical reflections converge to illuminate the rich tapestry of our shared heritage.

History is not merely a study of the past; it is a window into understanding the present and shaping the future. Through this publication, our students have embraced the profound responsibility of uncovering stories that resonate with courage, resilience, innovation, and transformation. The articles in this issue explore diverse themes, from the architectural brilliance of the Delhi Sultanate to the heroic struggles of figure like Matangini Hazra and the contribution of Derozio in spreading radicalism. These stories, deeply rooted in our cultural ethos, remind us of the strength and determination that define our identity.

The magazine also takes us into the realms of social evolution, highlighting Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's tireless advocacy for female education and independence, and tracing the fascinating development of sign language in India. Each piece is a reflection of meticulous research, thoughtful analysis, and a passion for unveiling the lesser-known aspects of history. Equally commendable is the creative section of this e-magazine, featuring thought-provoking poems, stunning sketches, and vibrant artwork that beautifully complement the written narratives. These expressions are a testament to the imaginative spirit of our students and their ability to connect with history in profoundly personal ways.

This e-magazine represents a collective effort—a labour of love, curiosity, and scholarship. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the editorial team, contributors, and faculty advisors who have worked tirelessly to bring this vision to life. Your dedication and creativity have culminated in a publication that is both enriching and inspiring.

As you journey through the pages of this e-magazine, I hope you are captivated by the stories, moved by the artistry, and inspired by the underlying message: that history is a living, breathing entity that continues to shape who we are and who we aspire to be.

I am confident that this initiative will not only enhance our appreciation for the past but also encourage a spirit of inquiry and dialogue among our readers. Let this be the beginning of a tradition of excellence that will thrive in the issues to come.

Wishing you an enlightening and enjoyable reading experience!

Dr. Srabanti Bhattacharya  
Principal

# From The HOD's Desk



A trivial albeit quintessential step is as important as the final step to summit, but the way the students of the Department of History have put their effort with zeal and accomplished such commendable job surely deserves applause. Nothing can be more exciting and exhilarating than introducing a work which is entirely compiled, edited and designed by our students. The title 'Nexus', which means a series of connections conjoining two or more separate themes for a common purpose, is aptly given to explore the interconnections and subtlety existing in the narratives of past. Readers must not face any difficulty to understand the dynamic nature of e-magazine after browsing through its assorted contents. The articles, ranging from medieval architecture to Kalighat Painting, are seemed to be focusing on the heritage and culture of our country followed by poems, sketches and paintings which substantiate the significance of the title. We hope that their endeavor would be appreciated and encouraged by the faculty of this esteemed institution.

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# Content

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## ARTICLES

Page no.

1. Voices of change: Derozio's Young Bengal Revolution 8-9
2. Rokeya Begum: An Endeavor to Establish Her School 10-11
3. The Evolution of Sign Language : A Short History 12-13
4. Kalighat Painting 14-15
5. Architectural Innovations of the Delhi Sultanate:  
A New Era in Indian Design 16-17
6. Matangini Hazra : The Freedom Fighter 18-19

## POETRY

7. One More Time 21
8. Echoes Of Love 22
9. Silenced Dreams 23
10. Long Live Revolution 24
11. A lonely Path 25

## SKETCHES & PAINTINGS

27-32

## PHOTOGRAPHS

34-39



# ARTICLES





# Voices Of Change: Derozio's Young Bengal Revolution

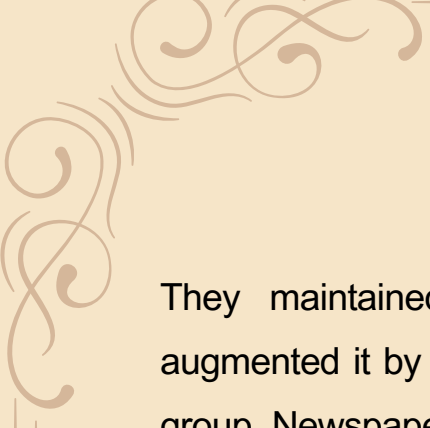
~Ayesha Farooque

In the 19th century Renaissance period of Bengal, we saw the emergence of new radicalism ideas through the Derozio and the Young Bengal from a Hindu College.

Derozio was an Anglo-Indian deeply immersed in the spirit of the intoxicating freedom of the French Revolution, having a passion for freedom of thought and from the burden of all tradition which took over his soul. At a very young age, he became the professor of Hindu College. He inspired young minds through his progressive ideas and emphasized the importance of reason, scientific inquiry, social reform and challenging traditional norms. Through his teachings, radical views and Young Bengal society, he brought reforms in the orthodox Hindu customs, promoted equality and encouraged western culture as well as western education. He was also a talented poet and his works often reflected themes of love, nature and social issues. His poems like 'To India - My Native Land' and 'Fakir of Jhungeera' struck an immense patriotic note. But due to his radical activities and influence on his students, he was expelled from Hindu College in 1831, and in a few months he died due to Cholera.

Despite his short life, his reminiscence remained green in the hearts of his beloved disciples. Many favourite students of Derozio like Rasik Krishna Mallick, Krishna Mohan Banerjee, Ramgopal Ghosh, Radhanath Sikdar, Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee etc played an important role in the Young Bengal Movement. They admired the principles of the French Revolution as well as England's liberal thought. They also attempted to eliminate social evils, promote liberty through press freedom and jury trials, and improve the conditions of women and peasants.





They maintained Derozio academic association until about 1839 and augmented it by a periodical association for the exchange of ideas within his group. Newspapers like -Parthenon, Jnanannesan, Enquirer, Hesperus, Hindu Pioneer, the Bengal Spectator and many more were published by the Derozians in which they expressed their radical views .They organized many public meetings. Charges were levied against members of Young Bengal because they opposed the traditional norms of Hindu society. As a mark of protest they openly ate forbidden food and drink. Conservative organizations like Samachar Chandrika and Samvad Prabhakar created a lot of uproar over his activities which endangered society and religion .Their advocacy for social reform, criticism of orthodox practices, and calls for change challenged the established norms of society during that time. The British colonial authorities and conservative elements within Indian society viewed their actions as a threat, leading to arrests and suppression of their activities .Worldly occupations and personal interests inevitably attracted the attention of the individual members of the group, most of whom came from middle-class homes and had livelihoods to earn. After that, internal Conflicts and Social resistance became the major cause of the decline of the Young Bengal Movement.

Derozio and the contributions of his followers laid the groundwork for a new wave of thought in Bengal, fostering a generation of thinkers and reformers who would go on to influence India struggle for independence and social justice. His legacy continues to inspire generations, serving as a beacon of enlightenment and progress in the history.

# Rokeya Begum: An Endeavour To Establish Her School

~Alfia Ahmed

Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, a pioneering feminist, educator, and writer, embarked on a remarkable journey to establish a school for Muslim girls in Calcutta, India, in the early 20th century. This endeavour was a testament to her unwavering commitment to women's education and empowerment, despite facing formidable obstacles from conservative forces and societal norms. In 1911, Rokeya founded the Sakhawat Memorial Girls High School, named in memory of her husband, Sakhawat Hossain. The school establishment was a groundbreaking milestone in the history of women's education in India. Rokeya's vision was to provide a safe and supportive environment where Muslim girls could access education, free from the constraints of patriarchal norms. Her determination was fueled by the realization that education was the key to unlocking women's potential and challenging the status quo. Rokeya's journey was not without its challenges. Conservative Muslims and British colonial authorities opposed her efforts, viewing education for women as a threat to traditional values. Undeterred, Rokeya persevered, convinced that education was essential for women's empowerment. She went door-to-door, persuading parents to send their daughters to her school, often facing resistance and criticism. Despite these obstacles, the school flourished under Rokeya's guidance. She recruited talented teachers, developed a comprehensive curriculum, and fostered a supportive environment that encouraged girls to pursue their academic and personal interests. The school became a beacon of hope for Muslim girls, offering them a chance to break free from the shackles of ignorance and oppression.

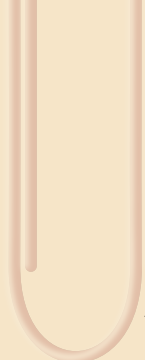
Rokeya educational philosophy emphasized the importance of intellectual freedom, critical thinking, and social responsibility. She believed that education should empower women to challenge societal norms and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Her school became a hub for intellectual and cultural activities, hosting debates, literary gatherings, and social events that promoted women's rights and empowerment. The impact of Rokeya's school extended beyond the classroom. It sparked a wider movement for women's education and empowerment in India and Bangladesh. Her pioneering work inspired generations of women educators, activists, and writers, including Taslima Nasrin and Mahasweta Devi. The school also became a model for future educational institutions, demonstrating the potential for women-led initiatives to drive social change.

Rokeya's legacy continues to inspire and empower women today. The Sakhawat Memorial Girls' High School, now a government-recognized institution, remains a testament to her vision and perseverance. Rokeya University, Rangpur, Bangladesh, was established in her honour, further solidifying her contributions to education and women's empowerment. Begum Rokeya's endeavour to establish her school serves as a powerful reminder of the transformative power of individual agency and collective action. Her story underscores the importance of education as a catalyst for social change and the need for continued advocacy for women's rights and empowerment. Begum Rokeya's remarkable journey to establish her school is a testament to her unwavering commitment to women's education and empowerment. Her legacy continues to inspire and empower women, ensuring her place as a pioneering figure in the struggle for gender equality. As we reflect on her contributions, we are reminded of the power of education to transform lives and shape a more equitable society.

# The Evolution Of Sign Language: A Short History

~ Zinat Ali

Sign language has been an integral part of human communication for thousands of years, with evidence of its use found in ancient civilizations across the globe. India, with its rich cultural heritage, is no exception. The history of sign language in India is a fascinating story of evolution, adaptation, and resilience. The earliest recorded evidence of sign language use in India dates back to the Indus Valley Civilization (3000 BC - 1500 BC). Excavations at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa have uncovered seals and artifacts depicting hand gestures, suggesting a primitive form of sign language. Similarly, ancient Indian texts like the Rigveda and the Mahabharata contain references to hand gestures used for communication. In classical Indian dance forms like Bharatanatyam, Kathakali and Kathak, hand gestures (mudras) play a vital role in conveying emotions and telling stories. These hand movements are an integral part of Indian classical dance and theatre, showcasing the importance of manual communication in Indian culture. During the medieval period, sign language was used by Buddhist monks and Hindu sages for silent communication. Manual alphabets were also developed for deaf education in some regions, demonstrating an early recognition of the importance of sign language in education. The British colonial era saw the introduction of British Sign Language (BSL) in India, which suppressed local sign languages. Deaf education during this period was largely oralist, focusing on lip-reading and speech. This led to a decline in the use of indigenous sign languages.



After India gained independence in 1947, Indian Sign Language (ISL) emerged as a distinct language, influenced by local sign languages and BSL. Deaf organizations and schools began promoting ISL, recognizing its importance in deaf education and communication. In recent decades, ISL has gained recognition as a legitimate language, with efforts towards standardization and documentation. Technology advancements, such as mobile apps and video remote interpreting, have expanded ISL access, making it easier for the deaf community to communicate and connect.

While ISL is the widely used term, regional variations exist, such as Mumbai Sign Language (MSL), Delhi Sign Language (DSL), and Bangalore Sign Language (BSL). These regional sign languages reflect the diversity of Indian culture and the need for localized communication solutions. The history of sign language in India is a testament to the country's rich cultural heritage and the resilience of its deaf community. From ancient roots to modern-day recognition, sign language has evolved to become an integral part of Indian communication. As we move forward, it is essential to continue promoting and supporting sign language, ensuring equal access and opportunities for the deaf community in India.

# Kalighat Painting

~ Safia Karim

Kalighat Paintings refer to the class of paintings and drawings on hand-made or more usually on machine-made paper produced by a group of artists called 'Patuas' in the neighbourhood of the famous Kali temple at Kalighat between the 19th and earlier 20th Century. During the early 19th century, the Kalighat Temple was a popular destination for local people, pilgrims and certain foreign visitors as well. With the rise of popularity and fame of the goddess Kali, many of the artisans and craftsmen flocked to Kalighat area to capitalize the new market by selling cheap religious souvenirs to the visitors. Soon after that a number of skilled artists moved to Kolkata from the rural Bengal especially from 24 Parganas and Midnapore and set up stalls outside the Temple. In the villages they had painted long narrative stories on scrolls of handmade paper often stretched to over 20 feet in length and were known as patachitra. Each section was known as a pat and the artists therefore became known as patuas. The patuas would travel from village to village, unrolling the scroll a section at a time and singing the stories to their audiences. However, the visitors to Kalighat did not want to buy long scrolls which would take a lot of time to paint.

Kalighat paintings were produced with variety of water based, opaque colours on papers. Several colours like blue, indigo, red, green, yellow, carbon black etc. had been used in Kalighat paintings. Some of these colours were made of indigenous ingredients. For example yellow was produced from the turmeric root, blue was made from petals of Aparajita flower, and black was produced from common shoot by burning an oil lamp under a pot. Silvery and golden colours were also used for ornamentation.

The themes in Kalighat paintings had a wide variety. From the pantheon of Hindu Gods and Goddess to the religious and contemporary social events – nothing left behind as the theme of Kalighat paintings. From the depiction of Hindu gods & goddesses, episodes from Ramayana and Mahabharata, scenes from the life of Krishna to the other mythological characters, the Kalighat paintings developed to reflect a variety of religious themes. Amongst the deities, Kali was the favourite which was quite reasonable and apart from that Shiva in the form of Panchanan.

The Kalighat patuas showed an interest in portraying domestic pets which might be an influence of Mughal as well as contemporary British artists. Several scenes of animals and fishes were the popular themes in Kalighat painting. Today the practice of Kalighat paintings still continues in the villages of Bengal where the rich traditions are proudly being carried out by the patuas which are being handed down through the generations. This is surely a matter of great appreciation and a consortium is needed whose untired effort will revive the glorious past of Bengal.

# Architectural Innovations of the Delhi Sultanate: A New Era in Indian Design

~ Tamanna Haider

India had a very rich architectural tradition of its own since the pre Islamic time. With the coming of the Persianised Turks from Central Asia, who were great builders, the introduction of a new style of architecture in India such as arch, dome, vault and lime mortar was seen, which was a kind of assimilation of two different cultures and two different types of architecture which gradually gave birth to a new style known as Indo-Islamic Architecture. One thing which we must know is that neither the arch nor the dome was a Turkish or Persian invention, but it was the Arabs who borrowed it from the Byzantine Empire and made them their own. Let us look into some architectural marvels which were erected during the times of Delhi Sultanate.

**QUWWAT AL-ISLAM MOSQUE-** It marks the beginning of Islamic architecture in India and was the first congregational mosque in Delhi, commissioned by Qutubuddin Aibak around 1193 CE and was completed in 1198 CE. The mosque is built in the traditional Hypostyle Plan, and has a rectangular courtyard and a surrounding pillar cloister. For constructing the cloisters, four hundred and seventy pillars were used from the wreckage of twenty seven temples. To decorate the surface of the panels, Quranic verses were written in *Naksh* and *Tughra* styles which were executed by Indian craftsmen with little knowledge of Arabic script.



**QUTUB MINAR**-This is the highest free standing brick tower in the Islamic world, exalting the growing power and omnipotence of the new faith. Earlier it was called the *Madhana* or place where the Azan was called. Originally it had four stories. The first storey was built by Aibak the second and third stories by Iltutmish and the 4th storey was hit by lightning, which was repaired by Firoz Shah Tughlaq; and finally adding the fifth in 1367AD. The minar is beautifully decorated with 'Stalactile Honeycombing' design. Arabic inscriptions written in *Naksh* style provide a handsome relief to the plane-fluted red sandstone and grey quartzites of the great Minar.

### **Some key Features of Delhi Sultanate Architecture**

**Throughout the Sultanate period, certain architectural features became prominent:**

- \* Pointed arches and domes.
- \* Courtyards and minarets as integral parts of mosque architecture.
- \* Extensive use of calligraphy, especially Quranic inscriptions, and intricate geometric patterns.
- \* Incorporation of local elements, like corbelled arches and trabeated (post and lintel) constructions from earlier Indian traditions.

The architecture of the Delhi sultanate marked a high watermark in the development of the distinctive architectural style. Apart from the designs discussed above, we see some more beautiful and magnificent designs developing later, such as the 'True Arch and Dome' in Alai Darwaza during Khilji period, we also see the trend of 'Slanting Wall' during Tughlaq and 'Double Dome' during Lodi periods. Though the architects came from Western Asia, bringing their own pattern and style, they however mostly used indigenous craftsmen, stonecutter and masons of Delhi who were superior to their contemporary craftsmen within the Muslim world. This is also proclaimed by the 'Parrot of India' Amir Khusrau that Timur had taken masons and stonecutters of Delhi to build his own capital Samarkand. This period saw the development of a large pool of talent dedicated to architectural craftsmanship, leading to the emergence of a distinctive pattern blending Indian and Arabesque motifs like flora and fauna, geometric patterns and scripts which were never used earlier to decorate the surface. Thus we can say that the journey of the indo- islamic architecture begins with the arrival of the Turks that blends Islamic, Persian and Central Asian influences with Indian elements which further becomes more complex and organized during the Mughal period.

# Matangini Hazra : The Freedom Fighter

~Sneha Chakraborty

Matangini Hazra (1870-1942) a famous Gandhian leader and a humanitarian. Matangini Hazra (Matangini Hazra) was born at a village named Hogla under Tamluk Thana of Midnapore in West Bengal. Daughter of a poor peasant, she had no access to education at her father's house. Given in marriage at an early age, Matangini became widowed at eighteen without having any children. She played an active role in the struggle for independence from colonial rule and followed Mahatma Gandhi's creed of non-violence. In 1932, Matangini participated in Gandhi's civil disobedience movement (Salt Satyagraha), manufactured salt at Alinan salt centre and was arrested for violating the salt act. After her arrest she was made to walk a long distance as punishment. She also participated in the 'Chowkidari Tax Bandha' (abolition of chowkidari tax) movement and while marching towards the court building chanting slogan to protest against the illegal constitution of a court by the governor to punish those who participated in the movement, Matangini was arrested again. She was sentenced to six months imprisonment and sent to Baharampur jail. After being released, she became an active member of the Indian National Congress and took to spinning her own Khadi. In 1933, she also attended the subdivisional Congress conference at Serampore and was injured in the ensuing baton charge by the police.

Affectionally called Gandhiburi, which is Bengali for old lady Gandhi, Matangini Hazra was a true patriot. She took part in various movements organised for attaining complete freedom for India. Matangini led one procession from the north of the criminal court building; even after the firing commenced, she continued to advance with the tri-colour flag, leaving all the volunteers behind. The police shot her three times. She continued marching despite wounds to the forehead and both hands. As she was repeatedly shot, she kept chanting Vande Mataram, "hail to the Motherland". She died with the flag of the Indian National Congress held high and still flying. The parallel Tamuk government incited open rebellion by praising her "martyrdom for her country" and was able to function for two more years, until it was disbanded in 1944, at Gandhi's request. Matangini Hazra exemplify the courage, resilience, and unwavering commitment of women freedom fighters who played an integral role in India's journey to independence. Their sacrifices continue to inspire generations, reminding us of the formidable power of determination and unity in the face of oppression. As we commemorate their contributions, let us uphold their legacies and draw strength from their unwavering dedication to the ideals of freedom and justice.





# POETRY





# One More Time

~ Bushra Samreen

There are voiceovers in head to let go everything all at once,

There are songs in heart to hold on one more time.

There are chaos all around denoting how toxic things are,

There is peace in soul suggesting to give out sigh one more time.

There are people roaming around destroying themselves,

There are birds building nests after a storm one more time.

Here we enjoy and dance and play in rain together,

Who thinks about the sky who cries one more time?

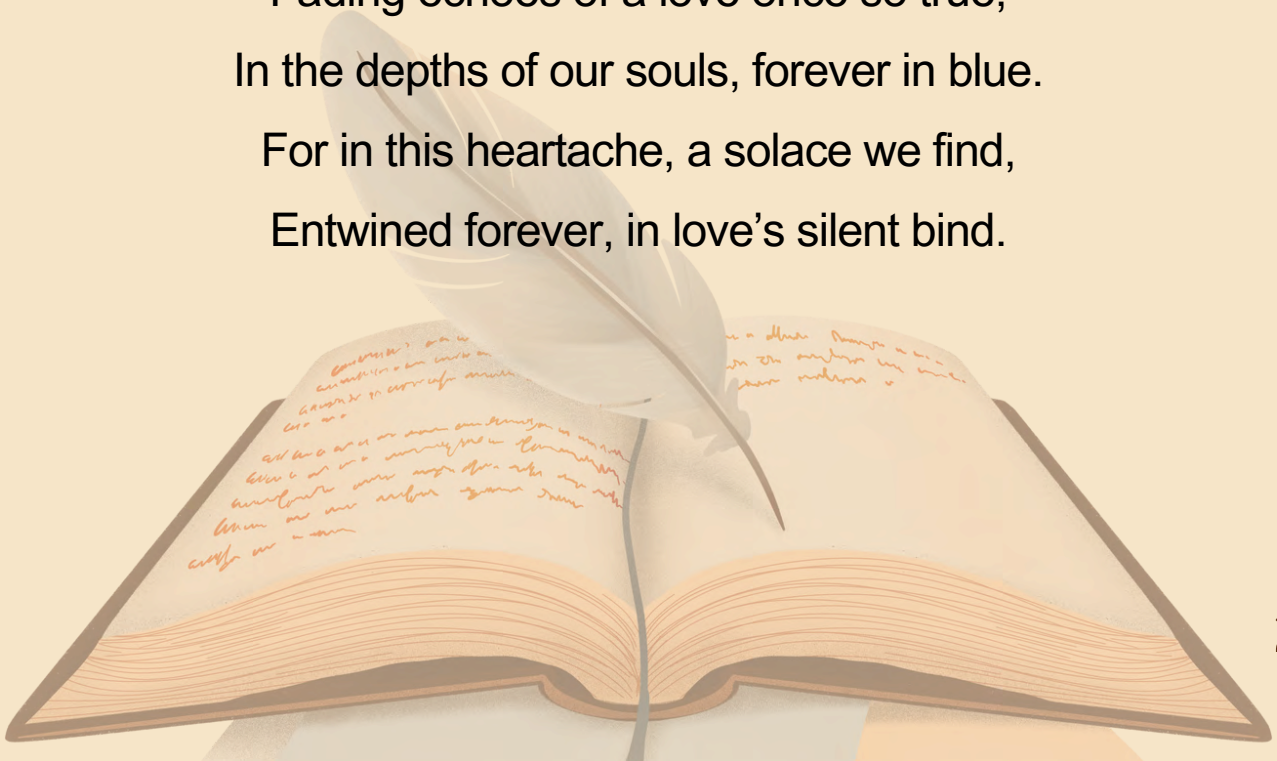




# Echoes Of Love

~ Zinat Ali

In the silence of night, echoes of our love resound,  
Whispers of promises, once lost, now found.  
In this bittersweet embrace, hearts entwined,  
A love so deep, yet fate unkind.  
Like shadows we dance, in the moon's soft glow,  
Embracing the pain that only lovers know.  
Words unspoken, linger in the air,  
A timeless ache, beyond repair.  
And as the stars fade into dawn's first light,  
We hold on to moments, slipping out of sight.  
Torn between what is and what could be,  
Lost in love's fragile Symphony  
Fading echoes of a love once so true,  
In the depths of our souls, forever in blue.  
For in this heartache, a solace we find,  
Entwined forever, in love's silent bind.





# Silenced Dreams

~ Zinat Ali

I was a girl with dreams,  
A fragile soul beneath a veil of shattered starlight gleam.  
In whispered sighs, hopes took flight, yet faltered on the wing,  
Unseen tears in lonely nights, where echoes softly sing.  
The sunsets weep for lost tomorrows, where dreams once danced  
so bright,  
But shadows loom in every corner, stealing dreams from sight.  
I sought to grasp the fleeting light, but darkness held its sway,  
In quiet corners of my heart, where dreams began to fray.  
how I longed to touch the sky, where dreams were free to soar,  
But chains of doubt and silent sighs left dreams upon the shore.  
I whispered secrets to the stars, in hopes they would reply,  
Yet silence echoed through the void, where dreams were left to die.  
Now here I stand, a whisper's breath, a memory unfurled,  
Of dreams that danced within my soul, yet never touched the world.  
I was a girl with dreams untold, where shadows held their gleam,  
But in the silence of the night, I was a girl who dared to dream.

# Long Live Revolution

~ Ayesha Farooque

With the aim of revolution in the country;

By keeping faith in democracy;

Carrying the load of unemployment,

I want to shout - Inquilaab! Inquilaab!

With the aim of revolution in the country;

By demolishing the draconian law;

Bearing the load of billions hope,

I want to shout- Inquilaab! Inquilaab!

With the aim of revolution in the country;

By taking action against communalism;

Treading on the path of the revolutionaries,

I want to shout- Inquilaab! Inquilaab!

With the aim of revolution in the country;

By exposing the venal offices

carrying the grief of the proletarian;

I want to shout - Inquilaab! Inquilaab!

With the aim of revolution in the country,

By raising my voice against every injustice;

Carrying the anger of every victim,

I want to shout - Inquilaab! Inquilaab!

With the aim of revolution in the country;

By passing through the patriotic emotions;

Carrying the weight of the tricolor in my hands,

I want to shout- Inquilaab! Inquilaab!



# A Lonely Path

~ Ayesha Farooque

I was walking on a lonely path in the middle of the night,  
There was no one with me, the whole way was silent.

With tears in my eyes, I walked fast on the road;  
The further I went, the bigger the path became.

I felt like I was alone on that road,  
The only noise on the streets was my pounding heartbeats.

And the sound of the wind whispered in my ears;  
I wanted to get off that road as fast as possible.

The whole road was dark, as if it was a new moon night,  
And the Cool breeze was tranquil in my mind with a gentle touch.

A beautiful scenery illuminated in front of my eyes;  
Seemed like it was my last night.

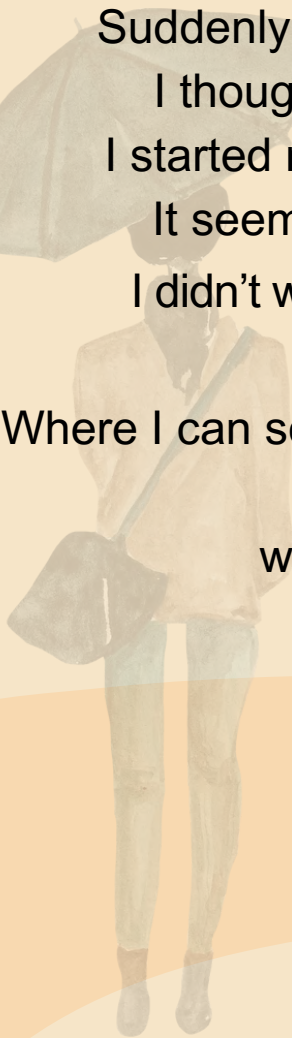
Suddenly a lamp of light fell into my eyes from a distance,  
I thought maybe I had reached but it was an illusion.

I started running faster, tears were flowing from my eyes;  
It seemed like my breath was about to leave me too.

I didn't want to stop, I wanted to go somewhere far away,  
A place where no one recognizes me.

Where I can scream, and say — this is the place where I wanted to  
reach;

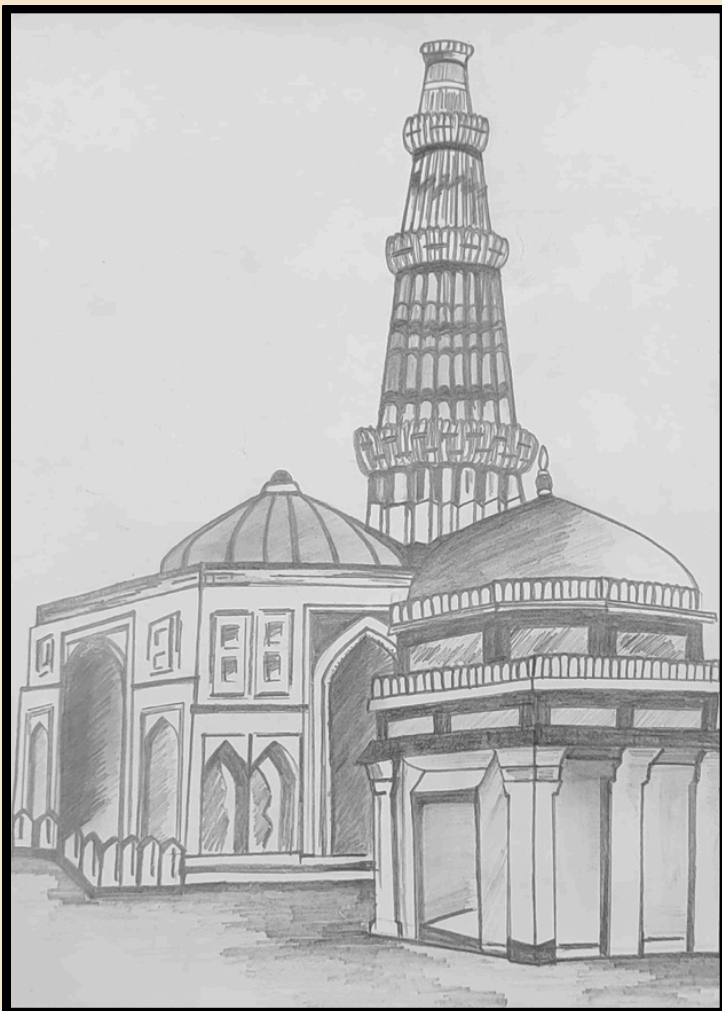
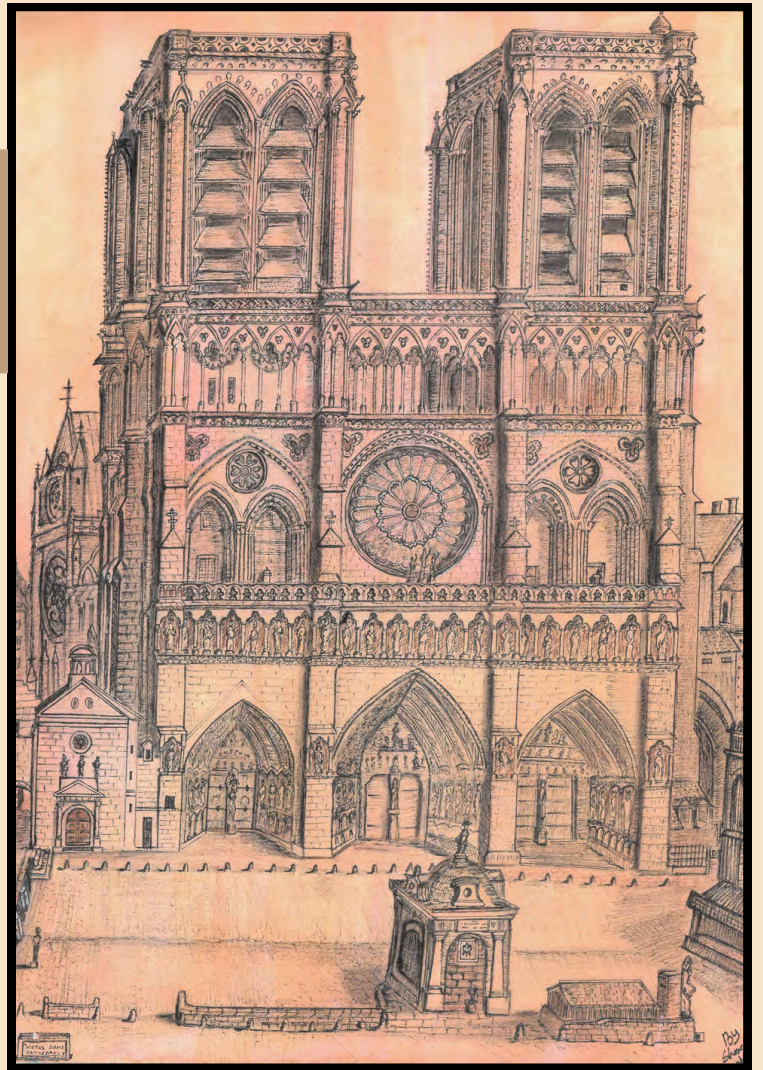
where a big smile can appear on my face.



# SKETCHES & PAINTINGS



Shareeqa Aftab



Shahreen Afreen



Alfia Ahmed



Nausheen Ali

Ayesha Farooque



Bushra Samreen

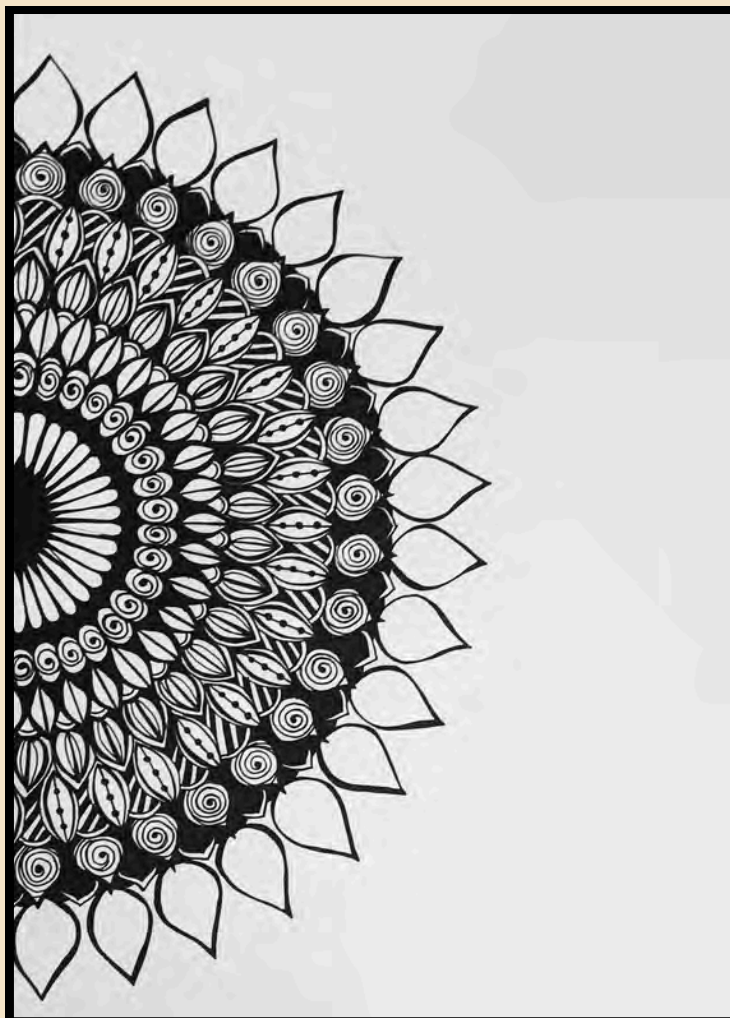


Alfia Ahmed



Rahat Imam

Bushra Samreen



Shahreen Afreen



**Tayebah Huma**

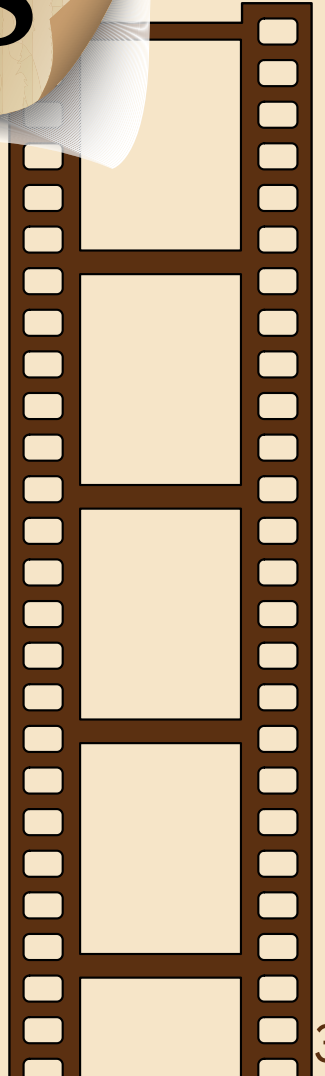


**Tayebah Huma**





# PHOTOGRAPHS

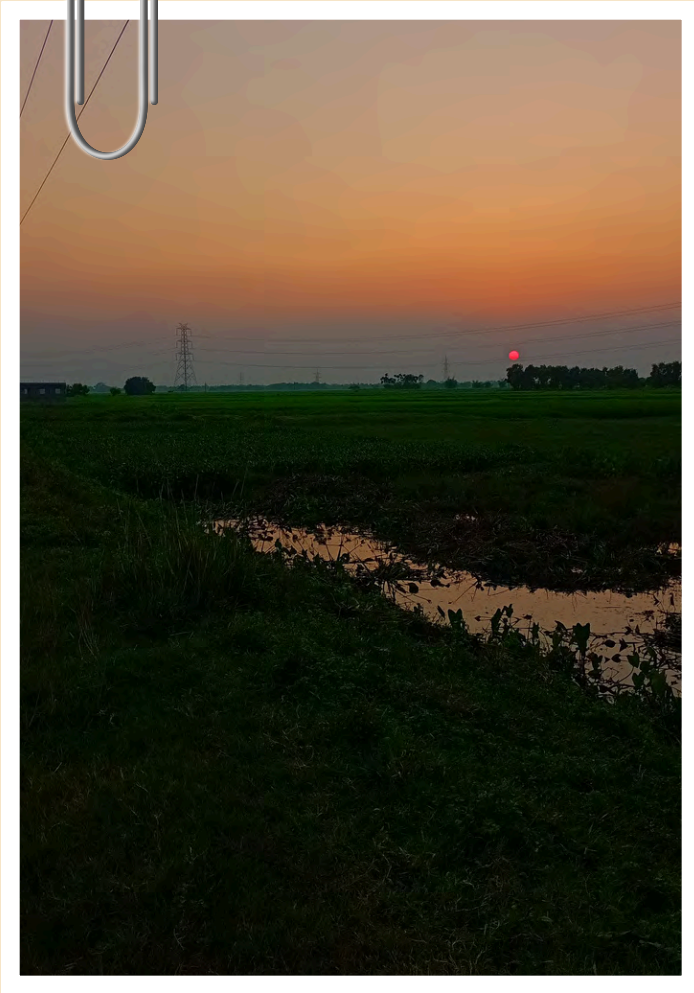




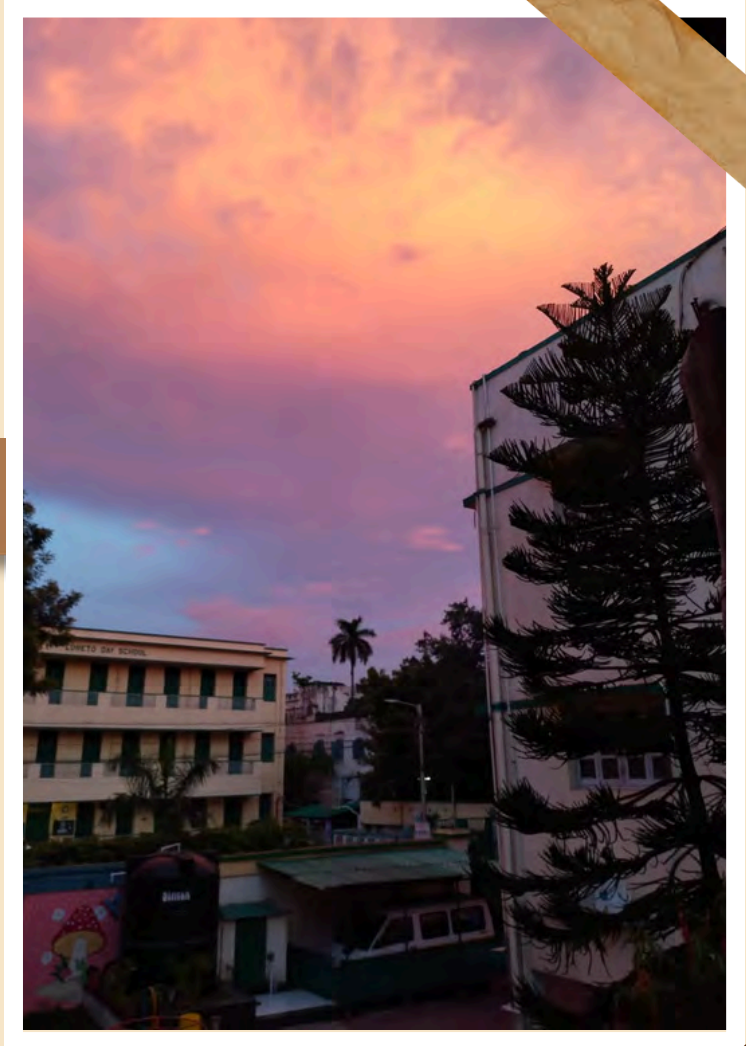
Huma Parveen



Zinat Ali



Shahreen Afreen



Alfia Ahmed



Alisha Mushtaque

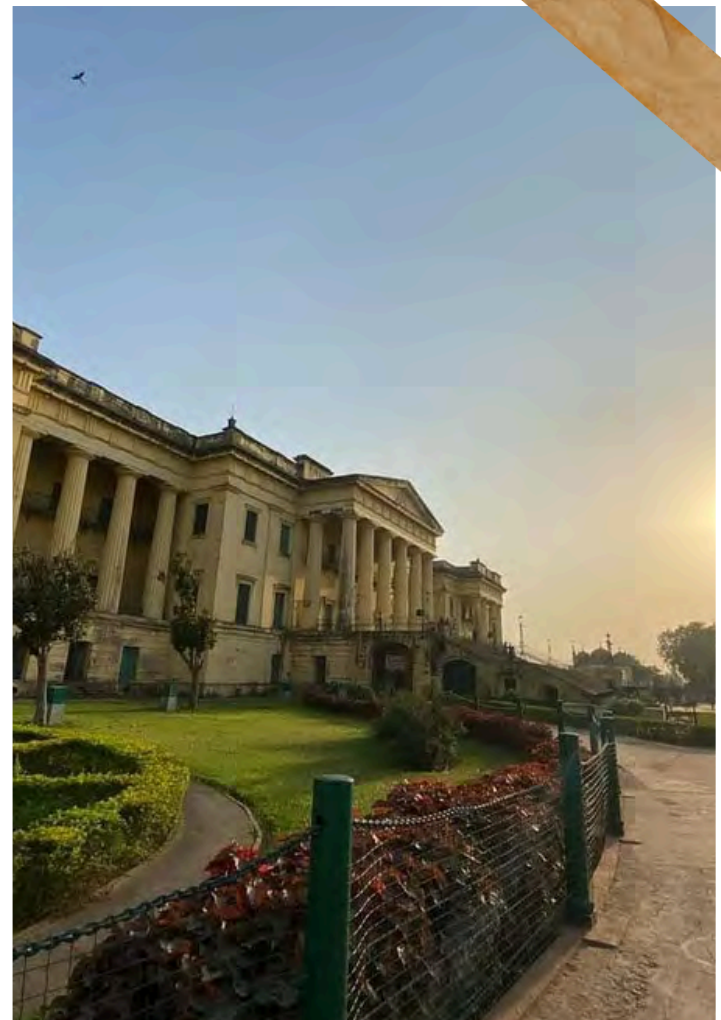
Masheera Rashed





Ayesha Farooque

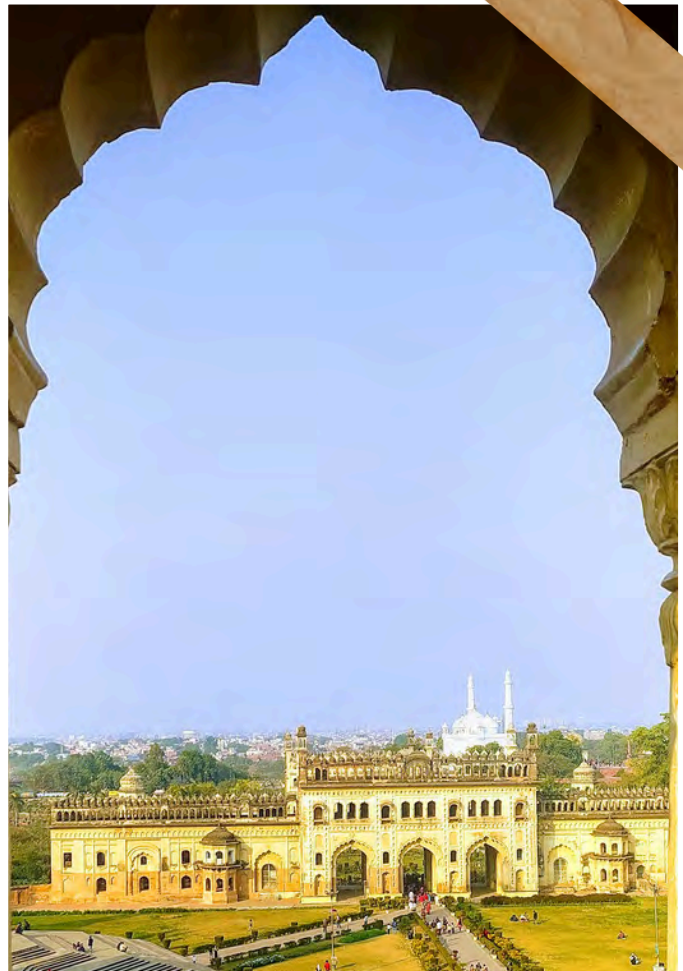
Zinat Ali





**Ayesha Farooque**

**Masheera Rashed**





**Shahreen Afreen**

**Ayesha Farooque**



# The End

