

TUNNEL41: The HIMALAYAN RESCUE A COMIC BOOK BASED ON TRUE EVENT

A PROJECT REPORT

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE

OF

MASTER OF DESIGN

IN

VISUAL COMMUNICATION

Submitted by

**AMULYA AGARWAL
(2K23/MDVC/02)**

Under the supervision of

PROF. NEERAJ RATHEE



**DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN
DELHI TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
(Formerly Delhi College of Engineering)
Bawana Road, Delhi-110042
MAY,2025**

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CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I, **Amulya Agarwal**, Roll No. **2K23/MDVC/02**, student of **M.Des (Visual Communication)**, hereby declare that the project dissertation titled **“TUNNEL41: THE HIMALAYAN RESCUE A COMIC BOOK BASED ON A TRUE EVENT”**, which is submitted by me to the Department of Design, Delhi Technological University, Delhi in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Design, is original and not copied from any source without proper citation. This work has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship, or other similar title or recognition.

Place: Rohini, New Delhi

(Amulya Agarwal)

Date: January 2025 (For a Period of 6 Months)

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the Project Dissertation titled **“TUNNEL41: THE HIMALAYAN RESCUE A COMIC BOOK BASED ON A TRUE EVENT”**, which is submitted by **Amulya Agarwal**, Roll No. **2K23/MDVC/02**, Department of Design, Delhi Technological University, Delhi, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Design, is a record of the project work carried out by the student under my supervision. To the best of my knowledge, this work has not been submitted in part or full for any Degree or Diploma to this University or elsewhere.

Place: New Delhi

(PROF. NEERAJ RATHEE)

Date:

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ABSTRACT

This thesis documents the creation of “Tunnel 41: The Himalayan Rescue,” a comic book that visually narrates the dramatic 17-day rescue of 41 workers trapped in the Silkyara–Barkot tunnel in Uttarakhand in November 2023. Inspired by real events and extensive research, the project blends engaging illustrations with factual storytelling to highlight the courage, teamwork, and resilience of those involved. Employing the Ligne Claire art style, earthy color palettes, and accessible layouts, the comic aims to make a complex disaster event relatable and educational for diverse audiences, while celebrating unsung heroes and advancing the role of comics in visual communication design.

Table of Content

CANDIDATE’S DECLARATION	I
CERTIFICATE	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	IV
ABSTRACT	V
CHAPTER 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Genesis	1
1.2 Project Brief	2
1.3 Objective	2
CHAPTER 2: Who should read this and why?	3
CHAPTER 3: Literature Review	3
3.1 Visual Storytelling and Sequential Art	3
3.2 Comics for Communicating Real-Life Events	3
3.3 Design theories and principles in comics	6
CHAPTER 4: Methodology	7
CHAPTER 5: Research	8
5.1 Context	8
5.2 Timeline (Major Events)	9
5.3 Plot Type	9
5.4 Script	11
CHAPTER 6: Design Process and Execution	38
6.1 Visual Language	38
6.1.1 Lines/Strokes	38
6.1.2 Medium	40
6.1.3 Color Pallet	41
6.1.4 Rendering	41
6.2 Character Exploration	43
6.3 Character Design	44
6.4 Dialogue Visual Language	47
6.4.1 Dialogue Box	47
6.4.2 Text Font	49
6.5 Page Layout	50
6.6 Process	51
CHAPTER 7: Conclusion	52
CHAPTER 8: Future Scope	52
REFERENCES	

Table of Figures

Figure 1 The Photographer: Into War-torn Afghanistan with Doctors Without Borders ..	4
Figure 2 September 11, 2001: The Day the World Changed Forever (2021)	5
Figure 3 Without Warning! Wildfire Safety (2021) by Dark Horse Comics	5
Figure 4 “Wo 17 Din” book release by CM Dhami	8
Figure 5 Major event timeline at Silkyara-Barkot tunnel collapse rescue mission	9
Figure 6 Inspiration Board for line/Strokes	39
Figure 7 Sketches used in Comic Book	39
Figure 8 Inspiration board for Medium	40
Figure 9 Illustrations used in Comic Book	40
Figure 10 Color Pallet used in Comic Book	41
Figure 11 Panels and background from comic book	41
Figure 12 Inspiration board for rendering	42
Figure 13 Illustration from comic book	42
Figure 14 Inspiration board for character design	43
Figure 15 Some Character Sketches for exploration	43
Figure 16 Aditya’s Character Sketch	44
Figure 17 Lallan’s Character Sketch	45
Figure 18 Sunil and Randeep’s Character Sketch	45
Figure 19 Official’s Character Sketch	46
Figure 20 Other Character’s Sketches	46
Figure 21 Other Character’s Sketches	46
Figure 22 Dialogue Box Inspiration Board	48
Figure 23 Dialogue Box used in Comic Book	48
Figure 24 Comic Sans MS Font Sheet	49
Figure 25 Type of Page Layouts	50
Figure 26 Process of Making a Comic Page	51

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1 Genesis

The genesis of this thesis lies in a deep desire to harness the power of visual storytelling to document and honor real-life acts of courage and resilience. As a visual communication designer, I have always been fascinated by the ability of comics to transform complex, emotionally charged events into accessible and impactful narratives. The Silkyara–Barkot tunnel collapse in Uttarakhand, which trapped 41 workers for 17 days, stood out as a powerful story of collective human effort, innovation, and hope. Witnessing the extensive media coverage and the emotional responses from families and rescuers, I recognized a unique opportunity to reinterpret this event through the medium of a comic book.

This project was conceived not only to narrate the chronological events of the rescue but to bring forward the untold stories of the unsung heroes—the workers, engineers, local authorities, and “rat-hole” miners—whose determination and collaboration led to a miraculous outcome. Readers witness the ordeal through the eyes of workers’ families, rescue teams, and officials, as escalating technical and emotional challenges are met with innovation, teamwork, and unwavering hope. The choice of this event was also driven by a personal commitment to bridge the gap between factual reporting and empathetic engagement, making the story relatable for diverse audiences, including students, visual learners, and the general public.

By blending research, creative scripting, and thoughtful illustration, this thesis aims to demonstrate how visual communication can both educate and inspire, preserving the memory of extraordinary real-life heroism while advancing the role of comics in contemporary design practice.

1.2 Project Brief

This project aims to create a comic book that brings to life real stories of heroism, focusing on unsung individuals to inspire and inform readers in an engaging way. For this project, I have chosen the dramatic rescue mission of 41 workers trapped for 17 days in the Silkyara–Barkot tunnel in Uttarakhand. The book will visually narrate the sequence of events, highlight the collaborative efforts of various agencies, and showcase the courage and resilience of those involved in the rescue. Through compelling illustrations, the project seeks to promote motivation and awareness of extraordinary real-life acts of bravery.

1.3 Objective

The objective of this project is to synthesize and apply the expertise in visual communication design into creating a visually engaging and impactful comic book that adapts a serious real-life event into accessible and enjoyable content. The aim is to balance entertainment with sensitivity and respect, making the story relatable and memorable for a broad audience. Additionally, it seeks to further develop my storytelling and illustration skills, push my creative boundaries, and contribute meaningfully to the field of visual communication.

CHAPTER 2: Who should read this and why?

This comic book can be enjoyed and utilized by a diverse audience for various reasons. Comic book enthusiasts will appreciate its engaging storytelling and visual style, while students can use it to learn about disaster response and crisis management. It also serves as valuable case study or training material for educational and professional settings. Journalists may reference it for event details or narrative techniques, and those interested in real-life heroism and survival stories will find its content compelling. Illustration lovers and visual learners, especially those who prefer data visualization, will benefit from its rich graphics and design elements. Overall, the comic book appeals to anyone interested in a visually immersive account of a significant real-life event.

CHAPTER 3: Literature Review

3.1 Visual Storytelling and Sequential Art

Visual storytelling in comics combines images and text in juxtaposed panels to create narrative flow. According to McCloud and Eisner's theories, comics engage readers through "closure" – the process where readers mentally fill gaps between frames. This makes comics particularly effective for conveying complex narratives. Research emphasizes that sequentiality is the defining feature of comics, allowing even wordless panels to convey coherent stories through visual progression. The combination of text and imagery creates a unique medium that enhances emotional connections while tackling intricate subjects.

3.2 Comics for Communicating Real-Life Events

Comics excel at translating complex real-world events into accessible narratives. Studies show comics enhance knowledge retention through visual cues and emotional engagement across diverse demographics. For example, comics

delivering COVID-19 information to adolescents significantly improved knowledge accuracy compared to traditional formats.


Several contemporary works exemplify the effectiveness of comics in this context. *The Photographer: Into War-torn Afghanistan with Doctors Without Borders* (2009) blends Didier Lefèvre's stark black-and-white photographs with Emmanuel Guibert's illustrations, immersing readers in the humanitarian challenges and emotional realities of the Afghan-Soviet conflict. This hybrid approach not only documents real events but also provides emotional depth, allowing readers to empathize with the individuals involved.



Figure 1 *The Photographer: Into War-torn Afghanistan with Doctors Without Borders*

September 11, 2001: The Day the World Changed Forever (2021) further demonstrates the medium's capacity to document historical tragedy through multiple perspectives. By combining documentary-style reporting with personal narratives, the comic balances emotional impact with factual context, making the complexities of the event and its aftermath accessible to a broad audience.

September 11, 2001: The Day the World Changed Forever (2021)



Type

Status

Date of release

Categories

Tags

Views

Rating

Other Comics

Complete

2021

Europe Comics

Europe Comics

14505

★★★★★
Average 5/5 out of 1 total votes.


Summary

What do younger generations know about the terrible tragedy that shook America and the world on September 11, 2001? In this gripping documentary work by journalist Baptiste Bouthier and illustrator Heloise Chochois, we first learn about the historic day from several inside perspectives. In the second half, the authors take stock of 9/11 in the days, weeks, and years that followed, from traumatized America to George W. Bush's crusade against the "axis of evil." A not-be-missed piece of graphic non-fiction, published 20 years after the events in question.

Figure 2 September 11, 2001: The Day the World Changed Forever (2021)

Without Warning! Wildfire Safety (2021) by Dark Horse Comics uses relatable characters and real-life scenarios to teach practical disaster preparedness. By placing readers in the protagonists' shoes, the comic fosters personal connection and makes safety lessons memorable and actionable, especially for young audiences who may not engage with traditional resources.

Without Warning! Wildfire Safety (2021)



Type

Status

Date of release

Categories

Tags

Views

Rating

Other Comics

Complete

2021

Dark Horse

Dark Horse Without Warning

8662

★★★★★
Average 0/5 out of 0 total votes.

Summary

It's everyone's responsibility to help prevent wildfires. You can do many things to keep the wilderness green and safe. The first step is being aware. Learn how and where wildfires start and how to reduce your risk in this action-packed comic!

Figure 3 Without Warning! Wildfire Safety (2021) by Dark Horse Comics

Overall, comics' ability to merge storytelling, visual cues, and emotional resonance makes them an effective tool for communicating real-life events and complex information in a way that is both memorable and impactful.

3.3 Design theories and principles in comics

Comics that communicate real-life events or complex information rely on a blend of established design theories and principles to maximize clarity, engagement, and emotional impact. Scott McCloud's framework highlights five core choices in comic creation: moment, frame, image, word, and flow, which together shape the reader's experience and narrative pacing. Visual storytelling techniques—such as perspective, facial expressions, and pacing—are crucial for conveying emotion, guiding attention, and establishing spatial awareness within each scene.

Fundamental design principles—balance, emphasis, movement, pattern, repetition, proportion, and rhythm—are applied to organize visual elements and direct the reader's gaze through the page⁵. For example, movement can be depicted through speed lines, dynamic panel layouts, or strategic use of color and shapes, ensuring the story's action feels fluid and compelling. Consistent color schemes, lighting, and mood help reinforce the narrative tone and maintain visual coherence throughout the comic.

Character development is also integral, involving the visual depiction of physical traits, personality, and relationships, which supports both narrative depth and reader empathy. Panel composition, the use of speech and thought balloons, and the integration of graphical elements like symbols and patterns further enhance storytelling, making complex information accessible and memorable.

CHAPTER 4: Methodology

I began my project by selecting a topic for the comic book. To do this, I researched various stories of local heroism from the past two to three years, focusing on those with enough depth and detail to be adapted into a substantial comic book. After choosing a story with sufficient length and information, I delved deeply into the event, gathering as much data and reference points as possible. Once I had ample material, I connected key events, streamlined the narrative for clarity, and then began scripting. While developing the characters and story, I also worked on establishing a timeline and plot structure that would keep readers engaged.

After completing the script, I shifted to the visual aspect, analyzing different comic books across genres to determine suitable panel layouts and dialogue box styles for my story. I then finalized my art style, medium, color palette, and rendering technique. With these decisions made, I started designing the comic book pages, carefully deciding how much story to include per page. I created rough sketches in each panel to visualize the layout with dialogues, then colored them according to the scene and environment. Once I had 4–5 completed pages, I printed them as samples to ensure the printed version matched the digital feel. Satisfied with the results, I proceeded to illustrate and print the entire comic book.

CHAPTER 5: Research

5.1 Context

To script the story, I conducted extensive secondary research, reviewing numerous news articles, video coverage, and a case study by Dr. Priyanka Tyagi from the disaster management cell. A pivotal resource was the book "Wo 17 Din" by journalist Rajeev Ranjan Singh, which provided a detailed, chronological account of the events and helped me develop a more emotionally engaging narrative by introducing characters and personal stories. To enhance the reader's experience, I incorporated additional visual elements, some self-created, others sourced from various references—ensuring the comic was both informative and immersive. This approach enabled me to blend factual accuracy with compelling storytelling, making the complex rescue operation accessible and relatable.



Figure 4 “Wo 17 Din” book release by CM Dhami

5.2 Timeline (Major Events)

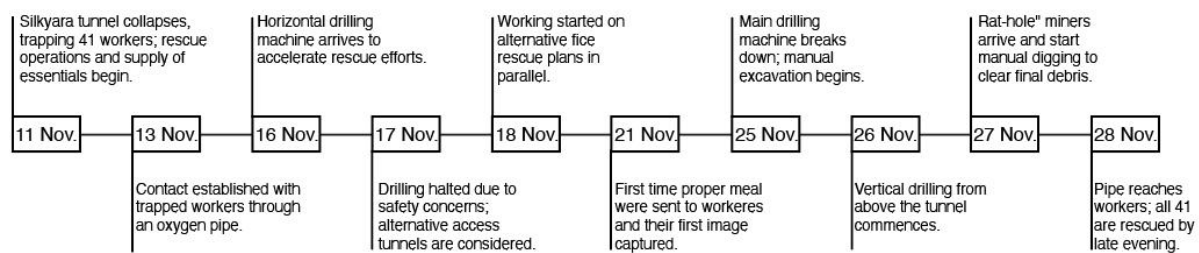


Figure 5 Major event timeline at Silkyara-Barkot tunnel collapse rescue mission

5.3 Plot Type

Comic books based on real-life events utilize a variety of plot types to effectively tell true stories, educate, and inspire readers. These plot structures help transform factual accounts into engaging narratives, making complex or emotional events accessible and memorable.

Common Plot Types in Real-Life Event Comics:

- **Memoir/Biography:** These comics follow the personal journey of an individual, often the creator or a historical figure, offering an intimate perspective on real events. Examples include *March* by John Lewis and *The Photographer* by Didier Lefèvre.
- **Historical Chronicle:** The narrative unfolds as a chronological retelling of significant events, sometimes through multiple viewpoints. This approach is seen in works like *September 11, 2001: The Day the World Changed Forever*, which documents the tragedy from various perspectives.
- **Quest or Mission:** The protagonist or group undertakes a challenging journey or mission, facing obstacles and learning along the way. This is common in stories about rescue operations, humanitarian missions, or survival, such as *The Photographer* or disaster-themed comics.
- **Overcoming the Monster:** The narrative centers on confronting and overcoming a major threat, whether it's a disaster, social injustice, or personal adversity. This plot type is evident in comics about fighting disease,

surviving natural disasters (*Without Warning! Wildfire Safety*), or standing up to oppression.

- Voyage and Return: The protagonist enters an unfamiliar situation (war zone, disaster, crisis), faces challenges, and returns transformed by the experience. This structure is often used in war reporting or survival stories.
- Collective/Community Response: The story focuses on a group's response to a crisis, emphasizing teamwork, solidarity, and resilience—common in disaster management or rescue operation comics.
- Tragedy and Recovery: The comic explores loss, trauma, and the journey toward healing or rebuilding, often blending personal and collective experiences, as seen in works about historical tragedies.
- These plot types can be combined or adapted, allowing creators to balance factual reporting with emotional storytelling, making real-life events compelling and relatable for readers.

The Tunnel41 script perfectly embodies the Quest plot archetype, chronicling the harrowing 18-day mission to rescue 41 workers trapped after a Himalayan tunnel collapse. The narrative establishes a clear, urgent goal—saving the trapped workers—while presenting escalating challenges that test both rescuers and victims.

Following classic Quest structure, the story develops through distinct stages: the initial crisis when the tunnel collapses; the assembly of a rescue team including specialists, government officials, and international experts; and multiple setbacks that heighten tension. The narrative brilliantly showcases both physical obstacles (machinery failures, geological challenges, debris falls) and emotional journeys of various family members.

The Quest elements are particularly evident in how multiple rescue strategies unfold simultaneously: horizontal drilling, vertical approaches, and ultimately manual "rat-hole" mining—mirroring how quest protagonists must adapt tactics when facing insurmountable barriers. The script balances technical rescue

operations with human elements, showing how communities rally together, incorporating both modern engineering and traditional spiritual practices.

The triumphant rescue conclusion delivers the emotional payoff characteristic of successful Quest narratives, where perseverance and collaborative effort overcome seemingly impossible odds, affirming the power of human determination against nature's formidable forces.

5.4 Script

Page 1:

[Aditya and his brother working in a night shift on 11th November 2023. They still have 2 hrs. left in their shift to end. Aditya, one of the three brothers, told his brothers that he was going out to the washroom.]

Aditya: "I am going for a break."

Brother 1: "Okay, don't take a long break. Lots of work is still pending."

Brother 2: "Okay, fine."

Page 2:

[Aditya walks towards the bathroom.]

[While Aditya was in bathroom, he heard a siren and immediately recognized it.]

[He rushed outside to investigate the situation. But only to find everyone running towards the tunnel. He tries to stop running workers to enquire but everyone seems to be in hurry. Finally, one worker stopped upon his request. He couldn't understand what was happening. He stopped one worker asked him.]

Aditya: "Are bhai what happened? Why is everyone running?"

Some worker *[in hurry]*: "A piece of tunnel just collapsed and blocked the exit."

Page 3:

Aditya *[shocked]*: "Aree bhai, wait."

[worker was leaving and suddenly Aditya holds his hand in desperation]

Aditya: "Can you please tell me everything? My brothers are inside!"

Some worker: "I already told you everything that I know."

Some worker *[said while pointing towards the thekedar]*: "Talk to Thekedar Sahab, he is over there."

[After hearing this Aditya was devastated, for a second darkness clouded his eyes, his feet got numbed as he could not contemplate the information he just heard]

[A person standing in white pants and shirt. Aditya ran towards thekedar.]

Aditya: "Thekedar Sahab, what happened indie? My brothers are in there. Are they okay? everyone is saying that tunnel has collapsed."

Thekedar: "Areee, no need to worry. These kinds of small debris happens in the tunnel all the time. Due to water seepage sometimes, rocks get loose and fall. No need to worry."

[Aditya was not satisfied with the answer he got as by thekedar. From his face it's clear that he is not okay.]

*[Meanwhile Aditya's phone starts ringing in the background.
Ring!!!Ring!!!Ring!!!Ring!!!Ring!!!]*

Page 4:

[Aditya sees his phone and found that his mother is calling. He got emotion knowing he had to face his mother's question. he picked her call.]

Aditya: "Ram Ram Maa."

Maa: "Ram Ram bete. Did you catch the train?"

Aditya: "Haan Maa, Haan, I will tell you. I had to go, had some work to do. I will call you in sometime."

Maa: "Beta, what happened is everything alright?"

Aditya: "Haan Maa, everything is fine. I will call you back."

Maa: "Did you all catch the train or not? Tell me. Why is there so much noise?"

Aditya: "I am on the site maa. I will call back sometime." *[And he puts his phone down.]*

[Within 2 minutes his phone rang again. With out seeing his phone he picks it up and in disappoint he says]

Aditya: "Han maa, i am still at the site."

Aditya's Baba: "Beta, it's me baba."

Page 5:

Baba: "Are you still on the site? How will you all reach home on time? Everyone is waiting for all of you! All the children are excited. Its Diwali! 1doyou remember?"

Aditya: “Baba, give me some time to get back to you. There is osme issue at the site and i have to get back.”

Baba: “What’s the trouble beta? Is everything all right? Did you not get paid? “

Aditya: "Nahi baba, it's not that."

Baba: "Then what happened?"

Aditya: "Baba, just wait for my call."

Page 6:

[On the inauguration day of the project.

*Mr. Nitin Gatgari (Minister of Road Transport and Highways of India)
addressing media on the importance of this project]*

Nitin Gatgari: "Good morning, everyone. Thank you all for joining here today.

The Char Dham all-weather road project is a significant infrastructure initiative by the Central Government of India, aimed at improving connectivity to the Char Dham pilgrimage sites in the state of Uttarakhand. These pilgrimage sites include Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath. The tunnel will additionally serve the local community by addressing the issue of disconnection during snowfall at Radi top, especially for Barkot. Acting as an all-weather road, it will offer a reliable and comfortable transportation route for the residents.

The Silkyara-Barkot tunnel, a marvel of engineering cutting through the heart of the Himalayas, this 4.5-kilometer passage promised to shrink the arduous journey to the sacred Char Dham pilgrimage sites, bringing devotees closer to their spiritual aspirations.“

Page 7:

[Sometime in afternoon]

[Aditya heard some cars coming and some noises near the barricades. Those were put in place to keep the angry crowd away. As he ran towards the noise, he found several media crew waiting to interview the site officials.]

Site officer: "Namaste Bahiyo! I am sorry to say this that our workers are trapped in the tunnel. Unfortunately, there is no way out other than the way where debris have fallen. We are still counting the number of workers stuck inside, and we have contacted the authorities for the rescue. There is no way we can contact them right now. We must wait for the rescue team to come and assess the situation. Given the condition of the debris, it's risky to dig on our own."

Page 8:

[Worker's residence area]

[Aditya goes to his cabine after getting tired and disappointed. There he found lallan already in the room preparing tea. Aditya enters the room.]

Lallan: "Ram Ram Bhaiya. I am Lallan."

Aditya: "Ram Ram Bhai, i am Aditya."

Lallan: "Bhaiya, I have seen you before. Where are you from?"

Aditya: "I am from Jharkhand."

Lallan: "Aree Bhaiya, Me Too!!! On this note let's have a tea, I have extra."

Aditya: "Yes, I can really use some tea right now."

Lallan: "You also work here na bhaiya? I have seen you inside tunnel but never got chance to talk with you."

Aditya: "Han bhai, I work here."

Lallan: "Someone you know also trapped inside bhaiya?"

Aditya: "Han, my two brothers are inside. I came out to freshen up just before the collapse."

Lallan: "Are bhaiya me too. I was also working in the tunnel yesterday. I came outside for a brake and while having a beedi tunnel collapsed. Many of my friends are trapped inside now."

Aditya: "Lucky us, han. don't know whAt they are going through in there no one is giving proper information also."

Lallan: "Don't worry bhaiya, everyone is pretty shaken up by the incident."

Lallan: "Give some time everything will clear out."

Aditya: "Let's see."

[Later that day]

[Two gentle men arrived on Lallan and Aditya's doorstep looking for answers. As soon as they entered the room Lallan asked]

Lallan: "Han bhaiya, Who are you and why are you here?"

Ramdeep: "Bhai, I am Ramdeep and he is Sunil, we are from Bihar and work in Delhi. my friend's brother works here and when we saw the news about the accident we came here for enquiry."

Aditya: "What's his name?"

Ramdeep: "Virendar."

Aditya: "Han, Virendar. I saw him during the shift."

Sunil: "Where is he now?"

Aditya: "Don't ask where he is, more important question right now is how is he. Total 41 workers are trapped inside the tunnel including my two brothers. Your friend is also with him."

Sunil: "Now what then?"

Lallan: "Don't worry!! rescue operation has been started for their safe rescue."

Aditya: "What rescue mission? They all are still surveying. It's been 36 hr since the tunnel collapsed. They are doing nothing."

Lallan: "Why are you saying this bhaiya? They are doing their best."

[In the meantime, thekedar came looking for lallan]

Page 9:

Ramdeep: "Lallan bhai some one is calling you outside."

Lallan: "Seems like contractor i told him to do some juggad for our food."

Ramdeep: "Let's ask him, he must know something."

Aditya: "He knows nothing."

Thekedar: "Lallan take A tiffin and come with me there is some food for rescue team, take some for yourself also."

Lallan: "Ji Sahab."

Aditya: "Contractor Sahab, any news about my brothers or anything."

Thekedar: "I heard that Rescue team will take someone named Akash inside the tunnel to talk with the trapped workers through walkie talkie. Signals are strong only near debrie. Only then they can know about the inner conditions."

Sunil: "What about their rescue? My friend's brother is trapped inside. His family is very scared for him. His wife is about to give birth, and they need money for the hospital."

Thekedar: "Only rescue team can answer that. There is a lot of debrie inside the tunnel and caused a blockage of 60 meters. Removing the debrie is the only way out for them. Some Retired Corneal is looking after the whole operation. He is head of some company sent by PM himself."

Lallan: "Sahab i saw it on phone the companies name is NHIDL and they are calling this rescue "Operation Zindagi"."

Thekedar: "Acha, what else you have heard from your phone, you spent lot of time with it, Lallan."

Lallan: "Colonel was telling that for rescue mission all the necessary machines are arriving on the site. Many teams are put on the job to rescue the trapped workers."

Page 10:

[Press Conference Room (New Delhi)

Gen (ret'd) Syed Ata Hasnain [Member of NDMA, overseeing the rescue mission] and CM Pushkar Singh Dhami CM of Uttarakhand addressing media.]

CM Dhami: "Today we have called this conference to inform you all that yesterday at approximately 0530 hours, a portion of the Silkyara tunnel under construction in Uttarakhand collapsed, trapping several workers inside."

Reporter 1: “Sir, can you tell us exactly how many workers are trapped and what their current conditions is?”

CM Dhami: “According to the contractor's register, approximately 41 workers are trapped 260–265 meters inside the tunnel. The collapse occurred between 205–260 meters from the Silkyara portal. I want to emphasize that we have established communication via walkie-talkies and confirmed they're currently safe. Our priority is maintaining this communication link while we work on their extraction.”

Reporter-2: “Sir, what immediate steps have been taken since yesterday morning, and what is the current rescue plan?”

CM Dhami: “First, we immediately alerted all relevant state and central agencies. Luckily a 6 mm pipe is intact under the debris and we are using that pipeline to supply fresh air, water, and small packed food. A coordinated response involving state administration, SDRF, NDRF, MoRTH, NHIDCL, NHAI, and BRO is underway. With each agency contributes specialized capabilities. Our priority is to insert another pipe for proper food supply and maintain connection with workers inside. Secondly, we came up with a plan to drill through debris using Auger machine and insert 900mm pipe through which trapped workers can come outside.”

Page 11:

Reporter 3: “Is there any information about what caused the collapse? Were there any warning signs?”

Syed Ata Hasnain: “It's premature to speculate on causes. Our focus is on rescue operations. A thorough investigation will follow once workers are evacuated. Standard safety protocols were in place, but tunneling through mountains can present unpredictable geological challenges.”

Reporter 4: “How long will the rescue take, and what are the major challenges?”

Syed Ata Hasnain: “I cannot provide a specific timeline for this complex operation. Our primary challenges are preventing further collapse and navigating the logistical difficulties of reaching workers 260+ meters inside. Multiple rescue approaches are being pursued simultaneously by top engineering and rescue specialists.”

Reporter 5: “Can you elaborate on the condition of the workers?”

Syed Ata Hasnain: “Workers are maintaining calm despite the circumstances. We're ensuring continuous supplies of fresh air, water, and food through available pipes. Medical professionals are advising on nutritional and psychological support. Workers know the entire nation is focused on their rescue, which helps maintain morale.”

Reporter 6: “Are you also taking any help from international experts or specialized equipment being brought in?”

Syed Ata Hasnain: “We're currently using domestic and international expertise and equipment. We've consulted with tunnel rescue specialists Dr. Arnold Dix and Dr. Chris Cooper and will bring them here for more detailed strategy discussion. Specialized drilling equipments are also being at standby from across the country if required. Rest, India has significant tunnel construction and rescue experience, which we're fully applying.”

Page 12:

[12th November 2023;

Scene: Near the tunnel entrance, police have done barricades. A skinny child named Akash came running towards a police officer looking all disoriented and scared.]

Akash: "Sir, please... I need to go inside. My father is there somewhere. He's an elderly man. I came from Kotdwar and haven't slept properly for days just thinking about him. "

Officer: "I understand your concern, beta but we cannot allow. The rescue operation is ongoing."

Akash: "Please, I'm begging you. I don't even know if he's even alive. He's all I have. Just a few minutes that's all I ask."

Officer: "What's your father's name?"

Akash: "Goverdhan Negi, sir. He's been working on tunneling projects for twenty years. This was supposed to be his last project before retirement."

Officer: "Sorry bete, told you we cannot allow anyone in there as soon as we know something, you can check on information desk."

[A senior officer standing at a distance listening to their conversation came and joined them.]

Senior Officer: "What's happening here?"

Officer: "Sir, this is Akash. His father is one of the trapped worker. He's been camping outside since the collapse and keeps insisting to talk with him."

Senior Officer: "What have you done to yourself. Have you been eating properly, son?"

Page 14:

Akash: I can't eat knowing he might be hungry in there. Sir, please... even if I could just speak to him for a minute, just to hear his voice once.

Senior Officer: Lucky for you the engineers have established a communication pipe. We're making an exception in your case because of your father's age and your condition. But you'll need to follow every instruction and wear safety gear.

Akash: Thank you, sir! Thank you so much! I promise I'll follow every rule.

Senior Officer: Just prepare yourself. The conditions aren't ideal, and communication is difficult. You'll need to speak through an oxygen pipe, so you might not hear him clearly.

[This was the first time any worker talked to their relative. This increased their confidence and provided them moral support that their loved ones are out there and eagerly waiting to meet them.]

Page 15:

[Worker's residence area]

[Lallan comes running to his cabin.]

Lallan: “Adi bhaiya!! Adi bhaiya!!!”

Sunil: “Aree Lallan! What happened? Why are you in so much hurry?”

Lallan: “Sunil bhai, is Adi bhaiya here? Send him quickly! Two of the labourers have fallen sick in the tunnel!”

Sunil: “Sunil bhai, is Adi bhaiya here? Send him quickly! Two of the laborers have fallen sick in the tunnel!”

Lallan: “They said that one of them is vomiting and feeling dizzy... The other one has a severe headache. They have sent word through the walkie-talkie. The rescue team is trying to send some medicine.”

Sunil: “It’s been three days that they have been trapped in there... God knows what they must be going through. Has anyone informed their families?”

Lallan: “I don't know, bhai. The officials are keeping everything tight-lipped. That's why I came running to find Aditya. He knows how to make them talk.”

[As they approach the information desk, they see Aditya was already there and talking to an officer. Lallan and Sunil joins him.]

Aditya: “What do you mean "a little unwell"? Be specific! What exactly is their condition? What are their names?”

Rescue Officer: “Hey bhai, you ask too many questions. I'm not making anything up! Two labourers have become somewhat ill. We've sent medicines through the compressor. We're in constant touch. They will be fine.”

Page 16:

Sunil: “Aditya! What are they saying? How serious is it?”

Aditya to Sunil: “They won't give straight answers!”

Aditya to Rescue Officer: “Why shouldn’t I question you? Our brother has been trapped in that tunnel for the last 72 hrs! I’ve heard that the debris is still falling inside... Many workers have been injured. You are hiding the full story. At least let us talk to them ourselves.”

Rescue Officer: “I don't know where you people got your information from! You believe whatever rumors you hear...No worker is injured. We're sitting here specifically to provide real information, and you don't trust us?”

[Slowly crowd also gathered after learning about the ill workers in the tunnel.]

Someone from the crowd: “If you don't give us information, we will go to someone else na !!! We have a right to know!”

Rescue Officer [*looking that the crowd is increasing, he became nervous and lowered his tone to a defensive one*]: “Listen, brothers... listen. Let me explain. Drilling started last night, but after three meters, the machine stopped due to a fault. Since then, engineers are working on it, and the state government has called in for some backup to oversee the rescue operation. Earlier it was believed that rescue mission would be completed by 15th, but due to auger machine fault and a Continuous landslide, we had to wait a little longer.”

Aditya: “Landslide? What landslide? This is the first time we are hearing of this!

Rescue officer: “The platform built for the auger machine was damaged because of the continuous debris falling on it and due to this setback, the team has requested a more powerful american auger as a replacement. Another machine has been ordered from New Delhi.

Page 17:

[While listening to the rescue officer the crowd was getting impatient and started shouting and protesting.]

Someone from crowd-1: “How many more days will our brothers suffer in there?”

Someone from crowd-2: “They keep hiding information! They give us hope and then tell us about new problems! We want action!!!”

Someone from crowd-3: “This is not acceptable! Three days already, and now you're saying the machine is broken?”

Someone from crowd-4: "It's noon already. How much longer do we wait for real action? "

Someone from crowd-5: "We want action!!!"

Someone from crowd-6: "No more excuses!!!"

Someone from crowd-7: "We want action!!!"

Someone from crowd-8: "No more delays!!!"

Someone from crowd-9: "We want answers!!!"

[The workers' protest grows louder.]

[The workers' protest grows louder. The news of their uproar had also started coming in the media. The atmosphere outside the tunnel had become quite serious. From the rescue officer to the government officials, engineers and security personnel, everyone seemed to be scared. The police present outside the tunnel tried everything possible to silence them, but the workers gathered outside were not ready to listen.]

[Continuing well into the afternoon as officials scramble to address their concerns and provide updates on the rescue operation. They became quiet after the officials of the National Highway and Infrastructure Development Corp. (NHIDCL) which was implementing the project explained with great difficulty.]

Official from (NHIDCL): "Don't worry people, I understand that you all are very furious and unhappy with the slow progress and now the setback, but I have great news. The Air Force is going to bring American auger drilling machines from New Delhi and soon we will be able to start drilling again at much faster pace and able to get our worker brothers back safely. All I request from everyone here is to be calm and patient."

[New machines were to be airlifted by plane and transported in three batches to Chinyalisaur airstrip in Uttarkashi. This American Auger machine is much more powerful and had high capacity which can help in speed up the rescue mission.]

Page 18:

[Auger machines equipped with new special facilities had arrived on November 15th, 2023. Its shape and size brought a ray of hope in the eyes of the workers staying at the site of the incident.]

[Dozens of workers gathered on November 16th to see it up close. The American auger started working in the tunnel from November 16th, 2023, afternoon. It kept working all night. The speed was slow, but its distant sound could be heard by the workers in night.]

Page 19:

Lallan: “Looks like the machine has started working. Our little protest sparked and speed up the things.”

Aditya: “It started working in the evening itself. It's the quietness of the night that we are able to hear the machine working in here.”

Lallan: “Hope our brothers are able to see light soon.”

Aditya: “Yeah hope so, for now sleep and let's hope that when we wake up tomorrow morning the machine is still working.”

[18th November, 2023

The machine and rescue team, worked throughout the night of 16th, they drilled about 24 meters in DEBRIS by noon of 17th November. Four pipes of six

meters each have been inserted before the machine was stopped at around 2:45 PM.]

[Machine encountered some Obstacle during drilling, so to do inspection machine was stopped. As soon as the relatives of the workers came to learn that the machine has stopped working, a wave of disappointment spread throughout.]

Lallan: “What will happen now, aditya bhai? When will they resume the work it’s 18th now and they haven’t done anything since yesterday noon.

Aditya: “You are right Lallan, it seems like work is completely stopped. lets go and see what’s happening there. Call Sunil also tell him to come near information desk.

[Aditya, Lallan and Sunil reached near the information desk and found that the thekedar was sitting there. Seeing a familiar face they rushed towards him, in the hope of getting some information.]

Sunil: “Looks that’s thekedar right?”

Aditya: “You are right! Lets see if he knows something.”

Lallan: “Are theedar sahab!!!!”

Thekedar: “Are lallan aditya come come.”

Page 20:

Aditya: “Manager sahab, what is happening? When will the work start?”

Thekedar: “Are bhai, why are you so angry? I am also here with all of you. All are equally worried about them. There has been a slight hindrance in the work, but the rescue officers have been doing everything they can.”

Aditya: “Will the big machine from Delhi won’t work?”

Thekedar: “Why won’t it work? Engineers are repairing the machine. And if it doesn’t work, a new machine has arrived from Indore.”

Lallan: “Sahab, we do not know all this... get our brother out from inside by any means... we are tired of answering the phone calls of family members.”

Thekedar: “Look till now the debris were being removed from the tunnel by drilling horizontally. But now they are exploring some other options too. I have heard that they are looking to drill vertically as well.”

Sunil: “So, will the drilling be stopped from the front side?”

Thekedar: “No, why will it be stopped? It’s the main plan and the rest of the actions are just backup plans.”

Lallan: “How much time will it take?”

Thekedar: “If everything goes well, it may take four to five days to reach the workers.”

Aditya: “What else are they planning to do?”

Thekedar: “They are also consulting with the foreign experts and planning to bring them here if needed for exploring more possibilities.”

Sunil: “Will there only be meetings? Or they will take some action also!”

Thekedar: “You are talking nonsense! How will the planning be done without meetings? You guys tell me?”

[On 18 November, the rescue operation entered its seventh day, but drilling could not be resumed. Experts believed that the vibrations caused by the American auger inside the tunnel could cause more debris to fall.

A high-level meeting on site was held which was attended by CM Dhami, Minister Nitin Gadkari and other organization's head in which five options for rescue were considered with expert advice of professor Dix from Australia.]

Neeraj Khairwal *[IAS Officer]*: “Thank you everyone for joining today, Without wasting anytime, let’s come to the point. After consulting with prof. Dix, we’ve come up with 5 strategies that may work in parallel with the main focus on our original plan for which we have assigned specific responsibilities to five different agencies. ONGC, Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam, Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd., NHIDCL, and Tehri Hydro Development Corp. Ltd.”

Neeraj Khairwal *[IAS Officer]*: “NHIDCL is currently engaged in laying another 6-inch pipeline dedicated for food delivery to the trapped workers. RVNL is working on an additional vertical pipeline for essential supplies. The Border Roads Organisation has been extremely efficient, completing an approach road in just one day to facilitate this work.”

CM Dhami: “What about the drilling operations?”

Neeraj Khairwal: “Based on Professor Dix's recommendations from his assessment, we plan to continue drilling from the NHIDCL Silkyara end once proper work safety arrangements are in place.”

Nitin Gatgari: “And what about approaching from the other end?”

Neeraj Khairwal: “Yes, THDC has initiated work on creating a micro tunnel from the Barkot end. The heavy machinery required for this has already been mobilized. Additionally, we've tasked SJVN with vertical drilling operations.”

CM Dhani: “What specific approaches has Professor Dix recommended?”

Page 22:

Neeraj Khairwal: “After examining the site and our data, PROF DIX HAS AGREED WITH VERTICAL DRILLING down to 100 feet into the tunnel from the mountain top as one of the plans. HE HAS ALSO SUGGESTED that, if necessary, we could implement traditional manual tunnel digging methods. Since his arrival, his experience and confident assessment have significantly boosted the morale of our rescue team.”

Nitin Gatgari: “Professor Dix, would you like to add anything about your assessment from the past two days?”

Arnold Dix: “Thank you everyone for welcoming me. Since arriving on site, I've been working closely with your teams to understand the unique challenges of this Himalayan tunnel collapse. The geological formations here are extremely unstable, I believe the vertical drilling approach gives us the best chance of success beside horizontal drilling which I think still should be our main focus as it is the fastest way to get trapped workers out while minimizing additional risks. I've been impressed by how quickly your agencies have adapted their approaches based on our collaborative planning sessions.”

[Map of Silkyara– Barkot tunnel area with several rescue plan carried out by respective companies on the locations marked.]

Page 23:

[It was 8 am on the eighth day of the rescue operation, i.e. 19th November 2023.

Six teams from the center and the state were to converge on all five options with the help of foreign experts. The work was to start as soon as possible on this day. To rescue the workers trapped in the tunnel, it was decided to drill

from the top of the mountain i.e. vertically and sideways. Four places were identified for vertical drilling. Scientists have done a survey for drilling from above. Drilling will be done in an area of about 103 meters width. There is a plan to drill from the side along with vertical drilling from the top of the tunnel.

While the Rescue team inspected the top of the mountain in order to find a suitable spot for vertical drilling, a group of villagers approached the rescue site.]

[They believe that Baba Basukinath the protector of this valley, got upset with the construction, resulting in the collapse of the tunnel. They wanted to establish a temple and make God happy so that the rescue mission could be completed at its earliest.]

Pujari: “Hello! Officer! Please listen to us! We are from nearby villages. We need to talk with the incharge of the mission, we have something important to say.”

Police Officer: “Yes? What is the matter?”

Local Lady: “This is Dev Bhoomi – Land of Gods! Chardham project is connecting holy places. but You cannot ignore mountain deities here. That is why we are here! Before you disturb the mountain, proper rituals must be done for good luck!”

Page 24:

[Seeing the crowd, area incharge nodal officer IAS Neeraj Khairwal rushed towards them and took control of the situation.]

Neeraj Khairwal: “We understand your sentiments but we are in the middle of an urgent rescue.”

Pujari: “No, you didn’t understand. These mountains have their own gods. They are disturbed, and proper respect was not given starting the construction. That’s why they are angry.”

Neeraj Khairwal: “You think that's why we are facing a problem in rescuing workers?”

Police Officer: “Don’t provoke them, sir. We cannot afford to upset locals. With both machines having failed, and not much luck, i think we can use all the help possible – technical or spiritual.”

Neeraj Khairwal: “Hmmm, okay fine! What harm will it do? Let me talk to other officials and arrange the puja.”

Local Lady: “Yes please, we are telling you won’t regret it. After the puja you will see all stopped work will be completed effortlessly.”

[After getting approval, a small portion was dug. Near the entrance of the Tunnel, a small temple was temporarily set up with all the rituals and promised to be converted into a proper, structured temple along the tunnel. Since then, every officer who visited the site made Sure that he paid his respect to the baba and asked for a safe and fast rescue of workers.]

Page 25:

[Somewhat in the afternoon of 20th November 2023, Lt. gen Hasanain addressing media with the good news.]

Lt. Gen Hasanain : “Good afternoon, everyone. I have some positive news to share. Last night, on November 20, our team achieved a significant breakthrough. I'm pleased to report that our rescue workers have successfully completed drilling through the tunnel and have laid a 6-inch diameter pipeline across the debris. This wider pipeline now allows us to deliver substantially larger amounts of food items, communication equipment, and other essential

supplies that the workers urgently need. For the first time since the incident, trapped workers will be able to eat meals including khichdi, porridge, and oranges. This development significantly improves the conditions for those trapped inside while we continue our efforts to safely extract them. Our teams are working around the clock, and we will provide further updates as the operation progresses. Thank you for your continued support and patience during this challenging time.”

[Meanwhile on the site, A kitchen was set up and proper diet was made for every worker with consultation of doctor.

A wave of happiness flooded among the relatives of worker when they came to know that workers are are now getting proper cooked food.]

Ramdeep: “Bhaiya, today after so long I can feel that my stomach is full, knowing that my brother is also having a proper meal, really increased my appetite.”

Everyone else (Aditya, Lallan and Sunil): Totally agreed, after so long we enjoyed our food.

Page 26:

[21st November 2023

The work of taking SJVN's drill machine to the top of the tunnel was started. According to the plan, it was to be installed there within 24 hours. Similarly, RVNL's drill machine was also to be taken to the top of the tunnel. For that road to be carved out on mountain.

Meanwhile in the tunnel, along with talking to the workers, their condition was seen on camera for the first time. Because of this, all 41 workers trapped inside the tunnel were seen through the camera for the first time. First Drones

were used to see the inside scene, but pictures were not visible clearly due to dust inside. To deal with this problem, Endoscopic camera was used.}

Page 27:

[22th November, the 11th day of the rescue mission.

Today, CM Dhami reached on site and interacted with the officials present there and took stock of the progress of the rescue operation. After that he went into the tunnel and talked with trapped workers. After which he interacted with the relatives of the workers and gave them moral support.]

CM Dhami to trapped workers: “Please be assured that we are doing everything to bring you all out of the tunnel. Your families, friends, and the whole nation is praying for your safe return.”

[During his conversation with the workers, he enquired about their well being and food supply. He gave moral support by telling them that the rescue team was working day and night to get them out of the tunnel and as per the progress they would soon be able to see the light again. He then later updated the media and families of the workers.]

CM Dhami: “Namaste bhaiyo aur beheno. Thank you for your patience. We are united in these difficult times. I have been closely watching the situation and talked with the trapped brothers. I would like to share with you that the drilling has reached 39 meters. And only 18 meters are left to drill. We are moving with caution. We should be able to complete our rescue by 25th November. Lastly, we are going to set up a board here which will be updated daily or on the basis of any new information.

Thank you.”

Page 28:

[23rd November 2023, mission in its final stage.

On 23rd November morning, the vertical drill machine had reached the top of the mountain, and it was supposed to start working in the afternoon. All the workers had joy on their faces and before starting the job, they chanted Jai ho! Jai Ho! Jai Baba Basukinath Ki!!]

Lallan: “Arey Aditya Bhaiya, here you are! I know I will find you on your favorite spot. The mission is in its final stage. They are updating the noticeboard every few hours.”

Aditya: “You are right Lallan, from here I can see everything without the noise. let’s go and see. what’s new there on the board.”

[Visuals:

Notice Board data:

- 1. 47 Meters have been drilled so far. 10 meters are left.*
- 2. The auger machine is facing some challenges with the metal pieces as obstacles, so under repair.*
- 3. 41 ambulances will be arriving shortly for shifting the trapped workers to the hospital.*
- 4. At the Chinyalisaur community Health Center, 41 beds have been set up.]*

Page 29:

[25th November 2023, At CM Dhami's temporary office on site]

Cm Dhami: “Officer Neeraj Khairwal what’s the update on auger machine.”

Neeraj Khairwal: “The auger machine had suffered heavy damage because of iron rods.”

Pannel Member-1: “How much time will it take to repair the machine?”

Neeraj Khairwal: “Probably a day or two. But Sir, even if the machine starts, its gonna be in a very critical condition to run.”

CM Dhama: “So what are our other options?”

Pannel member-2: “If we are facing problems from the front why not ask trapped workers to dig from inside its only 9 meters of debris were left.”

Arnold Dix: “That’s not a good idea, first they don’t have proper equipment and second, they already been through enough.”

CM Dhama: “Arnold is right. We cannot afford to get any of them injured. Do you have any ideas professor?”

Arnold Dix: “There is one way. it's a bit time consuming but looking at the condition I think it's the most reliable one: “rat-hole miners.”

Pannel Member-3: “That's a risky move sir !! are we really that desperate?”

CM Dhama: “Time is running out of our hand and so does patience of the relatives. those who are in favor of manual digging.”

[Rat miners as they are called started their work inside the tunnel on Monday evening, 27 November. People working with rat pushing technique were carrying out their work inside the tunnel at a fast pace. A total of 9 meters of debris was left to be removed. By 8.30 am on Tuesday, 28th November, the rat miners had removed up to six meters of debris.]

Page 30:

[28th November 2023]

Finally, in the late evening, around half past eight, that time came when all the workers came out safely one by one. After coming out, the first person to meet these workers was Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami and congratulated them for winning the ongoing battle between life and death.]

----- THE END -----

CHAPTER 6: Design Process and Execution

6.1 Visual Language

To refine my visual storytelling, I also studied various types of comic books—such as nonfiction, slice-of-life, and reality-based graphic novels like "The photographer: into War-torn Afghanistan with doctors without border" and "The day the world changed forever"—which helped me understand how real events are adapted visually and narratively. This comparative analysis guided my decisions on panel layouts, pacing, and the use of dialogue boxes (e.g., speech, thought, caption, and scream bubbles) to convey different tones and emotions. Additionally, I explored background designs and color schemes to enhance the atmosphere and reader engagement, ensuring my comic was both informative and visually compelling.

6.1.1 Lines/Strokes

In my comic book illustration, I chose the Ligne Claire style to ensure clarity and visual coherence throughout the narrative. The use of continuous, bold, and clear strokes helps convey the story and emotions in a direct and easily understandable way, which justifies the situations depicted in each panel. This style's key features—black outlines with varying width, a balance between cartoonish characters and realistic backgrounds—make the visuals engaging and accessible. By adopting Ligne Claire, I aimed to enhance readability and create a visually appealing experience that supports storytelling.



Figure 6 Inspiration Board for line/Strokes

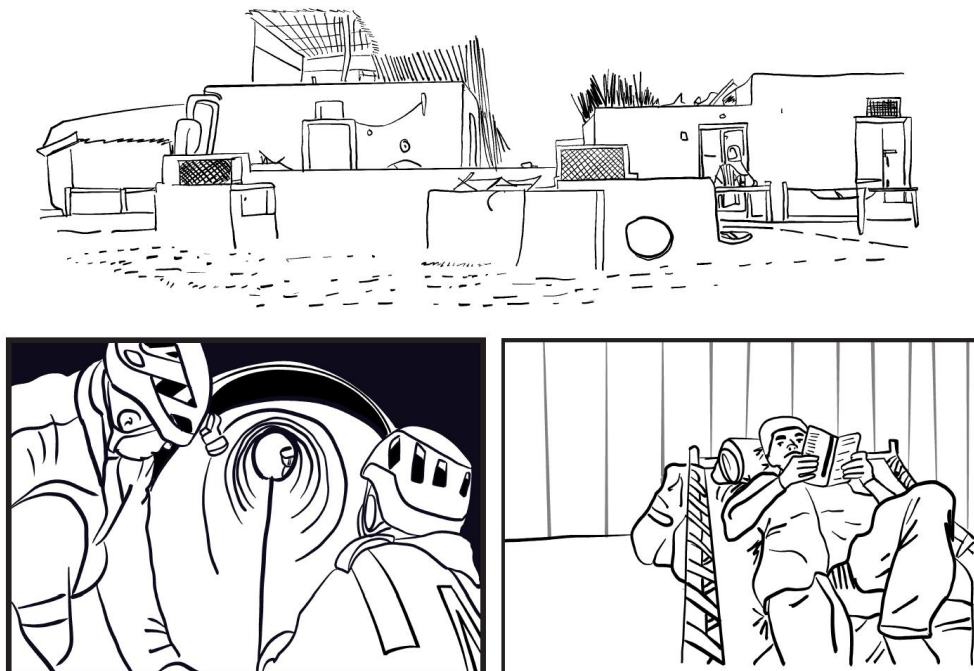


Figure 7 Sketches used in Comic Book

6.1.2 Medium

For my comic book, I am using solid colors as the primary medium to achieve a clean and vibrant look. Shadows are created by layering darker tones of the same color multiple times, adding depth and dimension while maintaining the simplicity and clarity essential for effective visual storytelling.

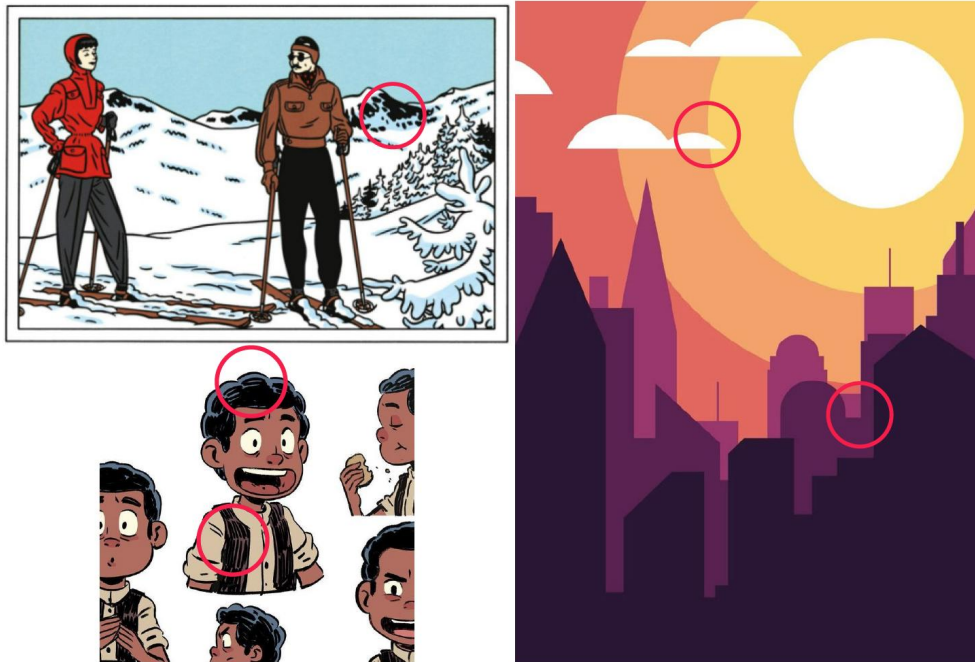


Figure 8 Inspiration board for Medium



Figure 9 Illustrations used in Comic Book

6.1.3 Color Pallet

For my comic book, I am using an earthy color palette to reflect the construction site and natural surroundings. Rooms will feature metallic and darker tones to capture their industrial atmosphere, ensuring the colors enhance the setting's authenticity and support the overall mood and realism of each scene.



Figure 10 Color Pallet used in Comic Book



Figure 11 Panels and background from comic book

6.1.4 Rendering

In rendering illustrations, I am using small, deliberate strokes on surfaces like walls, roads, and mountains. This technique will help create a sense of perspective and movement, making the scenes feel more dynamic and alive. By

varying the direction and density of these strokes, I can enhance the depth and texture of each environment, drawing the reader's eye into the scene. Sometimes, I will use these strokes specifically to suggest depth of view in the surroundings, ensuring that backgrounds don't appear flat and instead contribute to a more immersive and visually engaging comic book experience.



Figure 12 Inspiration board for rendering



Figure 13 Illustration from comic book

6.2 Character Exploration

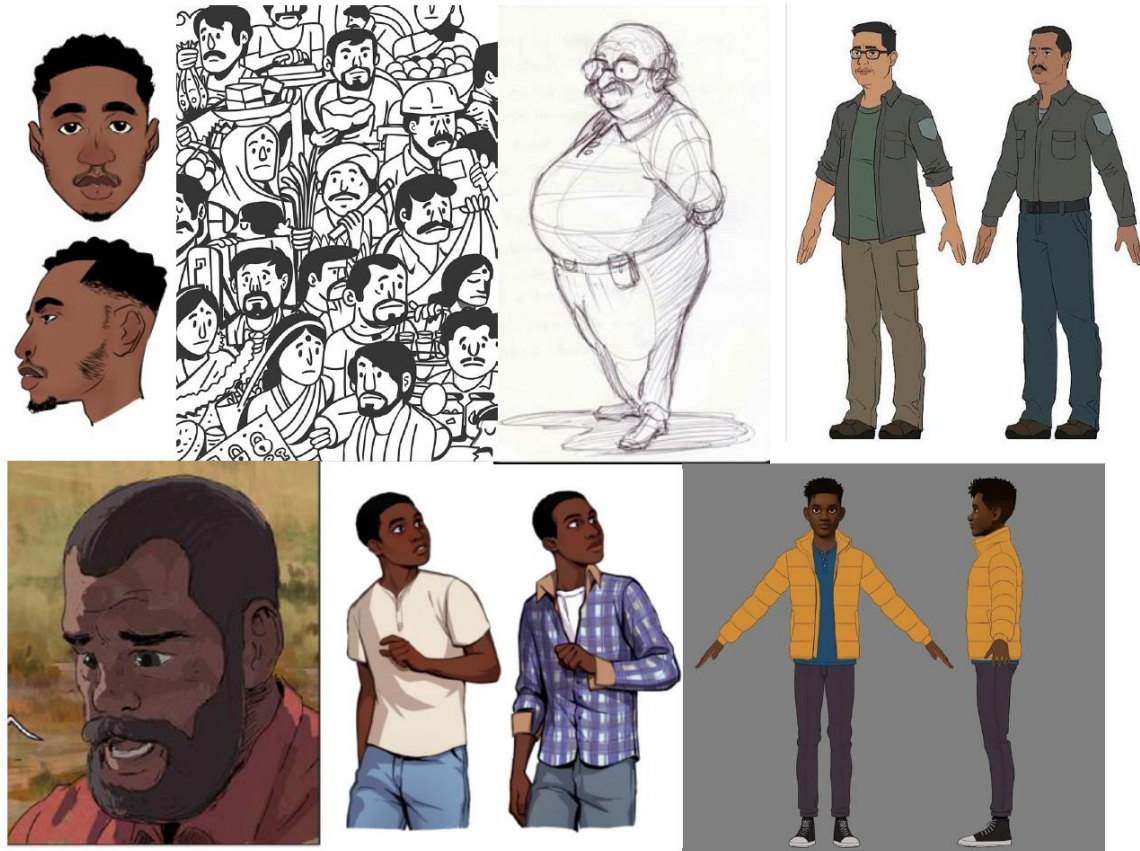


Figure 14 Inspiration board for character design



Figure 15 Some Character Sketches for exploration

6.3 Character Design

The characters in “Tunnel 41: The Himalayan Rescue” are crafted to authentically represent the diverse individuals involved in the real-life rescue mission. Each character is given a distinct personality, backstory, and motivation to ensure relatability and emotional depth.

Character design is informed by their roles and personalities: visual cues such as posture, facial expressions, and clothing are tailored to reflect their backgrounds—workers are shown in practical attire with expressive faces, while officials and experts are rendered with authoritative presence. The characters evolve throughout the story, responding to adversity and growing through their experiences, which adds authenticity and narrative energy. For example:

Aditya is depicted as a short-tempered, bold, and fearless worker, embodying resilience and leadership under crisis.



Figure 16 Aditya's Character Sketch

Lallan is empathetic, caring, and submissive, providing emotional support and camaraderie among the workers.

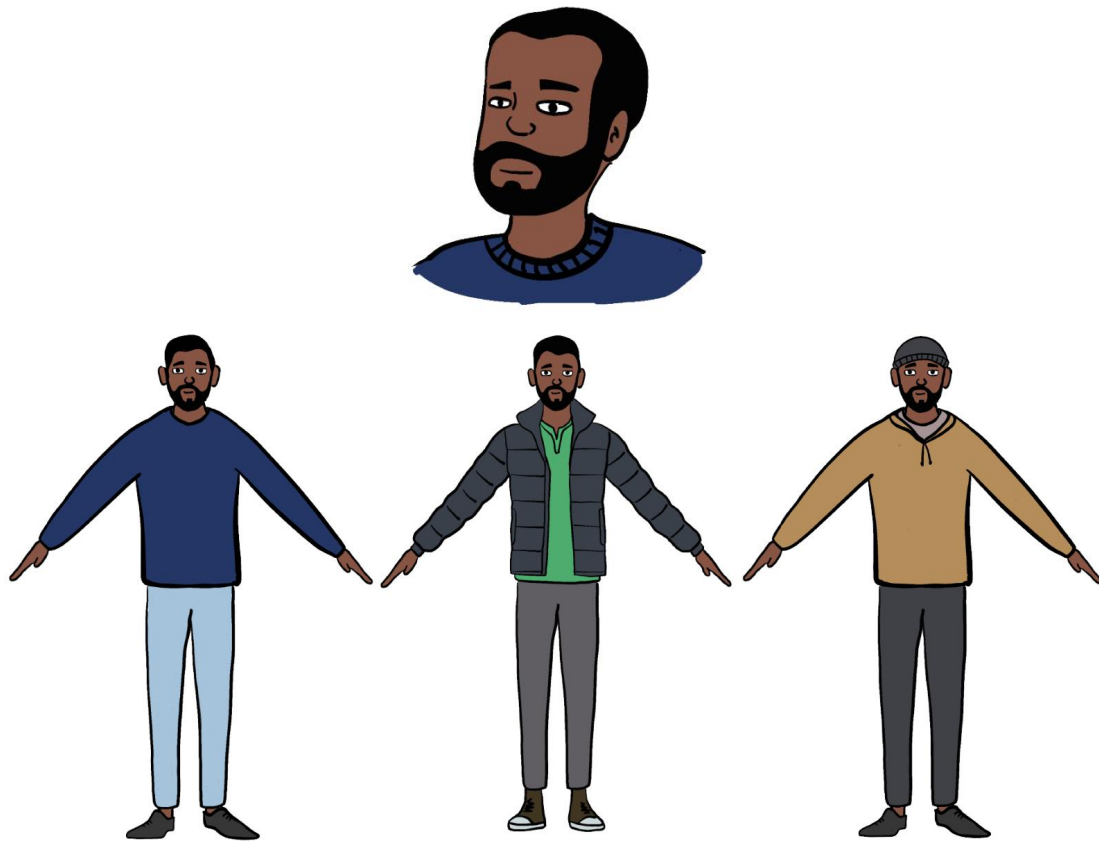


Figure 17 Lallan's Character Sketch

Supporting characters like Sunil, Randeep, and real-life figures such as Lt. Gen. (retd.) Syed Hasnain and international experts are included to highlight the collaborative, multi-agency nature of the rescue.



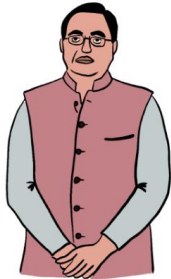
Figure 18 Sunil and Randeep's Character Sketch



Lt. Gen.(retd.) Syed Hasnain



Arnold Dix
Australian expert in mining



CM Pushkar Dhami



IAS Neeraj Khairwal

Figure 19 Official's Character Sketch



Figure 20 Other Character's Sketches



Figure 21 Other Character's Sketches

6.4 Dialogue Visual Language

6.4.1 Dialogue Box

The use of a white square dialogue box with a black border in this comic is a deliberate design choice that reflects the gravity and seriousness of the Silkyara tunnel rescue narrative. The stark contrast of black on white ensures maximum readability and conveys a sense of urgency and clarity, essential for a story rooted in real-life crisis and high stakes. This neutral, formal style avoids distracting colors, keeping the reader focused on the dialogue and the unfolding events. In contrast, colored square dialogue boxes are used to distinguish narrative or background information from regular character conversations, helping readers intuitively differentiate between direct speech and the broader context or narration. This visual separation is especially important in a comic dealing with complex, multi-layered events, as it guides diverse readers—students, journalists, visual learners, and comic enthusiasts—through the story with clarity and respect for the topic’s seriousness.



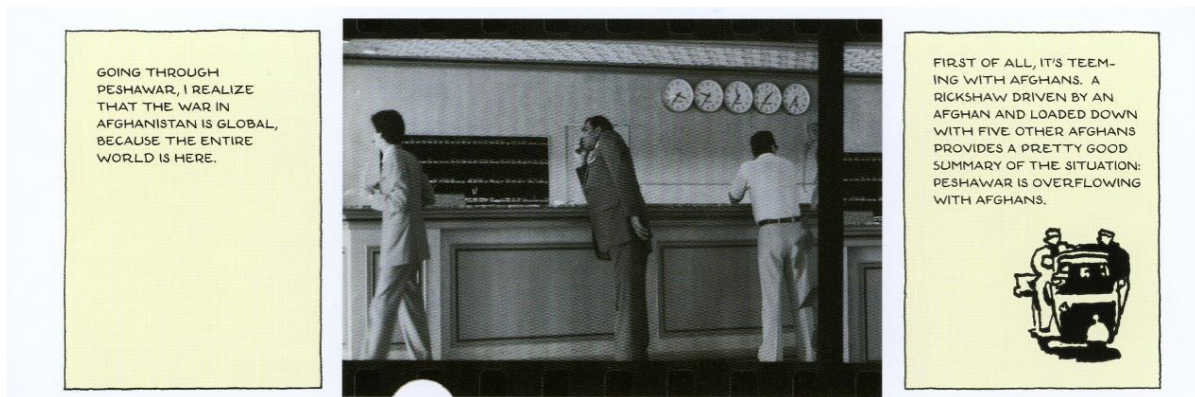


Figure 22 Dialogue Box Inspiration Board



Figure 23 Dialogue Box used in Comic Book

6.4.2 Text Font

Comic Sans MS was chosen as the text font for this comic book to reinforce the authentic comic book reading experience. Its rounded, informal style is directly inspired by traditional comic lettering, making the narrative feel approachable and visually engaging. The font's clean, sans-serif design ensures that even long paragraphs in small sizes remain legible and comfortable to read, which is crucial for maintaining reader focus through detailed or text-heavy scenes. Additionally, Comic Sans MS is recognized for being dyslexia-friendly, as its distinct letter shapes and generous spacing help reduce visual crowding, making the comic accessible to a wider audience.

Comic Sans MS

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm

Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

1234567890 (.!/?#\$%&* /\@::)

Penultimate

The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak

SCHADENFREUDE

3964 Elm Street and 1370 Rt. 21

<https://fonts-online.ru> info@fonts-online.ru

Figure 24 Comic Sans MS Font Sheet

6.5 Page Layout

The use of simple square and rectangular panel boxes throughout this comic ensures that the story remains the central focus, reflecting the gravity and decorum of the event. This structured layout avoids visual clutter and distraction, allowing readers to follow the intense, real-life narrative with clarity and respect. By adjusting the number of panels per page—up to 12 for fast-paced, dialogue-light scenes and as few as four where text is heavier—the pacing is carefully balanced, so readers can absorb information without feeling rushed or overwhelmed.

Integrating visual props like the tunnel map with rescue plans and a separate notice board provides essential context and information while maintaining a seamless connection to the unfolding story. These elements, drawn directly from the scenes, enhance understanding and immersion without detracting from the emotional and factual core of the narrative.

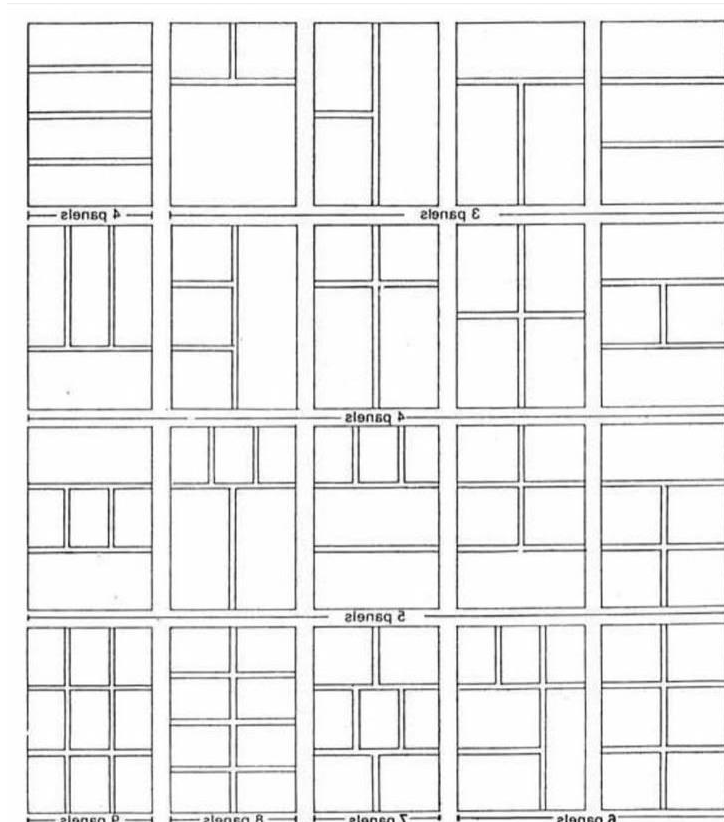


Figure 25 Type of Page Layouts

6.6 Process

Creating a comic book page starts with setting the panel layout, ensuring the amount of story per page keeps reading time consistent throughout the book. Next, dialogues are placed within the panels to estimate the space they will occupy. Rough sketches are then added to each panel, helping visualize the overall feel and ensuring the scenes match the panel's purpose and its connection to previous and subsequent panels. Finally, once the composition and flow are satisfactory, the sketches are painted or inked, adding color, detail, and finishing touches to complete and finalize the comic book page.

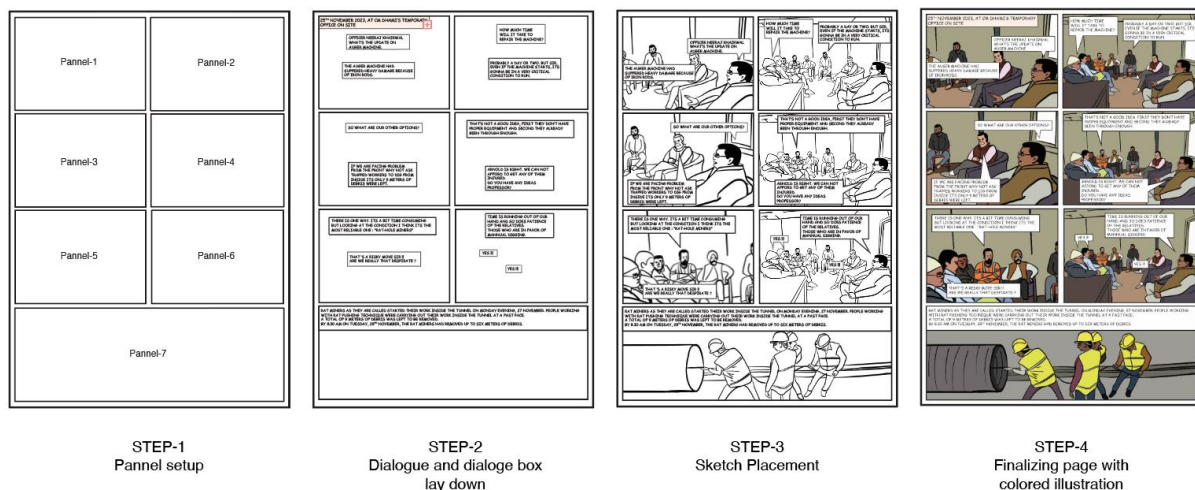


Figure 26 Process of Making a Comic Page

CHAPTER 7: Conclusion

The creation of “Tunnel 41: The Himalayan Rescue” has been a transformative journey in applying visual communication design to narrate a real-life event of extraordinary courage and resilience. Through extensive research, careful scripting, and deliberate visual choices, the comic book brings to life the suspenseful 17-day rescue of 41 workers from the Silkyara–Barkot tunnel, highlighting not just technical challenges but also the emotional experiences of workers, families, and rescuers. By blending factual accuracy with engaging illustrations and accessible storytelling, the project succeeds in making a complex disaster event both relatable and educational for a broad audience. This work demonstrates the potential of comics as a medium for social documentation and awareness, celebrating unsung heroes while expanding the boundaries of visual storytelling in contemporary design practice.

CHAPTER 8: Future Scope

The success and impact of “Tunnel 41: The Himalayan Rescue” highlight a promising future for this project as a continuing series. Building on the approach of visually narrating real-life acts of heroism and resilience, future volumes can explore other significant events—such as natural disasters, rescue missions, or stories of unsung individuals from diverse backgrounds—using the comic book format. This episodic or anthology model leverages the strengths of comics in episodic storytelling, allowing each volume to stand alone while contributing to a larger collection that educates, inspires, and preserves contemporary history.

With the growing popularity of digital comics and graphic novels, future instalment’s can also be adapted for digital platforms, enabling interactive features, multimedia integration, and broader accessibility. Incorporating new trends in visual storytelling, such as AR/VR experiences or cross-platform

narratives, can further engage audiences and expand the educational and social impact of the series. This ongoing project can thus serve as a valuable resource for students, educators, and the general public, fostering empathy and awareness through the powerful medium of visual storytelling.

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