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City lensman on WTC mission

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KOLKATA: The runaway boy from a Purulia village who struck it big in photography after an NGO spotted his talent on the platforms of New Delhi railway station is now set to scale even greater heights. Vicky Roy has been chosen to document the on-going work to rebuild the World Trade Centre at Ground Zero, a project both prestigious and symbolic in the present times.

"WTC has historical significance and it's a great opportunity to be a part of it. I share the pain of the New Yorkers because I belong to a country which is frequently hit by terror attacks," he told TOI.

Earlier, TOI had reported his journey from a little known village of Purulia to the platforms of Delhi station and onwards to the Nehru Centre in London where he held an exhibition.

Ace photographer Anay Mann, whom Vicky is currently assisting, feels the assignment is a great exposure for the budding photographer. "Technology has made photography easier. But there is honesty in Vicky's work. He captures the right emotions. Devotion has been a key factor in his success story. At the same time, meeting the right people at the right time has helped him," Mann said.

The World Trade Center Documentary Arts Project is undertaken by Maybach Foundation and Silverstein Properties. Anubhav Nath of Ramchander Nath Foundation had the task of short listing candidates from South Asia. "We received hundreds of applications from all over South Asia. Vicky made it to the final selection. This is the biggest thing that has happened to him and should help him make it big in international photography," Nath said.

Vicky is the only Indian in a team of four young lensmen selected for the project. He wants to make sure that his work makes the country proud. "There are photographers from Georgia, US and Hong Kong. After the project, when the foundation holds an exhibition globally, I want my work to be the best. I want people to believe that Indians are the best in whatever they do," he said.

But amidst the excitement over the challenge ahead, the tinge of sadness is unmistakable. The terror attacks at Mumbai days before he leaves the country to capture the rebuilding of an iconic building destroyed by terror have left him distraught. "The recent attacks on India are very upsetting. I stay close to the flower market at Mehrauli which was hit by bomb blasts a few months ago."

There's also a spot of worry over the visa. "The name Vicky Roy has been lucky for me but my actual name is Md Mehboob and I know Muslims have to go through rigorous scrutiny. And every time there are terror attacks I feel the discomfort. I hope my work speaks for me."

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