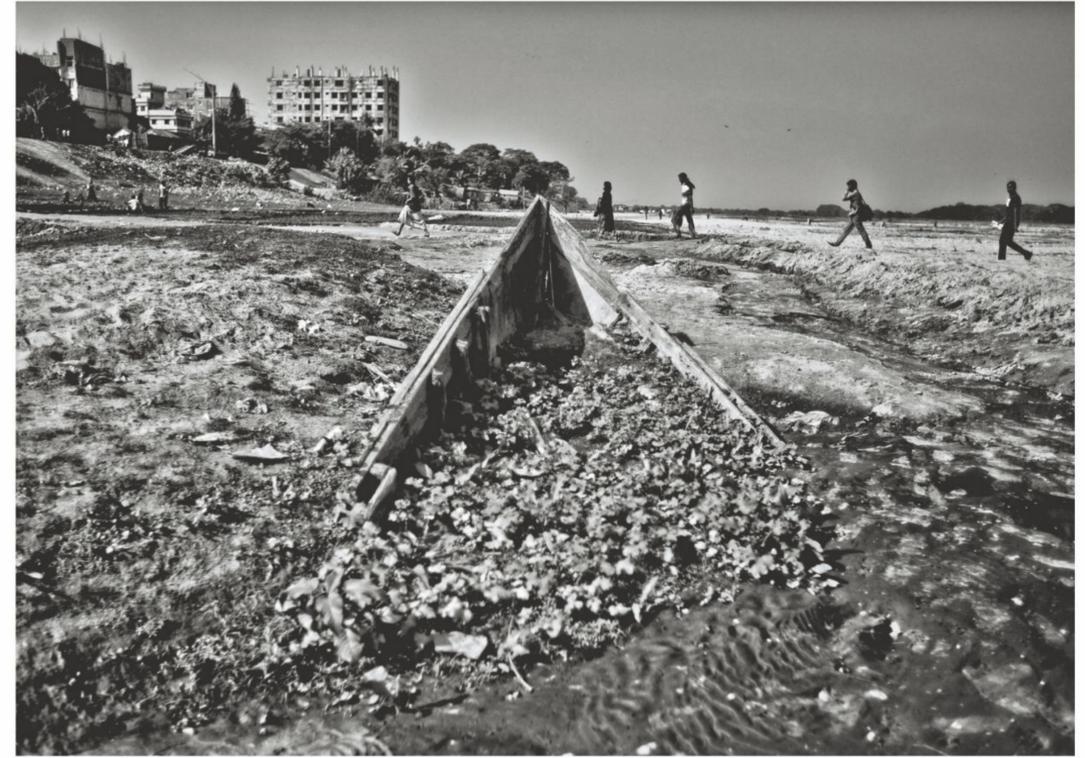




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DEATH OF THE BRAHMAPUTRA

ANIK RAHMAN

Our cities are made of sand. It's in the bricks in our walls, the mortar between those bricks, and even the roads we walk on. Due to its many uses in construction, sand mining has become a popular business in Bangladesh. But the overuse of river sand for construction has disastrous social and ecological consequences.

Excessive mining of river sand leads to the degradation of river beds. Any volume of sand displaced from beds and coastal areas is a loss to the system, as has been the case with the Brahmaputra, the life blood of millions of Bangladeshis.

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DEATH OF THE BRAHMAPUTRA

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Sand mining activities also generate excess traffic in neighbouring locales, adding to the stress on the environment. Lowered river beds can erode banks, and compromise bridges and nearby structures. Furthermore, mining damages the groundwater system that local people depend on.

Continued extraction will degrade the river bed to the depth of excavation, which will lower water tables nearby and destabilise water channels. A change in morphology that extreme will surely destroy the habitats of aquatic and riparian life forever.

Our ecosystem, our homes, and our livelihoods are under threat. ■

