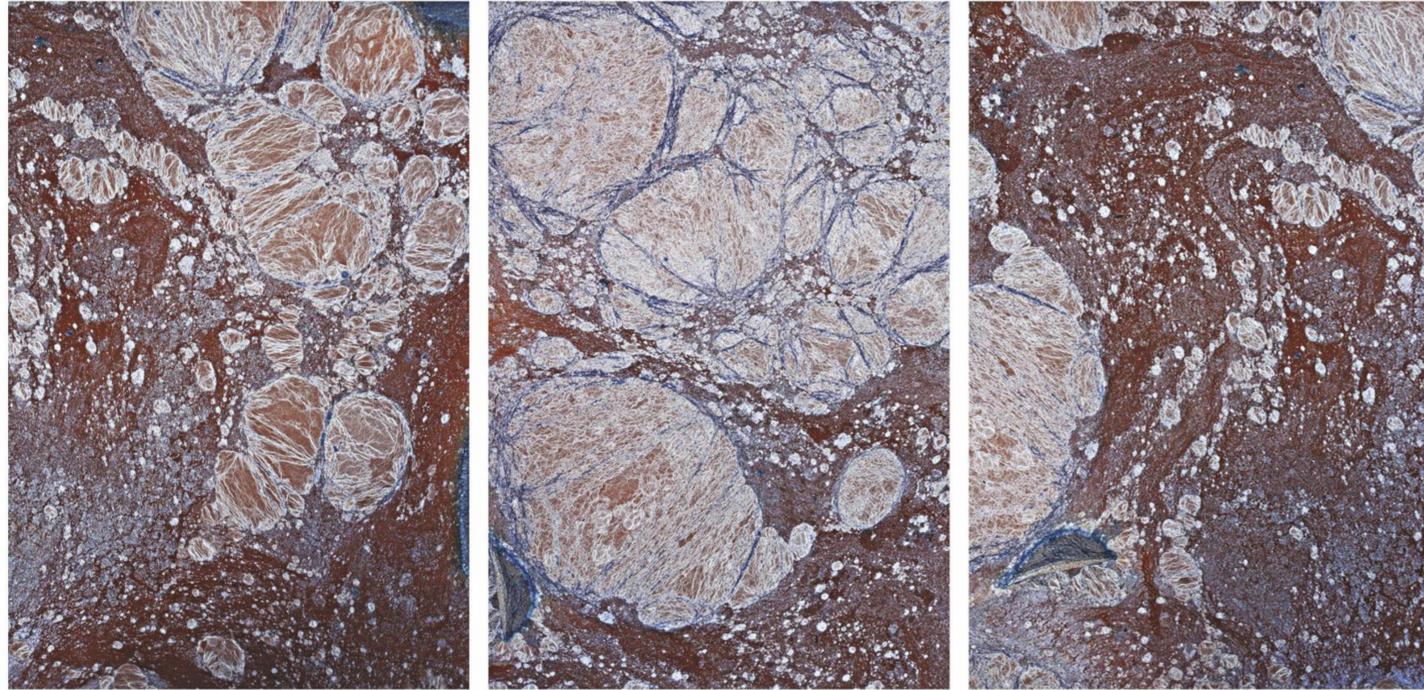


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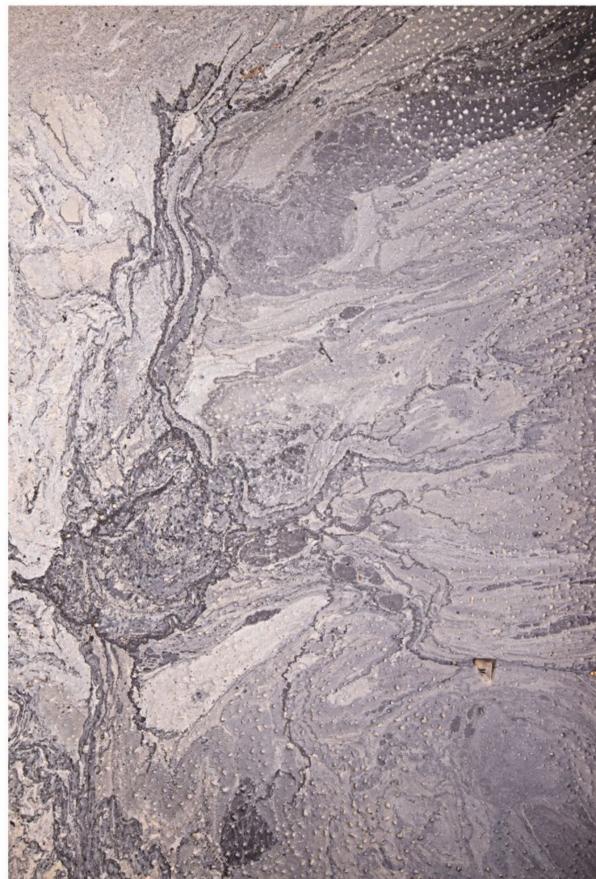


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A THOUSAND GARDENS

PHOTOS: KAISAR AHAMED
TEXT: AMIYA HALDER



Where have the fish in the Buriganga gone? Bubbling with rich, garish tones that can belie the grim reality, the waters of the Buriganga, once the lifeblood of the capital, tell our very own tale of woe. The vibrant eddies and soapy ripples captured in a frame may bring to mind abstract paintings, but this is one time

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fact triumphs fiction—nothing can survive in the river.

Nestled beside the river is neighbourhood of Hazaribagh, Farsi for “the city of a thousand gardens”. In its streets lined with leathers, there is not a glimmer of green to be found, and in its canals that flow into the Buriganga runs the muck of the tanneries that it has housed for over 60 years.

The river has become so slick with the chemicals that are dumped into it at all

times of the day that you can see the colours swirl and shift in the water between sunrise and sunset—now an oily black, neon red in the blink of an eye, then turning into an otherworldly blue.

The waters of the Buriganga are too murky, too alkaline, too devoid of oxygen for you take a sip or have a dip, and the borough of Hazaribagh, which once grew green and proud beside it, is now a tragic wasteland. ■

