

## Photos of 100-year India coal fire win Getty Instagram award

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**An Indian photographer has been awarded the second annual Getty Images Instagram grant, which recognises photographers who document stories from underrepresented communities around the world.**

Ronny Sen joined Christian Rodriguez of Uruguay and Girma Berta of Ethiopia - the other two winners - to pick up a grant of \$10,000 (£7,702) for his project.

Sen won the prize for his work on the dusty coal town of Jharia in the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand where underground fires have burned for more than a century.

"The underground fire in Jharia has been burning for more than a hundred years now. People who inhabit that space have seen this since they were born. So they are totally aware of it and it's very much a part of their life," he says.

"Many villages which were once thriving with life don't exist any more. They have simply vanished. While some people have left these areas and shifted elsewhere for better jobs and opportunities in other cities, there is a big population which calls Jharia home and keeps on shifting along the blasting mines.

"They are mostly dependent economically on this huge coal industry. They don't have any other skills. So, even if there is fire and subsidence they don't have any other choice but to keep moving along the mines."



RONNY SEN

"A fire underground has been burning for over 100 years, but its presence is now overground - inside homes, temples and schools, in churches and mosques - places that were once thriving with life are now consumed by flames."



RONNY SEN



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'The wall of a broken temple in a village near a coal mine in Jharia. Due to the blasting and the underground fire lots of the buildings and houses in nearby villages are being destroyed.'



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'Jharia was once a green forest. Coal was discovered here in the late 18th Century and by the beginning of the 19th Century most of the mineral resource was mined here'



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'Children waiting for their parents to return from work, both of whom are coal pickers inside a mine in Jharia'



RONNY SEN

'Mine officials trying to excavate useable coal from one of the burning mines in Jharia'



RONNY SEN

'A coal picker who works inside one of the mines in Jharia'



RONNY SEN

'A contract worker inside one of the coal mines in Jharia. He will make \$2 after loading almost five trucks with coal'



RONNY SEN

'Coal scavengers work very early in the morning before the mine officials come inside the mines'

"I want to share my concerns with a larger audience. Because, the Jharia story is not only specific and limited to India at all," says Sen.

"It is just a coincidence that Jharia is here. It's a economic, environmental and deeply political problem which is predominantly visible all across the world. I hope that this can initiate a dialogue and show people a small glimpse of a possible future that we are facing."

Sen is a regular contributor to the BBC News site. Some of his previous work:

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