

CARE FOR PAWS- REACHING OUT TO THE VOICELESS

NAZIBA BASHER
PHOTO: COURTESY



CFP, even prior to launching, faced a lot of struggle and objection. "The first question people ask us is 'why animals, why not humans'- they don't think about the fact that no matter how underprivileged, no matter how hungry, no matter how tormented, a human being

has the ability to ask for help. An animal does not. The amount of abuse they face daily from human beings is appalling," says Saima, "Just the day before the event, a rescue died because of the amount of abuse he had gone through from a human being. The day after the event, we

dropped a rehabilitated rescue off to his habitat- in front of Bangabandhu's house- and one of the guards, as soon as the pup was dropped, hit and broke its face with a rifle! What kind of 'superior beings' are we if we don't have any compassion towards the voiceless? How are we 'superior' if we don't protect them or fulfil our duties towards them?"

CFP's prime focus is to make the power relations between human and non-human animals visible to start a process of love and empathy towards defenceless and less fortunate animals on the street, and create nurturing relations between human and non-human animals. Besides other problems, their activities are aimed to help reduce brutality against street animals and help change the violent mindset of the current society towards non-human animals. "We like to develop an entity with professional veterinarians to operate an intervention program. We get the maximum amount veterinary help from Dr KBM Saiful Islam, of Sher e Bangla Agricultural University. He helps treat our stray cases with utmost care and selflessness," says Farhana H Choudhury, one of the co-founders of CFP.

Even though human beings have proved to be absolutely vile against animals here, there are some people who still give us hope for a better and kinder Bangladesh. "We have a five year plan ahead of us, focusing on Dhaka city dwellers. We have trained and dedicated volunteers, a brilliant rescue team and also paramedics. We are doing awareness campaigns; on the other hand there is Rubaiya Ahmad and Obhoyaronno doing similar work for animals. If we all do our duties as humans, if we all can just feed one stray, help an animal get warmth during winter, provide shelter, or at least let them live peacefully in their community- even that is a lot. Together, I think we can all work towards a cruelty-free Bangladesh."

If you have any known case of an abused animal or would like to help the organisation in any way, please email them at carepaws@gmail.com or visit their Facebook page- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/carefopaws>.

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HERITAGE

Reginald Heber was a man who wore many hats. Born into an affluent family, the hymn-writer made a reputation as a poet while at Oxford University. The traveller and adventurer served as the 'Bishop of Calcutta'.

Bishop Heber, in 1824, visited Narinda Christian Cemetery in Dhaka to consecrate it.

Today, the cemetery is at least 350 years of age. Being such an old burial ground, it contains within itself a vital part of the history of Dhaka - waiting to be unlocked by the curious visitor, but sometimes refusing to give away secrets it has chosen to hide.

One such secret is the Tomb of Columbo. The grandeur of the mausoleum struck Heber, and he wanted to know who Columbo was. He could not find a satisfactory answer. And neither can we, till this date. Reading what Heber wrote almost two centuries ago - about his experience when visiting the mausoleum - points at the obscurity that still prevails.

"...the old Durwan of the burial ground said, it was the tomb of a certain 'Columbo Sahib, Company ka nuokur; Mr Columbo, servant to the Company; who he can have been I know not; his name does not sound like an Englishman's, but as there is no inscription, the beadle's word is the only accessible authority."

If one visits the mausoleum today, like Heber, he would also be astonished by its magnificence.

The bottom is a square structure; on it a splendid octagonal building rises up, boasting a beautiful dome as its crown. If this description does not suffice, we can always refer to the bishop's portrayal:

"Some of the tombs are very handsome; one more particularly, resembling the



A TRIBUTE TO COLUMBO SAHIB

M H HAIDER
PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS

buildings raised over the graves of Mussulman saints, has a high octagon gothic tower, with a cupola in the same style, and eight windows with an elaborate tracery."



as a mystery, many of his neighbours are known to us. An exquisite statue of Madonna towers over the grave of Elizabeth, the wife of the Armenian Marcar David, the 'Merchant Prince of Bengal'. Jane Rennell, the daughter of James Rennell, also lies here. James Rennell was the pioneer of oceanography and his map of Bengal is an invaluable source of information for historians. The cemetery is also the final resting place of JGN Pogose, who died in 1876. He is the founder of Pogose School.

The cemetery features a wide plethora of structures, from domes to obelisks. Wilderness was all around when Reginald Heber visited Narinda Christian Cemetery, and the poet was indeed fascinated by the place:

"... the whole had so wild and characteristic an appearance, that I regretted that I had no time to make a drawing."

Source: 'Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India, From Calcutta to Bombay, 1824-1825' by Reginald Heber

To comprehend the grandiosity better, one may walk inside and look up, to witness the eight large windows at each side of the octagon.

There are some gravestones attached to the walls. But nobody really knows where their graves actually are. To add another twist, nobody even knows exactly where the grave of Columbo is! The building, at present, is shredded in ruins, and trees have taken over it. The structure still remains, crying for conservation.

Close to the monument is a lavish, white gate built during the Mughal era. Although Columbo Sahib looms over

TOP 7 PICK OF THE WEEK

#1 The Sacred India Book By : Amit Pasricha Price : 21,000	#2 The Complete Human Body By : Dr Alice Roberts Price : 4,900	#3 Pictorial History of the 20th Century By : Lord Briggs Price : 4,400	#4 Engineers By : Adam Hart-Davis Price : 3,000
#5 Photography: The Definitive Visual History By : Tom Ang Price : 3,400	#6 Atlas of Ancient Indian History By : Irfan Habib Price : 8,990	#7 Larousse Gastronomique Recipe Collection By : Librairie Larousse Price : 5,900	

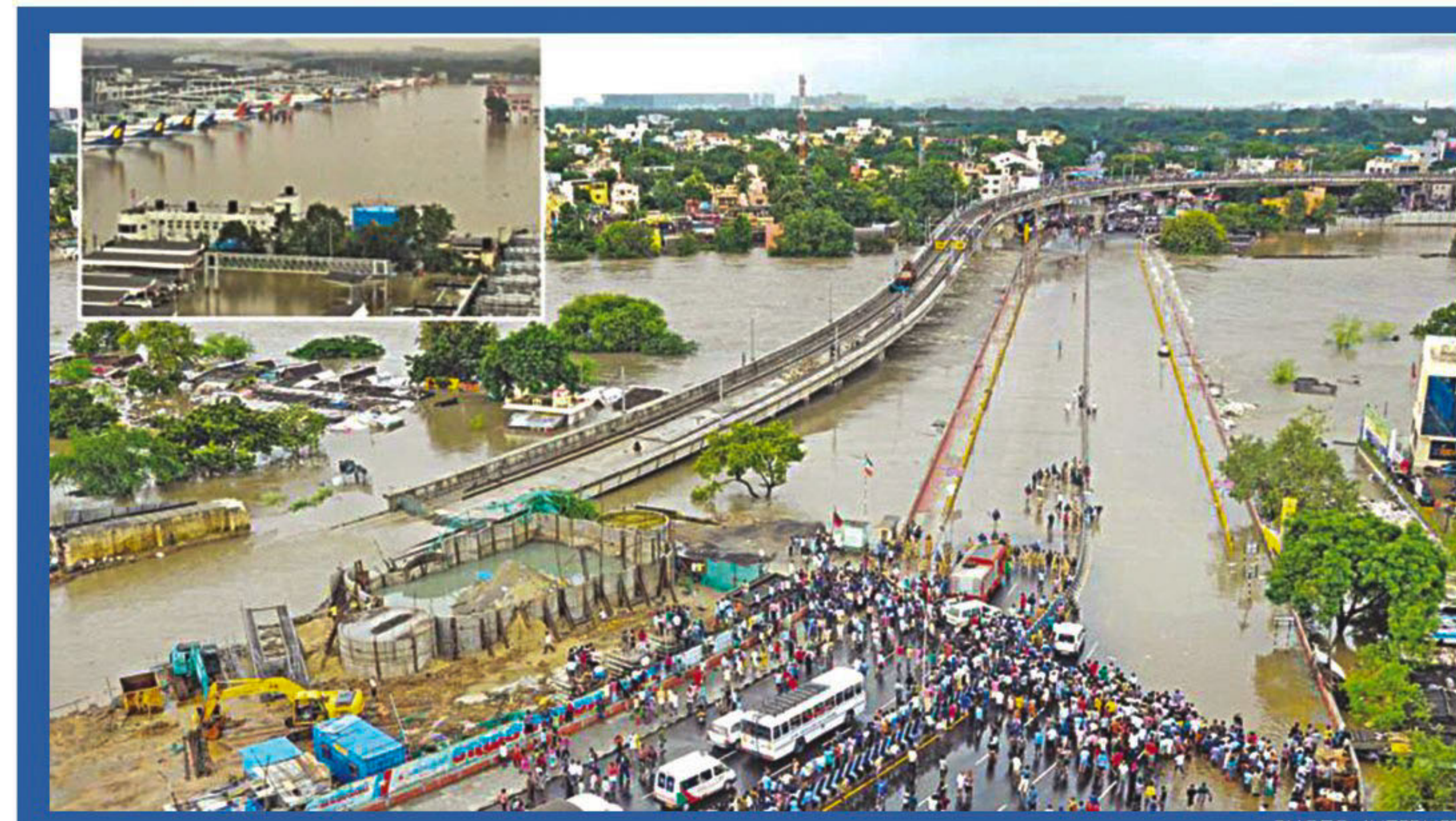


PHOTO: INTERNET

NUMBERS

137

The Hindu, one of India's oldest newspapers with its headquarter in Chennai has not been printed for the first time in 137 years due to heavy downpour and torrential rainfall in southern city of Chennai. Because of the continuous rains and floods, the city is almost submerged and the employees could not reach the daily's publication plant.

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