

# PINK CONNECTION

UBF

Volume 7 Issue 4 May-July '21



## Kameshwari Jandhyala:

Not afraid  
of mastectomy

## Robin Hood Army

Making the rich  
feed the poor

## Hampi

A spectacular  
symbol of  
India's legacy



# BEHIND The Scenes

We are living in a time when there are more deaths than even the two World Wars. Life seems more fragile now than at any other time in our living memory.

Just when we thought we had things in our control, the world around us—our lives, ambitions, career plans and our children's lives—has collapsed. It has been a year since our life has steadily spun out of control.

I, for one, believe in the law of Karma—as we sow, we reap. We truly believed that we were at the apex of creation, as we pillaged and ravished the earth for our gain. Without a care, we polluted rivers and the air, encroached forest land and mined tribal areas. We let several species go extinct, not realising we need even the humble bee for the eco-system's health. We put up shopping malls and high-rise buildings that did nothing for either the skyline or environment, even as we chopped 100-year-old trees and encroached on waterbodies.

In our egoistic belief that this world exists for us, we have taken advantage of this earth where a lion and a lamb, a dog or a calf, a flower and leaf have as much right to exist as we do. Maybe, we need to relinquish ideas of our own grandeur in the natural order and realise the pandemic may be of our own doing.

I hope human beings will nurture kindness and humility in the future. Let's take a leaf out of a doctor's life which is filled with care and concern for humanity.

*Ratna Rao Shekar*



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Cover Pic: M Sridhar Rao

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PUBLISHED BY  
Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer  
Foundation

PRINTED AT  
Kala Jyothi Process Pvt. Ltd.  
1-1-60/5, RTC Cross Roads  
Musheerabad  
Hyderabad - 500 020

KIMS-USHALAKSHMI  
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Website: [www.ubf.org.in](http://www.ubf.org.in)  
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# The Modern Day

## Robin Hoods



Inspired by a Re-Food programme in Portugal, the **Robin Hood Army** project was launched in New Delhi by Neel Ghosh, Aarushi Batra and Anand Sinha to feed the homeless with food waste we generate. This volunteer-based organisation that works to source surplus food from restaurants and weddings and feed the less fortunate has rapidly grown across India, and has been playing a critical role during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Nivedita Choudhuri** talks to the founders about their philosophy and how they reach out to the needy

**R**obin Hood, the legendary outlaw of English folklore, would rob the rich and give to the poor. That was many centuries ago when King John ruled over England. Plucking a feather out of the hats of Robin Hood and his band of Merry Men, 21st century 'Robins' – volunteers this time, not outlaws – scour our cities day and night. But, it's not silver pennies and gold coins they are after but they are searching for surplus food which they can take from the rich to feed the poor.

The statistics are alarming. Hunger reportedly kills more people each year than AIDS, terrorism and malaria. There are around 850 million people in the world who don't have enough food to feed themselves, according to Robin Hood Army (RHA). Clearly, something had to be done to find a solution to this colossal problem.

Inspired by the Re-Food programme in Portugal, a country where RHA co-founder Neel Ghose had lived for some time, the organisation started operating first in New Delhi in August 2014. Enamoured by how simple and doable the idea was, he decided to replicate it in India. Its purpose was simple: source leftover food that was still edible from restaurants and

communities and distribute it to the homeless, hungry and poor on the streets of Delhi.

Ghose and his co-founder, Anand Sinha, (they were three of them, including Aarushi Batra, who set up RHA) identified around 150 people who would otherwise go to bed hungry and the first food-distribution drive was carried out by five volunteers.

Today, the RHA has spread to 10 countries, including Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bahrain, Philippines and Malaysia. "In a little over six years, we have managed to make our presence felt in 217 cities and served around 65 million meals," says Sanchit Jain, a computer engineer, who has his own tech start-up and is a full-time 'Robin'.

The RHA is a zero-funds volunteer body. It has no revenue, office space or employees. The 'Robins' or volunteers, who are largely students and professionals, help by giving their time for this worthy cause. They are motivated by just one goal: to contribute and do something for society.

Says Batra, "The RHA is a massive team effort involving around 50,000 volunteers who have signed up on our roster and they each put in at least two hours every week to feed the destitute. The modus operandi is simple. The 'Robins' use Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp to attract more volunteers. The food is also sourced from parties, weddings and restaurants using social media. People can also fill in a form on the RHA website ([robinhoodarmy.com](http://robinhoodarmy.com)) to join as a volunteer or to share food."

Batra, who did her schooling at Convent of Jesus and Mary and then graduated in economics at Jesus & Mary College, New Delhi, met Ghose while both were students of London

School of Economics and Political Science. She shifted to New York after her marriage in 2019, but RHA continues to be an invaluable part of her life.

Batra says that whenever a drive is planned in a new city, a WhatsApp group is set up connecting all volunteers in that city. New volunteers are continually added to the group.

She goes on to explain how Sundays are usually kept aside for drives, but ad-hoc drives also take place. "A decentralised approach is adopted and the founders are usually not involved in the nitty-gritty and planning that goes into organising drives in the various cities. There are city heads for that," she says.

Batra recalls an instance when 1,000 people were served food left over from only one wedding in Surat. The kind of food wastage at lavish Indian weddings is heart-rending, she says, especially when millions of children in the country sleep hungry every night.

"The 'Robins' also learn and are motivated by what they see. Ours is not just a food delivery service. We spend time with the under-

privileged and needy in hospitals, orphanages and old-age homes and learn so much from them. I have found some of the most positive and jovial people living on streets and under flyovers," observes Batra.

Of course, last year changed everything. Life came to a grinding halt following the pandemic and the subsequent lockdown. Poverty and hunger were pressing issues that existed from before, but the migrant exodus and job losses that followed made life miserable and unbearable for a lot of people in India.

In an effort to mitigate the suffering of people impacted by the pandemic, RHA launched its 'Mission 30 Million', which has turned out to be one of the largest food relief efforts in

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*There are around 850 million people who don't have food to feed themselves*



*Making a simple idea work: Neel Ghose and Aarushi Batra*

the world. The initiative was rolled out in July-August 2020 and the organisation has almost met its target. Around 23 million people have been given food across eight countries, and what is remarkable is that it was done with no help from the governments or corporate bodies.

"The pandemic posed multiple challenges. For starters, we had to practise social distancing. We started off by serving food, water and providing footwear to migrant labourers," she recalls.

Ordinary citizens started to contribute by providing home-cooked food and though restaurants were closed, the owners would ensure their kitchens were operating by cooking food for the homeless. Even Bollywood actors Sonu Sood and Bhumi Pednekar, as well as chef Vikas Khanna tied up with RHA to provide footwear, rations and other items to the underprivileged, she reveals.

RHA has also rallied around and participated in flood-relief efforts in Orissa, Bihar, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh during the pandemic. "In some instances, 'Robins' have travelled in boats for more than two hours to reach inaccessible flood-hit areas," she points out.



*The Robin Hood Academy is another enterprise initiated by the Robin Hood Army to encourage the spirit of learning*

"We've also received desperate calls from expats living in the UK and USA who were worried for their elderly parents in the midst of the pandemic. They asked us if we could drop off rations and groceries to their parents, who were unable to step outside and shop. So, we began to drop off groceries at the doorsteps of those who were completely stuck at home," elaborates Batra.

RHA has another initiative too called Senior Patrol, where they help senior citizens get vaccinated. She explains, "We help elderly people, especially those who live alone to register online on the Co-Win portal. 'Robins' pick up and take them to the vaccination centres and then drop them home. The senior citizens are often helpless and so they feel really grateful when we offer our help. We often get to hear this line—*Jahan apno ne saath chhod diya, aapne hamara haath pakra* (where our own people abandoned us, you have held our hand)."

Spread across more than 105 cities and empowering more than 7,000 students with basic primary education, the Robin Hood Academy is another enterprise initiated by RHA. Here, 'Robins' conduct regular classes with the help of a standardised curriculum to introduce and encourage the spirit of learning. The aim of the Academy is to provide street kids the tools and knowledge to go to school.

**The kind of food wastage at lavish Indian weddings is heart-rending, she says, especially when millions of children in the country sleep hungry every night**

Uma Chilak joined RHA as a volunteer and was the city head of the Hyderabad unit from 2015-2020. The interior designer has plenty to share about the stellar role played by RHA during the pandemic.

"We found that people from all walks of life had been affected by the pandemic. It is not just migrant labourers. Many people's salaries and earnings have suddenly stopped. Beauty parlour employees, hotel cleaners, gym instructors, staff working in shops selling non-essential items and theatre workers had all been suddenly left high and dry," shares Chilak.

They had distributed 50,000 grocery kits in two months to families in the entertainment business and to drivers of Ola and Uber cabs, and more such workers in need at the height of the pandemic. A grocery kit comprises 10 kilos of rice, two kilos of dal, one kilo of sugar, 500 gm of tamarind, oil, onions and potatoes.

They tapped the growing tribe of home bakers during the pandemic as well. "We delivered 30,000 cakes to schools and orphanages and blankets to those sleeping out," adds Chilak.

RHA has come a long way from serving up cooked meals in 2014 to delivering raw rations during the pandemic. But, what is heartening and warms the cockles of one's hearts, is the spontaneous spirit of generosity that seems to drive donors and the Robins alike. We need more people like them in the world so that no one ever has to go hungry. ■

# Hampi:

## Where Time Stands Still

Hampi, the seat of the mighty Vijayanagara empire of yore, is one of the symbols of India's rich legacy. It has attracted travellers for centuries now.

**Mallik Thatipalli** visits the UNESCO World Heritage site and comes away mesmerised by the magnificent mandapas, temples, forts, and pillared halls

Photos: Mallik Thatipalli



**T**wo monsoons ago, while the world we knew still existed and where travel didn't involve sanitisers and RT-PCR tests, we travelled to Hampi, to simply get away from it all. The UNESCO World Heritage site in Karnataka has long occupied the imagination for being a significant monument from the point of mythology (it is believed to be the fabled kingdom of Kishkinda, the birthplace of Hanuman) as well as Indian history (as capital of the vibrant Vijayanagara empire).

The very air of Hampi with its numerous temples, rock-strewn landscape, the sound of the gentle gurgle of the river Tungabhadra and its breathtaking architecture spells just magic and mystique. Every temple has a story, and every corner of the temple tells a fable. In this axis of culture and history, Hampi is where time stands still.

Spread over 4,000 hectares, Hampi, which houses 1,500 temples, was a key cultural and economic centre of the south for almost 200 years. The fact that traces of its great history can still be savoured is a testimony to the art, architecture, engineering and science of that time.

The first stop for any visitor to Hampi is the famous oldest and principal temple here – the Virupaksha Temple. It is believed this temple has been functioning for prayers uninterrupted since its inception in 7th century AD. The idol has withstood frequent raids of the Deccan sultans. One of the few temples in south India dedicated to both Vishnu and Shiva, it is also home to India's first natural pin-hole camera.

In this temple, a giant tower or Gopura opens into the first courtyard of the compound. This pastel coloured, nine-storied tower is the most prominent landmark in Hampi and is visible from afar. The temple is a grand structure sprawling over a large area with many smaller shrines, pillared halls and gateways.

Nothing in this city of architectural wonder is as beautiful as the Vijaya Vittala Temple, the unheralded queen of Hampi's temple complexes. You have to walk along what was once the original and fabled Hampi bazaars, where diamonds and rubies were sold by kilos, to reach this temple dedicated to Vishnu.

Built in the 15th century Dravidian style, the temple is spread across a large complex filled with halls, pavilions and gateways. The most extraordinary feature of this temple is the stone chariot, which is one of the three famous stone chariots in India, the other two being in Konark and Mahabalipuram. It originally enshrined Garuda, the vehicle of Lord Vishnu.

The chariot, built on a rectangular platform, has been carved out of giant granite blocks. The chariot's base features mythical battle scenes and a series of concentric floral motifs adorn the wheels of the chariot. The story goes that in the 16th century, King

Krishnadevaraya of the Vijayanagara Empire was so fascinated with the Konark Sun temple chariot while fighting a battle in Odisha, he decided to build one here. An interesting folklore is linked to the Hampi chariot as villagers believe the world would come to a halt when the chariot moves from its place.

Another highlight here is the musical pillars hall (with 56 pillars), which emit a musical note when tapped. While this portion is cordoned off to the curious visitor, it is a treat to see these Saregama pillars.

The most extraordinary feature of this temple is the stone chariot, which is one of the three famous stone chariots in India, the other two being in Konark and Mahabalipuram.

The other architectural marvel at Hampi is the symmetrical stepped tank. This stepped tank was used for religious ceremonies and was considered sacred. The tank displays the spirit of architectural innovation in the Vijayanagara Empire.

Visitors can next soak in the sight of the Hazara Rama Temple, built in the early part of the 15th century

by Devaraya II. The temple once served as the private temple of the royal household. The "Hazara Rama" literally means "a thousand Ramas" and the Ramayana story is carved out on stone in the temple. Presently, it is not a functioning temple and is visited for its architectural beauty.

The less explored ruins of Anegundi or the "monkey kingdom", which is part of the UNESCO site is spell-binding as well. Hanuman, the monkey god who plays a big role in the Ramayana, was believed to have been born here.

Other places of interest at Hampi are the Queen's Bath, Mahanavami Dibba, Zenana enclosure, Courtesan's Street, Sugreeva's cave and Bhima's Gateway. If you climb up to Hemakuta Hill, you will discover two large Ganesha statues and a huge 6.7 m Vishnu carved out of a single boulder with a lion's head and the body of a human lying under a seven-hooded serpent.

A trip to Hampi is incomplete if you do not climb the 600 odd steps to the Hanuman Temple at sunset and watch the sun go down over the surreal scenery. It is guaranteed to imbue even an atheist with a spiritual feeling.

The best time to visit Hampi is between July to February. Most people do a hasty weekend but visitors should spend time to really get into the skin of this treasure trove. ■



# Mask Etiquette

## Covid Safety Measures

In this challenging period, it is important that each one of us is responsible to ensure our own safety, and equally, to be sensitive to the safety of others around us. **Dr P Raghu Ram** says one of the most effective ways of achieving this is by scrupulously following what is known as 'mask etiquette'



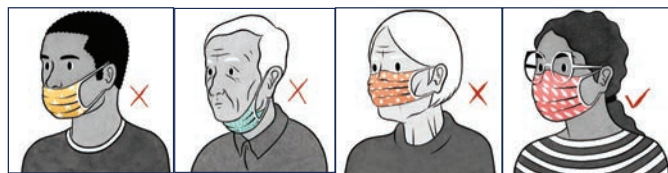
**A**t a time when the second wave of the pandemic is at its peak in India, it is distressing to see a number of irresponsible people (both educated and uneducated) either without masks or wearing them improperly. Equally, it is a common sight to see people bringing their mask down whilst speaking.

This must stop. The moment the mask is brought down to the level below the nose, the whole purpose of wearing the mask is defeated. Bringing the mask to the level of the neck exposes the inside of the mask to germs lurking at the neck level. And then, by bringing the mask from the level of the neck back to the face could make the individual prone to get infected with these germs.

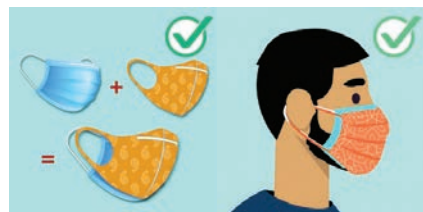
Furthermore, by frequently touching the mask's outer area the individual is exposed to carry the virus on their hands and spread it in the community, if these potentially infected hands are not washed.

### Wearing the mask right

Before wearing a mask, it is vitally important to wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Then dry your hands with a clean paper towel/cloth and throw the paper towel away. Do not use an air dryer as it may disseminate the virus all around. Alternatively, use a hand sanitiser as a second best alternative.



*How NOT to wear a Mask & How TO wear it correctly*



*Double mask Courtesy: Internet*

Check the mask periodically for any defects such as a tear or missing tie or ear loop. Throw away any that are defective.

If you are wearing a surgical mask, make sure the exterior side of the mask is facing out, away from your face. The coloured side is usually the front and must face away from you. The white side should be on the inner aspect touching the face.

If using a mask with ear loop, hold the top of the mask with your fingertips, put on the loops around each ear. Place the mask on your face with the stiff, bendable edge at the top by your nose. If using mask with ties, place the mask on your face with the stiff, bendable edge at the top by your nose. Bring the upper ties over the crown of the head and tie the upper ties with a bow. The crown refers to the area at the upper back of the head. Then tie the lower ties behind your head with a bow.

### General principles to observe

The mask should snugly fit the face. Very important to ensure that there is no air leak near your eyes and from the mask's outer edges. If the mask is fitted correctly, you would be able to see the mask moving in and out with each breath.

Once the mask is in place, use your index finger and thumb to pinch the bendable top edge of the mask around the bridge of your nose. Make sure the mask is completely secure. Extremely important to make sure the mask covers the nose and mouth so that the bottom edge is under your chin.

Do not forget to wash your hands after wearing the mask.

### Mask removal is equally important

Wash your hands before removing the mask. Do not touch the outside of the mask with bare hands. Use tissue papers to stabilise the outside of the mask. Untie/remove ear loops and gently take the mask away from the face without sudden jerky movements. Do not touch inside of the mask (the part over nose and mouth). It may be

contaminated from your breathing, coughing or sneezing. Promptly, dispose the mask in the trash without fail. Wash your hands.

### Wearing a double mask

Most recent recommendation is to wear a double mask in crowded places. A disposable mask is worn underneath a cloth mask. The masks should snugly fit covering the nose, mouth and chin without any gaps.

It is vitally important not to use two surgical (disposable) masks as they are not designed to fit snugly and wearing two such masks does not protect you.

### Who should wear medical masks?

Frontline healthcare workers, people suspected/confirmed with COVID, caretakers looking after COVID suspect/confirmed patients, people in the community over the age of 60 and those with underlying co-morbid health conditions should wear medical masks.

Whilst people with no COVID symptoms at home and when going out to a public place can wear a fabric/ disposable mask.



### Can masks be worn during exercise?

Although there are conflicting views, commonsense indicates that masks should not be worn while exercising. Airflow is significantly diminished in moderate to severe exercise, which is associated with faster breaths. And therefore, wearing a mask during exercise will act as a barrier to airflow, which can lower oxygen levels in the re-circulated air.

Also, more carbon-dioxide exhaled during exercise can potentially get trapped by the mask and when it is re-inhaled, it can further cause excessive breathing (hyperventilation) and reduced brain function, which can



manifest as confusion and loss of consciousness as well. It is a well-known fact that heart rate increases during exercise. But wearing a mask during exercise further increases heart rate, which can cause dehydration, light-headedness and dizziness and can even result in adverse cardiac effects.

It is important to balance the benefits of wearing a mask versus adverse effects during exercise. It would be prudent not to exercise in public places for a few months, until the pandemic wanes. How responsibly we conduct ourselves collectively as a nation will largely determine the effect of the pandemic in the country.

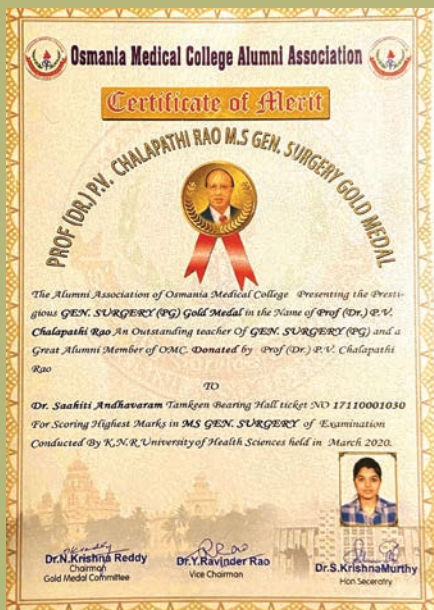
Wearing a mask properly alongside personal hygiene and social distancing are the three pillars, which we must not forget, both at home and outside. ■



# UBF Diary

March 2021

## The Legacy Lives On... The Dr P V Chalapathi Rao Gold Medal for 2020



Dr P Raghu Ram, founder, CEO and UBF director presented the 'Prof P V Chalapathi Rao Gold Medal' for the year 2020 to Dr Saahiti Andhavaram, the best outgoing post-graduate student in general surgery from Osmania Medical College at a function organised by the Osmania Medical College Alumni Association on March 24, 2021.

A corpus fund was created in the name of the late Prof Chalapathi Rao and the interest generated is being used annually to award the best outgoing under-graduate student in surgery (MBBS final year) at Gandhi Medical College and best outgoing post-graduate student (MS) in general surgery at Osmania Medical College.

These two colleges have been chosen as Prof Chalapathi Rao served in both these premier institutions as professor of surgery for 16 years from 1967 to 1983.

## The Queen's Honour Features in The American College of Surgeons Bulletin

Dr P Raghu Ram was recently appointed OBE – 'Officer of the Most Excellent Order of British Empire', which is the second highest-ranking Order of British Empire Award (excluding Knighthood/Damehood) by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II in the 2021 New Year's Honours' list.

In recognition of achieving this singular honour, he was featured in the March 2021 bulletin published by The American College of Surgeons, which is the world's largest surgical organisation that represents the surgical fraternity from America and across the world.

To read more about the feature published in the Bulletin, click on the link given below

<https://bulletin.facs.org/2021/03/members-in-the-news-19/>



## In Pursuit of that One Idea



Dr P Raghu Ram was interviewed by the editorial director at Rediff.com on March 11, 2021, after he had received the Queen's Honour.

Here's a highlight from the interview, in which Dr Raghu Ram says that receiving the Queen's Honour has well and 'truly added fire in my belly to make an even greater impact' to improve breast healthcare in the country. And, interestingly, he also shares a quote by Swami Vivekananda, which he says has now become a part and parcel of his life. "Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life... Think of it, dream of it and live on that idea... Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body be full of that idea, and, just leave every other idea alone".

Clearly, that one idea has been Dr Raghu Ram's mantra.

To know more about the interview, click on the link given below:

<https://www.rediff.com/news/interview/the-protector-of-women-from-breast-cancer/20210308.htm>

**rediff.com**



**Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation**  
Hyderabad, India

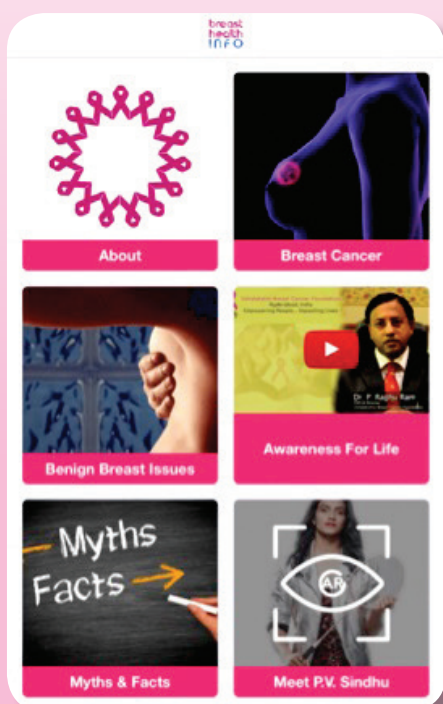
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[www.ubf.org.in](http://www.ubf.org.in)

## **World's first mobile app on breast health in 12 languages**

(English, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Gujarati, Punjabi, Bengali, Marathi, Oriya & Assamese).

### **‘ABCs OF BREAST HEALTH’**



Launched by Mr Amitabh Bachchan (2017)

**An initiative of the Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation**

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#### **LINKS FOR FREE DOWNLOAD**

##### **App store**

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/abcs-of-breast-health/id1482487468>

##### **Google play store**

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=devatech.kims.avantari>

