PINK CONNEXION

UBF
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Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan, Telangana Governor

Championing the cause of health

Paigah Tombs

An architectural gem

Mahasweta Bhatta

Overcoming the ordeal of cancer

BEHIND The Scenes

In May, when Hyderabad should have been unbearably hot, we've been having unseasonal rains. I see that everywhere, we have rains in peak summer months or conversely, intolerable heat during winters. Glaciers are melting and the arctic regions too are experiencing hot summers! Undeniably, climates are changing, and how.

To add to this, there is man's foolishness of urbanisation which leaves no room for excess waters to flow into estuaries and rivers. Husain Sagar Lake in Hyderabad, where rainwaters were supposed to flow into, now regularly floods areas that have emerged on its banks. I see the same situation near Durgam Cheruvu, where the roads are periodically blocked with overflowing rain water that otherwise should have run into the lake that is now bunded and surrounded by high-rises.

These adverse environmental conditions naturally trigger illnesses in humans. We are still debating over the origins of the COVID virus, with some speculating it was caused by bats, and other creatures who have lost their habitation in the forests. As we sow, we reap, and the way we abuse our environments will reflect on humanity's health, physical as well as mental.

On the brighter side, it was inspirational to meet Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan, the governor of Telangana and Puchucherry recently, who believes one needs to invest in health just as you would into a bank account: when you put in that much effort eating or exercising, it pays off on overall health. Indeed, if she has time to walk and do yoga, read and write, any of us can! She is quick to lend a helping hand to causes related to people's health (and not merely as jingoism) and she staunchly supports Dr Raghu Ram in his efforts to raise awareness for early detection of breast cancer by agreeing to light up the Raj Bhavan in Hyderabad two years in a row.

Ratna Rao Shekar

Contents

3 **CANCER CONQUEROR**
Mahasweta Bhatta tells her story of how she successfully fought third stage breast cancer with extraordinary resilience

6 **MAKING A DIFFERENCE**
Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan, governor of Telangana and Puducherry, is truly an inspirational figure. This champion of causes related to health, including raising awareness about breast cancer, talks to *Pink* exclusively

9 **HERITAGE**
The architectural gem that is the Paigah Tombs located in Hyderabad's old city, is often referred to as the 'Taj Mahal of the south'. *Pink* pays a visit to find out why

14 **MY VIEW**
Dr P Raghu Ram emphasises the importance of counselling as an important component of cancer care. It gives the patient the feeling they are more in control at every stage of the treatment

16 **UBF DIARY**
A roundup of events and activities at the UBF in the last quarter

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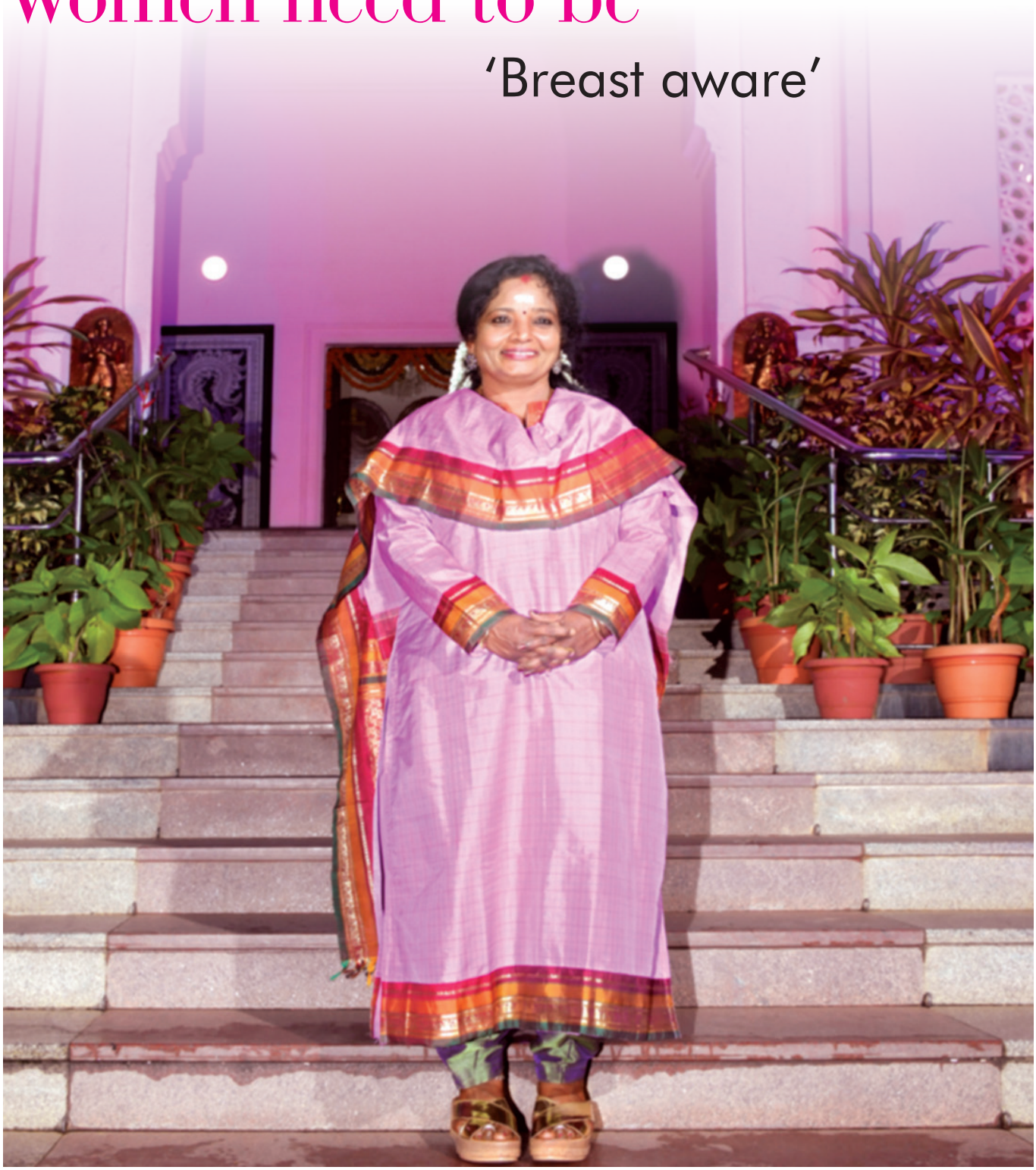
Women need to be 'Breast aware'



Dynamic and articulate, Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan is the governor of Telangana and Puducherry. Despite her busy schedule filled with official commitments she makes time for exercise, writing and reading. She is also an ardent supporter of breast cancer awareness and believes in the critical importance of timely screening.

Minal Khona talks to the dynamic governor in an exclusive interview for *Pink Connexion*

Born in Nagercoil, in the Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu, Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan knew at age ten that she wanted to be a politician. A good orator, she was often asked to give the welcome address when any VIP visited her school. Her father was a six-time MLA and one-time MP with the Congress party. Her interest in politics ensured she assisted her father with his campaigning – distributing posters and keeping accounts etc.

The oldest among four sisters and one brother, her far-sighted mother insisted she get an education before following her passion for politics, so that she wouldn't have to be dependent on anybody and ask anyone for money. She went on to study medicine, then got a post-graduate degree in gynaecology followed by specialised training in sonology and foetal therapy.

Though Dr Tamilisai got married and moved to Thanjavur when she was still in her first year of medicine, her husband, Dr P Soundararajan, a nephrologist, encouraged her to follow politics while working. He believed she had the capacity to lead on a larger stage.

She recalls, "I was always speaking up for causes and was a student leader at Madras Medical College (where I studied). I participated in the agitation during the Sri Lankan Tamil issue, when it was at its height. When I was in Thanjavur, I fought for more oxygen tanks at the hospital since there was a scarcity. I was drawn to social causes, and fought for people."

Seated regally in the Durbar Hall at the Raj Bhavan, in her official position as the governor for Telangana and Puducherry and as she talks to us about her career and lifestyle, it is evident that she is an expert at time management.

For 20 years, she led a busy life as a medical professional. Her specialisation qualified her to check for foetal anomalies. "I was only the second foetal specialist in Tamil Nadu at that time. I worked at four to five hospitals, was the assistant professor at Sri Ramachandra Medical College in Chennai and ran two clinics of my own. Despite the busy schedule, I never misdiagnosed a single case and I have examined lakhs of patients!" she says with some pride.

Dr Tamilisai is outspoken and committed about issues concerning the public, especially health

She joined the BJP as she wanted to be part of a national organisation, and has gone up the ranks by her own efforts. From state general secretary to state president for Tamil Nadu, where she got an extension due to her work, Dr Tamilisai is outspoken and committed about issues concerning the public, especially health.

As governor, she is often asked to speak at public events. She says, "At any public event, I always talk about the importance of health check-ups, especially for women and breast cancer. Early detection is the key. During my student days in medical college, we were taught to examine the breasts of patients during every consult, even if they came to us with different issues. Today, it is not older women alone who get breast cancer. Younger women too are diagnosed with the disease, so I always stress on the importance of detecting it before it reaches an advanced stage."

> I walk every day, one hour each, in the morning and evening. I practise yoga and depending on my flight schedules, I wake up early to do yoga and walk. If I don't have enough time, I break it up into shorter walks – at the airport terminal or at my residence – wherever I am. Even if I have ten minutes available, I walk

During one of her official engagements, Dr Tamilisai met Dr P Raghu Ram and has since been a strong supporter of his NGO that she helps in various ways. From having the Raj Bhavan illuminated in pink during the Breast Cancer Awareness month in October 2020, '21 and '22, to attending his events where other cancer conquerors come and share their stories, Dr Tamilisai participates whole-heartedly.

She says, "I met Dr Raghu Ram at programmes on cancer awareness that he has been organising with great passion, ensuring meticulous attention to detail. He is a brilliant surgeon with a burning desire for breast cancer advocacy, and I appreciate the sincere work he has been doing under the auspices of his NGO— Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation that he established in his mother, Dr Ushalakshmi's name to honour her struggle and applaud her strength in the fight against breast cancer."

The governor continues, "I had invited Dr Raghu Ram to Raj Bhavan recently to highlight the issue about awareness and the importance of screening for breast cancer, as a social initiative, and he has done an excellent job explaining to the audience in a simple, easy-to-understand format. He emphasised the importance of making women and young girls 'breast aware' and if there are any new changes in the breast such as a lump or discharge, they need to have it checked without any delay."

'Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan solidly stood by 'Paint the City Pink' campaign'

Ever grateful to the Hon'ble governor, who solidly stood like a rock behind the "Paint the City Pink" campaign being spearheaded by Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation. Even during the peak of the COVID 19 pandemic, the governor had very kindly accepted my proposal for the Foundation to illuminate the Telangana Raj Bhavan in pink, to mark the beginning of International Breast Cancer Awareness Month (October). This has sent a very powerful message of hope, courage and survivorship in the fight against the most common cancer affecting women in Bharat. Furthermore, the Telangana Raj Bhavan is the only Raj Bhavan in Bharat to have turned pink in support of breast cancer awareness in 2021 and 2022 as well

Dr P Raghu Ram, OBE, on governor of Telangana

The governor with Dr Raghu Ram and his wife Dr Vyjayanthi

'Dr Raghu Ram has a burning desire for breast cancer advocacy'

I met Dr Raghu Ram at programmes on cancer awareness that he has been organising with great passion, ensuring meticulous attention to detail. He is a brilliant surgeon with a burning desire for breast cancer advocacy, and I appreciate the sincere work he has been doing under the auspices of his NGO—Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation that he established in his mother, Dr Ushalakshmi's name to honour her struggle and applaud her strength in the fight against breast cancer

Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan on Dr P Raghu Ram

The governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan with Pink *editor Ratna Rao Shekar (right) and Minal Khona, writer*

Dr Tamilisai is impressed with the spirit of the survivors who speak at Dr Raghu Ram's events. She says, "I have met some of Dr Raghu Ram's patients whom he refers to as 'Conquerors', who have shared their opinions, views and experiences of fighting cancer. They were jubilant, well-dressed, with not an iota of pain, and healthy in body and mind."

Given her busy schedule, what is her own lifestyle like?

She says with a smile, "I am strict about my food habits and exercise. I measure my calorie intake and I know what to eat and how much. If I have a Hyderabadi biryani for lunch, I will have oats for dinner. When I go to Puducherry, I enjoy the kulfi there because it is very good; but then I balance the rest of my meals accordingly."

She is a believer in the benefits of exercise. "I walk every day, one hour each, in the morning and evening. I practise yoga and depending on my flight schedules, I wake up early to do yoga and walk. If I don't have enough time, I break it up into shorter walks—at the airport terminal or at my residence – wherever I am. Even if I have ten minutes available, I walk. I also never take the lift and climb the stairs where needed."

Dr Tamilisai believes in making the most of every day. An avid reader, she has also authored several books. She is currently working on three more—motivation in daily life, a compilation of her own speeches and her political experiences as the governor. How does she make time to fit all these in? She states that she is "averse to watching movies. I can't sit for three hours and watch a movie and nor do I watch TV serials. Nor can I read fiction. I read at the airport, before going to sleep or during lunchtime."

For a stress-free life, no matter how busy one is, Dr Tamilisai reiterates that a positive approach and not taking everything to heart is a good way to stay healthy.

Dr Tamilisai is a living example of how a woman can have it all—a career, family and good health. She is a wife, mother and a professional; besides holding important official positions in the government. And she has no plans of slowing down.

More power to her. ■

Paigah Tombs

The Taj Mahal of the South!

The Paigah Tombs located in Hyderabad's old city, is an architectural gem. From its confluence of styles to its delicate craftsmanship, it is a storyteller's dream. It is little wonder then that many architecture schools in the city ensure no student graduates without studying the splendours of this necropolis.

Mallik Thatipalli visits the vintage precincts and delves into its rich past

The lime and mortar wonders of Hyderabad

Inside the heart of Hyderabad's old city lies its best-kept secret. Maqhbara Shams ul-Umara, better known as the Paigah Tombs is an ancient necropolis, which is just a 15-minute drive from the world-famous Charminar, but it remains forgotten by the city, with even most of the locals unaware of its arresting beauty and allure!

Even in a city full of architectural wonders, the Paigah Tombs standout because of its magnificence and melange of styles. Fenestrations, full of detailing, scalloped arches, and screened lattices so fine, that no two frames are similar, make this a little-known gem.

The Paigahs were the most influential aristocrats of the erstwhile princely state of Hyderabad, second only to the Nizams and related to them by marriage. (Incidentally it was the Paigahs who built the now well known palace, The Faluknuma). The necropolis came into existence in 1786, with the death of Abul Fateh Khan, a valiant soldier, also known as the 'Sun of the Nobles'. The site was chosen because of its proximity to the dargah of the sufi saint Burhane Shah, who came to India from Iraq and was buried in an open enclosure in 1655. Initially spread over 6.5 acres, it has now shrunk to two acres because of encroachments.

Maqhbara Shams ul-Umara, better known as the Paigah Tombs is an ancient necropolis, which is just a 15-minute drive from the world-famous Charminar, but it remains forgotten by the city

Faiz Khan Paigah, an eighth-generation descendant of the family, calls the Paigah tombs 'a mammoth complex', which is matchless in its design. He adds, "The architecture is unique as it is an amalgamation of eight diverse styles—French, Italian, Greek, Turkish, Mughal, Rajput, Persian and Kakatiyan. No other place in the city boasts of so many influences."

Indeed, the influences result in a breathtaking and unique style. Every inch of the mausoleum is richly embellished – and the stucco work is marked by its harmonious geometrical patterns.

A confluence of design

An arched gateway called Naubat Khana leads us into the necropolis. Ornate trellises, intricately carved pillars and embellished domes

The heavily ornamented corridors flanking the tombs

The tombs, which were once embellished with precious stones, are open to the sky

Wooden entrance doors which boast of intricate and layered detailing

Arched corridors with ornately carved pillars

The unique onion-shaped domes which show a confluence of styles

resembling an onion, can be spotted at every corner. If you visit the place on a weekday, all you can hear is the cry of birds in this space, which is so imbued with a poignant beauty.

The Paigahs were renowned patrons of art and at one point, the graves were supposed to be embedded with stones that changed colour according to the time of the day. With over 28 graves, the crypts are soaked in architectural grandeur. Some with marble chowkandis (small pavilions) over the tombs that are decorated with fine engravings, while others boast of stunning pietra dura inlay work on Makrana marble from Rajasthan (used in the construction of the Taj Mahal).

Khan adds,"The tombs of Sir Amir-e-Paigah and Lady Khurshid Jah Hussain-un-Nissa Begum Sahiba are inlaid with precious and semi-precious stones like those made for Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan."

Significant style

Architecturally, their significance lies in the fact that the tombs have amalgamated different styles besides having been built over two centuries. Its evidence is present in the intricate jaalis in lime plaster and exquisite stucco carvings, unmatched anywhere else in the country. Every enclosure has limestone jaalis, while carved doors (made from mahogany, teak and rosewood) function as entrances. The mosaic tilework adds another element of ornamentation inside the tombs.

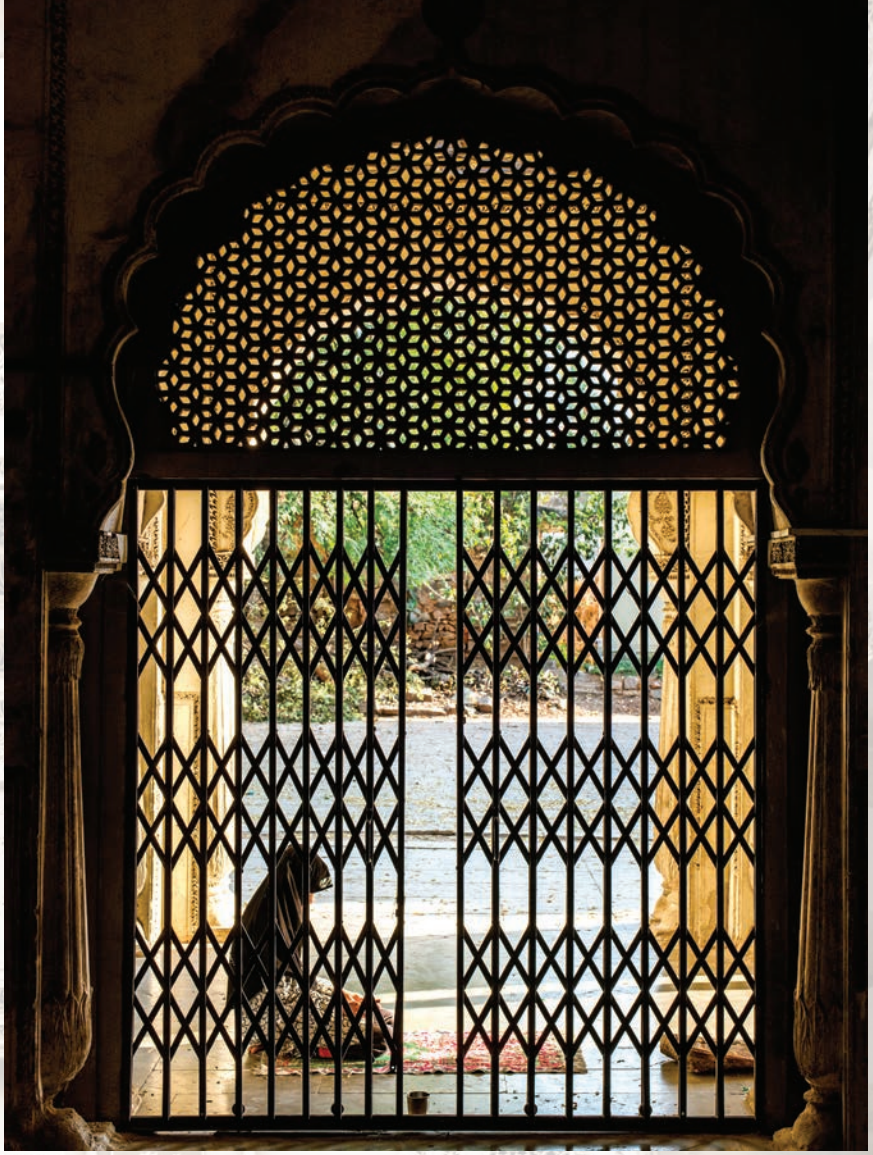
The Paigahs were renowned patrons of art and at one point, the graves were supposed to be embedded with stones that changed colour according to the time of the day

Over 35 different types of jaalis are found in the necropolis, many following the basic six-fold isometric grid. They showcase the Islamic interpretations of the feminine (matter) and masculine (mind) through geometric patterns including fruits and flowers, serpents, drums and vases as well as the traditional designs of stars and circles.

Delicate friezes are carved in complex shapes throughout the tombs: from pineapples (signifying wealth), opulent bouquets of flowers to arches that seem to merge into the heavens.

Many jaalis however are broken, while entire chunks have disappeared in some, lending them an eerie beauty. They create enticing patterns on the floor as the afternoon sun plays peek-a-boo with these decorative screens.

One highlight, which exemplifies the rich style of the necropolis is the Ladli Begum tomb, which has lattice-screens with a base of 1 mm thick terracotta, while using the conventional pattern of 10-fold rosette to great effect. The uniqueness lies in the construction techniques, used to fix the terracotta pieces together to get the geometry of the rosettes and perfect pentagrams within them, astoundingly accurate and symmetric.



The intricate lattice work which is unique to the Paigah Tombs

Conservation efforts

A US-funded conservation project is currently underway at this site, with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) leading the efforts.

Ratish Nanda, CEO of AKTC calls the Paigah Tombs unique not only for Hyderabad, but for the country. "There is no other group of monuments that are of a similar architectural style. Here, the graves, open to the sky – as per orthodox Islamic belief, are enclosed with elaborate screens that are deceptively like grand structures. The profuse ornamentation – stucco plaster, minarets and lattice screens are exceptional – made with terracotta and lime," he notes.

AKTC has spent years documenting the structures and trying to revive the craftmanship skills required for the conservation works. While the work is expected to take three more years, some of the landscape works have been completed, including granite stone paving.

Nanda states that the restoration of the jaalis will be the absolute highlight of the conservation effort. He adds, "The incredible jaalis at Paigah Tombs are unique – such lattice screens based on terracotta base and covered with lime are not seen anywhere."

The premises also house a small mosque, water body and wrought iron benches. The ancient mango and badam trees, the heady mixture of architecture styles and the lingering beauty of the necropolis, make it an Instagrammer's delight. Then it seems befitting for Rahmatullah to call these tombs, "The Taj of the south". ■

Counselling
in Cancer Care

More than a cure, it's comfort that is important, **Dr P Raghu Ram** writes in his column this quarter. Counselling is an important component of cancer care giving the patient the feeling that they are more in control at every stage of the treatment

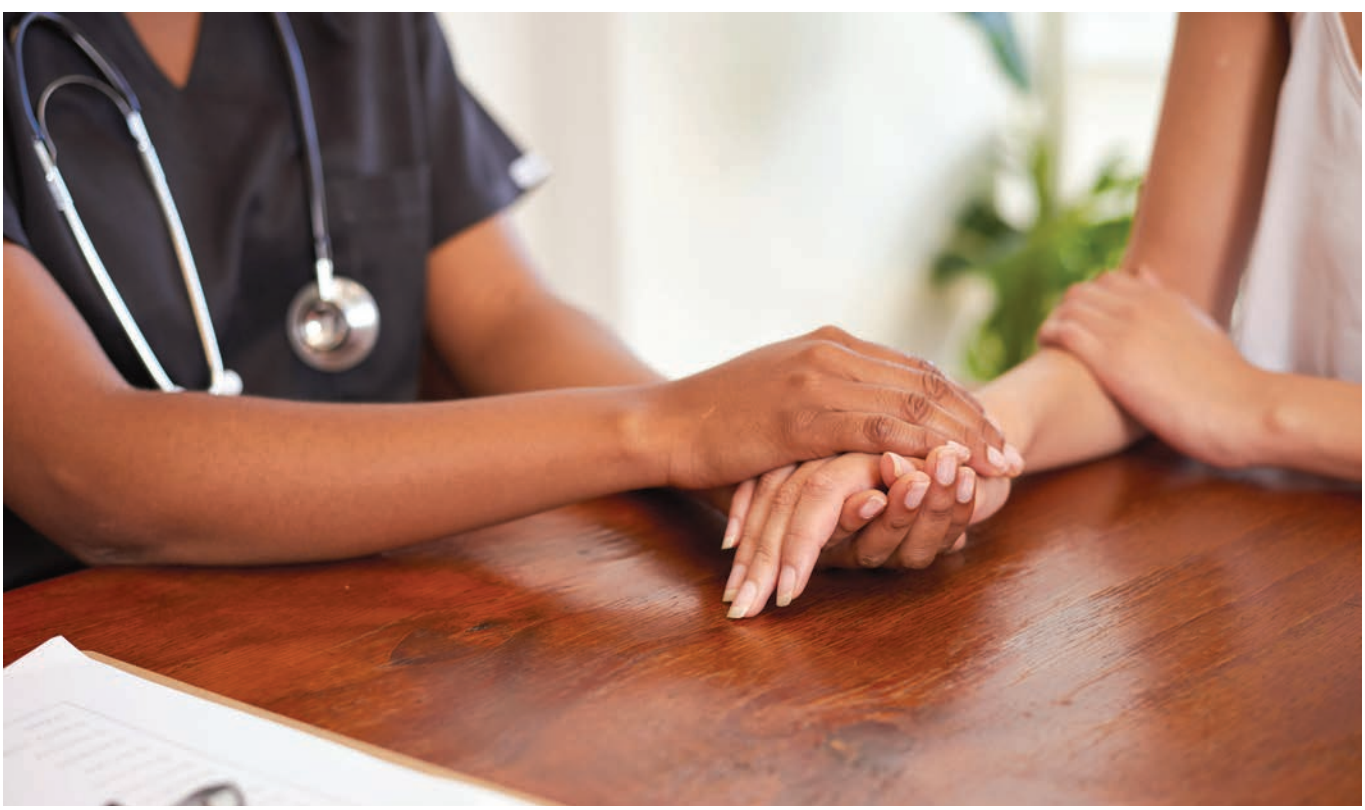
This is a familiar scenario—Mrs. S, a 40-year-old lady was diagnosed with breast cancer. She was told in medical jargon that she had a "malignant tumour" and needed mastectomy. Even before she got over the shock of being diagnosed with cancer, a battery of tests was done, and soon enough, she underwent surgery.

Being informed of cancer diagnosis is a huge shock, particularly so, when it strikes at a young age. It doesn't sink in so easily and one may really question if it is actually true. A loss of control over life steps in, with a range of emotions such as anxiety, anger, isolation and fear of dying, which are all too common and natural.

'Will I lose my breast?' is one of the first questions that comes to the mind when diagnosed with breast cancer.

Cancer affects the body, mind and soul. And hence, treating just the body isn't enough. Counselling is therefore a vitally important component of cancer care, which gives patients and their relatives the distinct

> Counselling involves an unhurried discussion between the specialist and patient about the diagnosis/various treatment options in a sensitive and supportive environment



opportunity to be better informed, better prepared and more importantly, feel more in control at every stage of the treatment.

Benefits of counselling

In my opinion, counselling constitutes more than 50 per cent of the treatment, as it plays a crucial role in the recovery of mind, body and soul. It involves an unhurried discussion between the specialist and patient about the diagnosis and various treatment options in a sensitive and supportive environment. Equally, adequate psychological and emotional support is given during counselling sessions, which provides the much needed 'inner strength' and determination to fight the 'unwelcome visitor' in their life.

Ask questions

Patients should be actively encouraged to ask questions regarding significance of various investigation modalities, treatment options and how they might impact on everyday life, possible side effects, the short and long term complications and many more. It is the specialist's duty to clarify questions in a simple, effective and easy-to-understand format.

Communication is a distinct art to talk medicine in the language of the non-medical man. Compassion and empathy must be at its best whilst breaking bad news. In giving patients time and listening to them, doctors will find some of the real rewards of practising medicine.

I remind myself every day that listening to the patient is far more important than talking. In this day and age of heavy reliance on tests, one must not forget that the diagnosis of a condition, in the vast majority, can me made through the history of the patient and physical examination. Hence, good listening is the best diagnostic modality.

Communication skills necessary for doctors

Until a few years ago, "Communication Skills" was not even part of the Indian medical curriculum. Although it is now included in the new medical curriculum since 2019, there is still no structured, uniform and robust assessment process in place across the nation. It is pertinent to mention here that however knowledgeable and skilled one may be, it is virtually impossible to clear the under-graduate MBBS course or Specialist Fellowship Examination (post-graduate course) in the UK, without demonstrating adequate communication skills. A fail in this section means an overall fail, even if one does well in other aspects of the examination.

Compassion and empathy must be at its best whilst breaking bad news. In giving patients time and listening to them, doctors will find some of the real rewards of practising medicine

On the occasion of World Cancer Day, I request the powers that be to ensure communication skills and its formal robust assessment become an integral part of under-graduate and post-graduate medical curriculum in India. I conclude with a poignant statement made by Edward Livingston Trudeau, a 19th century physician, which is relevant even today—"Cure sometimes, Relieve often, but, Comfort always". ■

This article was first published on World Cancer Day 2023 in The Times of India

Prof PV Chalapathi Rao Gold Medal

The Prof PV Chalapathi Rao Gold Medal for the year 2023 was presented for the 8th consecutive year by Dr Raghu Ram to Dr Ankush Supriya, best outgoing post-graduate student in general surgery, from Osmania Medical College, at a function organised by Osmania Medical College Alumni Association, on March 29.

UBF Diary

March 2023

What every woman must know – The ABCs of breast health

(L-R) Milkuri Gangavva, guest of honour, Dr Raghu Ram and K Padmanabhaiah, chief guest, on the dias

To celebrate International Women's Day, about 500 people from all walks of life participated in this unique, lively and interactive session that empowered the audience about every aspect of breast cancer and non-cancer benign breast health issues. The session was formally inaugurated by K Padmanabhaiah, chairman ASCI, who complimented Dr Raghu Ram for being a "listening doctor" and a skilled surgeon. A special attraction at the event, Milkuri Gangavva, an actor, YouTuber and influencer from Jagityal, urged women across Telangana to take all the necessary steps to ensure early detection of cancer.

Dr Raghu Ram highlighted the fact that breast cancer is the most common cancer affecting women in India and due to lack of awareness, more than 60 per cent present in the advanced stages and most succumb to the disease within a year of being diagnosed. He underlined the importance of early detection.

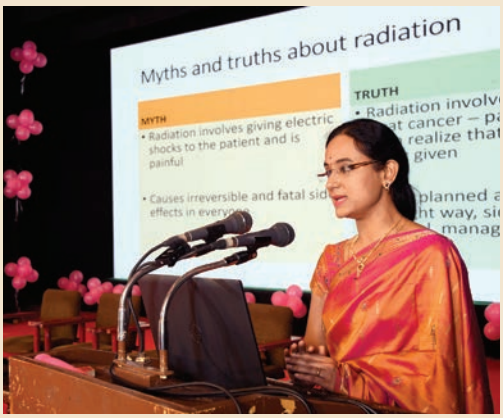
Dr Kotha Ushalakshmi: I fought the disease with courage

Talking of her own personal journey, Dr Kotha Ushalakshmi, UBF founder chairman said, "I am currently 90 years old. Breast cancer was an unwelcome visitor in my life precisely 20 years ago. I fought the disease with courage and determination. When my son, Dr Raghu Ram relocated from the UK to India to look after me, I asked him to establish a Foundation to create the much-needed awareness about early detection in the community. I'm delighted he has been working with missionary zeal over the past 17 years and has been spearheading a major breast cancer awareness drive in the Telugu States. What greater satisfaction can be there for a mother?" she asked.

ABCs of chemotherapy, radiotherapy, diet, yoga and meditation

Dr Mounika Boppana, consultant medical oncologist at KIMS Hospitals focussed on ways to minimise side effects relating to the often punishing treatment schedules. Dr Janaki Srinath, eminent nutritionist, talked about the role of diet in preventing cancer and the diet that one must consume during and after cancer treatment.

Cancer affects the body, mind and soul and Sharmila Raghav, a trained hatha yoga instructor not only stressed



Dr Mounika Boppana demystifying some common myths

Susila Kila, a teacher, a breast cancer conqueror with her husband

Dr Varalakshmi, an eminent neurologist and breast cancer conqueror

the importance of yoga and meditation in healing, but also made the attendees perform some basic yoga and meditation techniques.

The key questions surrounding every aspect of breast cancer and benign non-cancer breast health issues were addressed by this panel of experts led by Dr Raghu Ram.

Two patients who recently underwent treatment under the care of Dr Raghu Ram—Susila Kila and Dr Varalakshmi, a renowned neurologist too shared their first-hand experiences of dealing with cancer in their lives. Effective counselling by doctors and robust family help in winning the war against cancer, they shared.

Guest of honour at inaugural ceremony of 'Ramayanam Kalpavrksham'

Nirmala Sitharaman with Dr Raghu Ram and Dr Ananda Shankar Jayant

Dr Raghu Ram sharing his thoughts

Chief guest Nirmala Sitharaman and Dr Raghu Ram, guest of honour, inaugurating the festival

Dr Raghu Ram being felicitated by Dr Ananda Shankar Jayant

Dr P Raghu Ram, as guest of honour, shared the dais along with Union finance minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, to inaugurate 'Ramayanam Kalpavrksam' , a three-day unique multi-art cultural festival.

This festival conceived, curated and presented by Ananda Shankar Jayant, a renowned Indian classical dancer, scholar and a breast cancer conqueror, celebrates the life of Lord Rama. On the occasion, Dr Raghu Ram said he was fortunate to be involved in the care of Ananda Shankar Jayant as her surgeon, when she had fought cancer. He added, "With fierce determination and extraordinary resilience, she danced her way through cancer to emerge as a breast cancer conqueror." He later spoke about what he valued and treasured the most—reading the 'Ramayana' in his mother tongue, Telugu.

Link to Dr Raghu Ram's address

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmNv6hyHLqY

The 'Ibrahimpur Model' needs to be adopted around the country

Dr Raghu Ram and minister Harish Rao presenting updated post office pass books to a child

Dr Raghu Ram expressing his gratitude

Ibrahimpur, the remotest hamlet in Medak district, Telangana, has been the beneficiary of the several philanthropic initiatives implemented by Dr P Raghu Ram for the past eight years after he adopted the village.

Most recently, he contributed Rs 10 lakhs towards the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana scheme, in which money is credited in the accounts of 37 girl students under the age of 10 years from Ibrahimpur Primary School. An amount of Rs 27,000 has been credited in each of their accounts, which would mature to around Rs 1 lakh each, when they turn 21.

This amount can cover expenses towards higher studies/ wedding of the girl child. This highest interest generating post-office savings scheme, which was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015, fetches 3 to 4 times the principal invested amount at the time of maturity.

Furthermore, money cannot be withdrawn by any family member until maturity, to ensure the girl child is protected. Interacting with the recipients of 37 girl children and their families in Siddipet on March 26, Harish Rao, minister for finance, health, medical & family welfare, government of Telangana paid rich tributes to Dr Raghu Ram for his multiple initiatives in Ibrahimpur since 2015.

Dr Raghu Ram, minister Harish Rao with the beneficiaries and their parents

Minister Harish Rao felicitating Dr Raghu Ram

In Ibrahimpur, Dr Raghu Ram has constructed a modern crematorium, a cattle shed in the village outskirts to prevent cattle born infections, home solar system to ensure zero electricity bills for life, a digital class room, a dining hall in the school premises and an open air gym to ensure healthy living.

Dr Raghu Ram said, "It has been a blessing and an incredible privilege to have been able to reach out to the residents of my adopted village, Ibrahimpur. It is unreasonable to expect the government to do everything and it is vitally important for the citizenry who have the resources to do what is required to improve the lives of those who are less fortunate."

Pointing out that there are around 10, 000 villages in Telangana, he wished that if just 10, 000 citizens adopt one village each and invest part of their time and energy to uplift the lives and livelihood in rural areas, then this 'Ibrahimpur Model' can serve as a benchmark for the nation.

"And, with over 6 lakh villages, well over 70 per cent of India's population live in rural areas. If 6 lakh citizenry who have the necessary resources, undertake similar initiatives in the 6 lakh villages, in the next 25 years, it will be a golden opportunity to fulfil dreams, goals and aspirations of countless lives across Bharat," said Dr Raghu Ram.

Link to Harish Rao's address

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StkKq2tBGiw

A high-profile visitor from Britain drops in

Lord Bilimoria compliments Dr B Bhaskar Rao, Chairman, KIMS Hospitals and admires Dr Raghu Ram's accolades at the Breast Centre

One of the most successful persons of Indian origin in the UK—Lord Karan Bilimoria CBE, an active crossbench member of the House of Lords and chancellor of University of Birmingham and currently, president of the Confederation of British Industry, was on an official visit to India on behalf of the British government.

Lord Bilimoria visited KIMS-USHALAKSHMI Centre for Breast Diseases on April 6 and complimented Dr Raghu Ram for serving as a 'Living Bridge' between the UK and India for well over a decade and paid rich tributes to his outstanding contribution towards improving breast healthcare in India through a number of innovative initiatives.

Later in a tweet, he said about Dr Raghu Ram, "I am impressed and inspired with the wonderful work you are carrying out with your team, literally saving lives every day!"

The Pink Ribbon symbol sails the high seas

Ocean Network Express (ONE), which is the 7th largest shipping container service, organised an innovative breast cancer awareness event. Head-quartered in Singapore, ONE launched a year-long campaign to raise awareness of breast cancer globally.

The company has transformed 100 of its iconic magenta containers to feature the pink ribbon—an international symbol for breast cancer awareness to promote the importance of early detection of breast cancer.

Their first Pink Ribbon containers arrived in Hyderabad and Dr Raghu Ram was invited as chief guest on this occasion in April. He delivered an address to the employees about the importance of early detection.

UK Telugu charity confers Lifetime Achievement Award

Dr Raghu Ram being conferred 'Lifetime Achievement Award' by Dr Ramulu Dasoju, founder chairman and Bharathi Kandukuri, current chairperson of the Telugu Association of London

Dr Raghu Ram was conferred the 'Lifetime Achievement Award' at the glittering Ugadi 2023 celebrations organised by the Telugu Association of London (TAL) on April 22, in London.

Representing over 10,000 Telugu speaking people in and around London, TAL is the largest Telugu charity organisation in the UK. Paying rich tributes to Dr Raghu Ram, Dr Ramulu Dasoju, founder chairman and Mrs Bharathi Kandukuri, current chairman of Telugu Association of London, read out excerpts from the citation, which said, "TAL has recognised Dr Raghu Ram with the Lifetime Achievement Award for his outstanding contribution towards transforming breast cancer care in India."

Councillor Raghwinder Siddhu, mayor of London Borough of Hounslow, who was the special guest at the event added, "Dr Raghu Ram is a perfect role model of a 'Living Bridge' between UK and India and has been an advocate of best practices in his chosen field coupled with human touch and many altruistic values".

Sai Kumar, a well-known Tollywood actor felicitated Dr Raghu Ram with a 'Lifetime Achievement Award Pagadi' during the event.

Many glorious firsts at Japan Surgical Congress

Dr Raghu Ram delivering the 'International Lecture' at the JSS 123rd Congress

Dr P Raghu Ram delivered the prestigious 'International Lecture' on 'Transforming Breast Healthcare – Celebrating 17 positively eventful years' during the 123rd Annual Congress of the Japan Surgical Congress (JSS) being held from April 27-29, 2023 at the International Convention Centre in Grand Prince Hotel, Tokyo.

Dr Raghu Ram highlighted the disruptive initiatives championed by KIMS-USHALAKSHMI Centre for Breast Diseases & UBF, which has been working with missionary zeal over the past 17 years towards improving the delivery of breast cancer care in India.

Over 10,000 surgeons and surgical trainees from all across Japan and distinguished surgeons from other parts of the world participated in this scientific Congress. In his capacity as convenor, International Affairs for the Association of Surgeons of India (ASI), the world's second largest surgical organisation, Dr Raghu Ram's request to Japan Surgical Society to provide a travel grant of US$ 6000, which would fund three Indian surgical trainees to Japan, was approved.

Dr Sanjay Jain, president ASI and Dr Raghu Ram, convener, International Affairs ASI with Dr Kenji Minatoya, convenor, International Affairs, JSS

Dr Raghu Ram felicitating Dr Takao Ohki, Congress president JSS 2023

In an initiative for the first time in ASI's 84-year old history, Dr Nidhin from Palakkad, Dr Priyanka Saha from AIIMS Bhubaneshwar and Dr Reshma Balachandran from Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai, who were selected by virtue of merit by ASI, travelled to Tokyo under this scholarship scheme and were given an opportunity to present papers at the 123rd Annual Congress of JSS.

Also, they have been given an opportunity to observe best surgical practices at the University of Tokyo hospital as observers. This landmark initiative will benefit surgical trainees from India to obtain international exposure even before completing their post-graduation in surgery.

Dr Raghu Ram has also ensured that this initiative would be replicated every year and JSS will provide US$ 6000 annually for three surgical trainees to attend their annual conferences. Furthermore, surgical trainees from Japan will be given a similar opportunity to present papers at the annual Conference of Association of Surgeons of India starting from December 2023.

Indian embassy in Japan welcomes the doctor

Dr Raghu Ram presenting a copy of the recent issue of Pink Connexion *to ambassador Sibi George*

Dr Raghu Ram with Suresh Lakhavath, first secretary and Kanika Aggarwal, director, Vivekananda Cultural Centre at the Indian embassy in Tokyo

Dr Raghu Ram with an embassy staff member—a breast cancer conqueror

Dr Raghu Ram with the ambassador and embassy staff after the awareness talk

Impressed with the landmark innovative initiatives implemented by UBF towards creating awareness, Dr P Raghu Ram was invited by Sibi George, Indian ambassador to India in Japan to empower the Indian embassy staff in Tokyo about the importance of early detection of breast cancer. The ambassador was appreciative of his presentation and it was an absolutely emotional moment when an embassy staff member, a breast cancer conqueror, took a picture with Dr Raghu Ram after his presentation

Dr Raghu Ram presented the ambassador the most recent issue (Feb-April 2023) of *Pink Connexion*—UBF's quarterly breast health magazine, published since 2014.

Dr Raghu Ram becomes 'International Advisor' to RCPSG

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF GLASGOW

Dr P Raghu Ram becomes the first and only doctor from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in over 400 years to be appointed to the prestigious position of 'International Advisor' to the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Glasgow (RCPSG), which is one of the oldest Royal Colleges in the world. He will provide strategic advice to RCPSG.

Dr Raghu Ram obtained a Fellowship from all the four surgical Royal Colleges in British Isles (FRCS - London, Edinburgh, Glasgow & Ireland) at a very young age. It is in recognition of his track record in helping budding surgeons over the past two decades that he has been given this new responsibility by RCPSG.

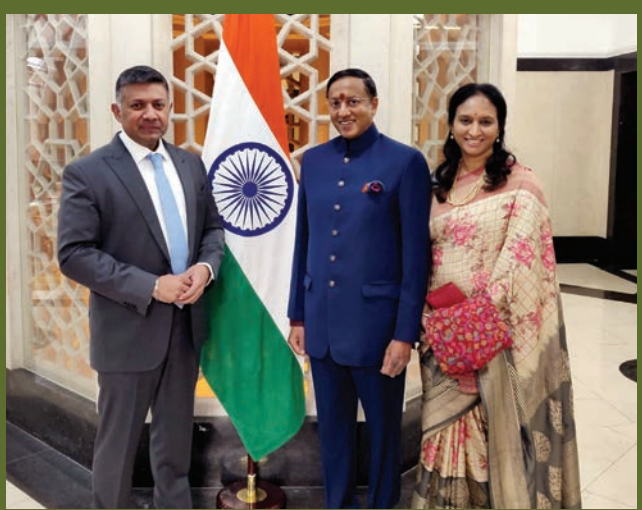
Confirming the appointment from 2023 – 2026, with an option to extend for another three years, professor Hany Eteiba, international director for the RCPSG in a letter addressed to Dr Raghu Ram stated, "I wish to extend my sincerest thanks for your willingness and commitment to the college's goal of developing this important international network. I extend a warm welcome to you as our new International Advisor."

Founded in 1599, RCPSG is over 400 years old and is the only multidisciplinary Royal College in the British Isles that represents a diverse community of over 15, 000 surgeons, dentists and professionals working in podiatry and travel medicine from across 97 countries around the world.

Whilst working in the UK, since the year 2000, Dr Raghu Ram has been convening annual courses that prepare doctors appearing for final FRCS and MRCS Examinations in Hyderabad. He would travel every year from the UK, taking time out from his annual leave to diligently conduct these courses in Hyderabad at a fraction of cost from what these courses would cost in the UK, thus sparing the need for Indian doctors to go to the UK to attend these courses before sitting for the FRCS and MRCS examinations.

After relocating to India in 2007, he has also been convening the inter-collegiate final MRCS examinations every year in Hyderabad on behalf of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh & Royal College of Surgeons of England, thus sparing the need for doctors to travel to the UK to appear for this examination.

Dr Raghu Ram has also served as international surgical advisor for The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh for 10 years from 2010 – 2020. That makes him the first and only surgeon from south Asia to have been associated with two of the oldest Royal Colleges in the world as 'International Advisor'.



A 'Living Bridge' between UK and India

In April, Dr Raghu Ram met Vikram Doraiswami, high commissioner of India to the UK, in London. He was especially appreciative of Dr Raghu Ram's body of work replicating the best of British practices to improve breast healthcare in India.

Dr Raghu Ram and his wife, Vyjayanthi, with the high commissioner of UK, in London

Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation
Hyderabad, India

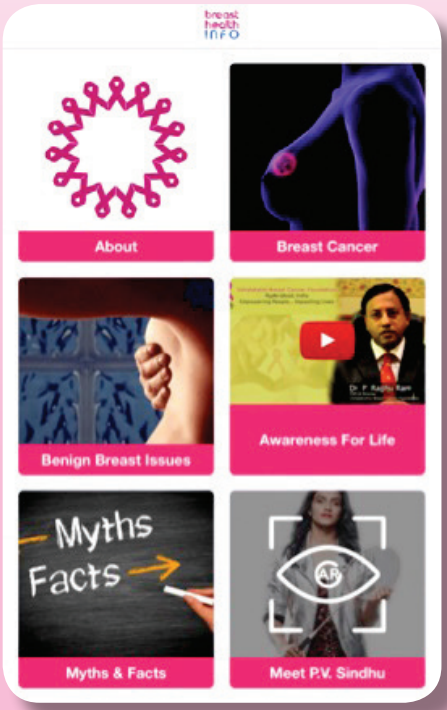
Empowering people...impacting lives

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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