

# PINK CONNECTION

UBF

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**The British Residency  
in Hyderabad**

Love, Decay and Restoration

**Sheeba Ameer**

Providing solace to  
terminally ill kids

**A young mother  
talks about**

her unexpected tryst with cancer

# BEHIND The Scenes

I was shocked recently by a statement from a rabid group on how Indians should not celebrate New Year because it was 'un-Hindu'. Temples were told not to accept special offerings or prayers for New Year since it is a western concept. In a month from now, the same brigade will go around parks and pubs busting young lovers and married people celebrating Valentine's Day.

What is not really Indian is the level of intolerance that hovers over us in this country, these days. It is common now to see couples in inter-caste marriages being ostracised, those who kill a certain animal lynched, and festivals based on Western myths and religion being banned.

I believe religion is a personal affair, and your relationship with your god is too intimate to be anybody's business. I come from an India, where we went to convent schools where we voluntarily went to church to kneel in prayer. We even took pride when we were chosen to sing Christmas carols, Jesus was as much a part of our growing up as Krishna and Shiva. Our best friends were Muslim, in fact, we never asked anyone their religion, and happily went to each other's homes for Diwali, Christmas or Eid.

As that great poet Tagore sang, lead me to that country and time where the mind can live without fear. Where what religion we practice does not matter but our common goals for an egalitarian society does, and where our children don't ask, 'ma, is he a Muslim, is he from Pakistan'?

As individuals we need to delete false news spreading hatred between communities. I got out of a WhatsApp group, where virulent things were being forwarded about Indian Muslims. News channels need to tone down reporting of riots based on religion. I wish for 2018 and times to come that we are able to live harmoniously with each other and individuals are given the choice to make decisions of who they should marry or which prayer they should offer in which mosque or temple.

*Ratna Rao Shekar*



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EDITOR  
Ratna Rao Shekar

CONTRIBUTORS  
Minal Khona  
Anil Mulchandani

DESIGN  
Malvika Mehra

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Centre for Breast Diseases  
Krishna Institute of Medical  
Sciences, Minister Road  
Secunderabad - 500 003  
Tel: 040-44885190 / 040-44885191  
Website: [www.ubf.org.in](http://www.ubf.org.in)  
<https://www.facebook.com/ubfoundation>

# Mother Courage

She was the most unlikely candidate for cancer. That is what Kavitha Uppalapati, a young mother in her twenties assumed. So, she was completely devastated when she found she had cancer. After a few days of gloom, anxious about her toddler son, this 28-year-old fought the disease with steely determination and a supportive family. More importantly, she received a timely second opinion and intervention. **Minal Khona** meets this courageous cancer survivor to tell her story



Kavitha Uppalapati:

Married young: check.

Had a baby while in her twenties: check.

Breast-fed her baby: check.

No history of cancer in her family: check.

Normal, well-adjusted lifestyle: check.

Caring, supportive husband: check.

If one reads up on some of the causes of cancer, Kavitha Uppalapati doesn't have any reason to have come down with the disease. But, she did. The lump in her breast turned out to be cancerous. And, with a steely determination she overcame the disease and is cancer free today.

Kavitha could easily be just a face in the crowd. An Andhra housewife who lives with her in-laws, and a doting mother to her four-year-old son. When she speaks, she is no different from the scores of women in her age group. But, when she talks about her ordeal with breast cancer, you see the courage shine through.

**When it finally sank in, I cried for ten days at a stretch. I was scared because I had a small child. Most of all, I couldn't understand how I could have got cancer**

Married at 24 years of age, and a mother at 25, life was sailing along smoothly, when out of the blue, Kavitha felt 'lumpiness' in her left breast in June 2016. She didn't take it very seriously. An appointment with a gynaecologist and an oncologist, and some tests revealed she indeed had a lump.

During the surgery, the doctors felt that the tissue was cancerous so they sent it for biopsy (frozen section). This, even after the earlier biopsy report prior to the surgery, had declared that the tumour was benign. So when the report stated it was cancerous, the doctors came out of the OT and

informed my husband and got him to sign the necessary paperwork. They removed all the lymph nodes as part of the procedure.

Kavitha was still unaware of what had transpired. She says, "After four days, when we drove home from the hospital, my husband told me in the parking lot, that I had breast cancer. He did not tell me about it immediately after the surgery because he didn't want to upset me."

This revelation shocked Kavitha immensely; understandably so, as no one in her family, either on her mother's or her father's side, had ever had cancer. She was only 28, and had breast fed her son till he was almost two years old. She ticked all the reasons why someone of her profile should not get cancer.

Kavitha brooded about it for days. She says, "I was shocked and I couldn't believe what I was being told. When it finally sank in, I cried for ten days at a stretch. I was quite fearful because I had a small child. Most of all, I couldn't understand how I could have got cancer. I don't have any major stress in my life, and maybe I was careless about my diet because I did not eat too many fruits; but I still didn't fit the profile. I was also scared it might spread."

In view of what had happened, her husband, Rajashekhhar Raju, a software engineer, was convinced they needed a second opinion before taking the next step. They consulted Dr Raghu Ram in the first week of August, 2016. He scheduled a mastectomy for the 13th of the same month.

More importantly, he gave her the counselling Kavitha should have got before her first surgery so that she knew what was to follow. She says, "He explained the procedures and told me the pros and cons of both the options in front of me—a lumpectomy and a mastectomy—and the variations in treatment. We decided to go in for a mastectomy followed by chemotherapy and avoid radiotherapy. I was more confident this time and wasn't afraid of the surgery or what was to follow."



*Kavitha, after her hair grew back*

When her hair started falling off during chemotherapy, Kavitha decided to shave it all off in Tirumala. Her parents, husband and mother-in-law were her support systems that helped her cope. But, her son Akhil Varma was the little angel who made it all better. She says, "However weak I would be, if my son wanted to play with me, I would somehow get the strength to play with him. Because he is very attached to me, he would want me for everything. Being so young, he didn't understand that I was unwell. Even my maid would say, 'Why can't you say no to him?' But I would feel happy being with him. It would help me forget my sickness."



Kavitha and her husband, Rajashekhar Raju, her primary caretaker

**My periods have also resumed and the cancer has not had a negative impact on our sex life. It has not affected my fertility either and I can plan to have a second child in the future**

The chemo cycles that took place every three weeks went on for six months and finished in the last week of January 2017. Kavitha shaved off her hair again and it has grown back thick and curly. Today, she is a lot more careful about her diet and makes it a point to eat fruits every day, and consciously maintain a healthy lifestyle with yoga classes as well.

One important aspect of Kavitha's tryst with breast cancer and the subsequent mastectomy is that she is a young, married woman. Often, one hears of cases where the husbands are indifferent when their wives get cancer; or they are disinterested in them sexually, after a mastectomy. I ask Kavitha to share her experience. She says, "My husband is very caring;

in fact I would say he cares for me more than I do for him. He used to be very depressed when I had cancer; in fact he was mentally far worse than I was. He looked after me too when I was sick. But, now everything is back to normal. My periods have also resumed and the cancer has not had a negative impact on our sex life. It has also not affected my fertility and I can even plan to have a second child in the future."

With Kavitha's story, one can summarise that cancer can affect anyone at any age; clear and detailed counselling by an oncologist is an absolute must; and a loving and supportive spouse can make all the difference to the patient's recovery. ■

# The Importance of Counselling in Breast Cancer Care



Counselling constitutes fifty per cent of breast cancer treatment and helps greatly in the recovery of mind and body, writes **Dr P Raghu Ram** emphatically

*Typical scenario: A 35-year-old lady was diagnosed with breast cancer. Just as she got over the shock, her specialist asked her to do a battery of tests without informing her or her family regarding the significance of each test. More so, she was not counselled about her treatment*

*A 40-year-old lady was not informed on the day of the diagnosis that she had breast cancer. Instead, medical jargon was thrown at her telling her she needs an operation and 'frozen section' (sending a piece of tissue under anesthesia) to confirm cancer. She went into the operating theatre totally in the dark. Similarly, a 50-year-old woman with breast cancer woke up after a surgery to find two drain tubes hanging out from the site of the operation. She was not informed about it at all.*

## When a person is first diagnosed with breast cancer

A breast cancer diagnosis can come as a huge shock and it can be particularly unexpected when it strikes at a young age. A feeling of losing control over one's life sets in. At times, the patient may experience feelings of isolation, anxiety, anger and fear of dying. These are natural emotions. 'Will I lose my breast?' is one of the first questions that come to the mind.

## The significance of counselling in breast cancer care

Counselling is an important component of breast cancer care as patients and their relatives are better informed, better prepared and in control at every stage of their treatment. Cancer affects the mind, body and soul. In my opinion, counselling constitutes 50 per cent of the treatment and plays a huge role in the recovery.

## Counselling is...

6

Counselling involves a discussion, about the diagnosis and different treatment options, by the specialist in a sensitive and supportive environment. Equally, adequate psychological and emotional support is provided during the counselling sessions.

## Questions for the specialist

Patients should feel free to ask questions to the specialist relating to different treatment options. Here's a few question for the specialist:

What is the significance of the various investigation modalities?

Why is this, the best treatment for me?

Are there any options?

Do I have to have a mastectomy?

Is breast conservation not possible and if not, why is it not possible?

What are the possible side-effects?

Are there any short term and long term complications?

How will these treatments impact daily life?

It is the specialist's duty to clarify in an unhurried manner. One of the essential requirements of a good specialist is to be a good counsellor, in short a "Listening Physician", who listens to patients and their relatives and help allay their anxieties. Equally, they should be able to provide extended care following a discharge from the hospital.

## Counselling is not part of the medical curriculum in India

It is unfortunately not part of the medical curriculum in India. However, it is virtually impossible to pass any specialist fellowship examination in the United Kingdom without adequate counselling skills. In the MRCS Surgical Examination of UK, there is a dedicated counselling bay where a trainee doctor has to demonstrate counselling skills in front of a pair of examiners. To provide good patient care, counselling should become an integral part of the medical curriculum and in post-graduate examinations in India.

## Role of breast cancer support groups in counselling

The aim of a breast cancer support group is to provide psychological and emotional assistance to breast cancer patients and their families. The group's focus is to rehabilitate the women and help them return to a normal life. A dedicated breast cancer support group—ASHA—set up by the Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation in 2008 not only provides psychological and emotional assistance, but also connects women who have suffered similar circumstances. This valuable 'connection' between people affected with breast cancer goes a long way to help women come to terms with a breast cancer diagnosis and deal with the side-effects.



## Giving Solace

The pain of losing a child is indescribable. There is no word or term in the English language that can adequately capture that depth of despair. Some people have transformed this wound that never heals, to an opportunity to heal others. Maybe, it is a way of coping with their pain.

Sheeba Ameer from Kerala is one such lady. Even as her own daughter was battling acute myeloid leukaemia, this mother started to help and support terminally-ill children and their parents.

**Minal Khona** meets her and comes away amazed by her incredible story

She modestly describes herself as a ‘full-fledged housewife’. That moniker however doesn’t even come close to define what Sheeba Ameer really is and has achieved in her 37 years of married life. Narrating her life-story, she recalls, “After getting married at 18 to a marine biologist, I moved to Qatar with him. I was homesick and so I moved back to Thrissur with my two kids, to live closer to my parents.” A move supported by Ameer, her husband.

Life would have continued to be idyllic for Sheeba but fate had other plans. After a year of being in Thrissur, her daughter Niloufa (then 13 years old) was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia, and Sheeba took her to Mumbai for treatment. She breaks down when she starts to talk about her daughter.

“Niloufa had a bone marrow transplant done at the Tata Memorial Hospital and the bone marrow was donated by my son Nikhil for his sister,” she reveals.

For almost three years, Sheeba made Mumbai her home, even buying a flat and a car to keep her daughter comfortable and commute to the hospital with ease. Her husband would fly down from Qatar to be with them, now, and then.

She would put up a brave front in front of her daughter, coping with the pain of watching her suffer, not knowing whether she would make it or not. In the midst of her misery, Sheeba started to compassionately observe the condition of the other children and their bewildered parents.



*Sheeba with her family*

She reminisces, “I could see other patients in the ward and their helpless looking parents. The mother would be sitting miserably beside the child, and the father would be outside; unable to even go look for work because their child needed them. I used to talk to them and realised that even a kind hand on their shoulder from someone who understood what they were going through made such a difference.”

That was when the seed of an idea was born. Sheeba made up her mind that once she returned to Kerala, she would help people who had children suffering from life-threatening diseases. She named her organisation—Solace—with the goal of standing by sick children and their parents, and offer them succour. It was her daughter’s doctor who was her inspiration, she reveals.

**Sheeba made up her mind that once she returned to Kerala, she would help people with children suffering from life-threatening diseases. She named her organisation—Solace—with the goal of standing by sick children and their parents, and offer them solace**

Sheeba points out, “To me, solace was synonymous with Dr Purvish Parikh. He was not just treating my daughter, he always comforted me and showed genuine concern for my well-being. What I aimed to do with Solace was to help a child financially, socially, psychologically and spiritually.”

After they returned to Thrissur, Sheeba worked as a volunteer with the paediatric ward at the Pain and Palliative Care Society (Thrissur chapter) for seven years. This stint was to understand the environment she planned to get into.

In 2007, she registered Solace as a NGO despite her husband’s wishes. During those years, she had also set up a designing and manufacturing unit for net dupattas worn by Muslim brides in Kerala. This gave her the financial independence she sought; and she got widows and single women or women



*At the Solace centre, Sheeba spends time with children that have special needs or are terminally ill*

with disabled husbands to work for her. She supplied the embroidered pieces to the leading sari stores in Kerala but discontinued the business after a few years because she had to look after her daughter.

The chemotherapy side-effects had affected her daughter’s hips and she was wheelchair-bound. Though a surgery helped her to walk, Niloufa was diagnosed with dilated cardio myopathy (an enlarged heart), and she eventually passed away of heart failure, at 29.

After her death, Niloufa left a legacy that continues to inspire her mother to this day. Her NGO, Solace today is a charitable trust supporting children suffering from long-term, life-threatening illnesses.

The first activity Sheeba started was the Play Therapy Unit at the leukaemia ward of the Medical College, Thrissur to fill the gap for the children for their homes and school. An office-cum-counselling centre followed, and there are five such centres of Solace across various districts in Kerala; manned by around 30-40 volunteers. They provide sorely needed counselling and emotional support to patients and their parents.

Presently, Solace caters to more than 1,600 children suffering from long-term serious illness such as cancer, thalassaemia,



*Receiving the ‘Vanitha Rathnam’ state government award from the Chief Minister of Kerala*



*Being awarded the CNN-IBN Real Hero award by Nita Ambani, chairperson of Reliance Foundation; cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar and well-known journalist Rajdeep Sardesai*

nephrotic syndrome, cerebral palsy, haemophilia, heart disease, etc. Children are provided life-saving medicines on a monthly basis for as many years as is required at no cost. Funds are also provided for chemotherapy, radiation etc., in the case of cancer patients.

**We provide psycho-social support to the sick children and their families. Nearly 250 families are regularly supported with food kits that include pulses, coconut oil, rice and other edible items on a monthly basis. These families solely depend upon Solace for their existence**

Sheeba believes providing medical support is insufficient and that a more holistic support system is required. She says, “We provide psycho-social support to the sick children and their families. Nearly 250 families are regularly supported with food kits that include pulses, coconut oil, rice and other edible items on a monthly basis. These families solely depend upon Solace for their existence.” However, Sheeba is struggling to meet these expenses, as one food kit costs nearly Rs 700.

What happens when one child in a family falls ill, especially if it is a life-threatening disease? The entire attention of the family and activities are focused on his care and well being. Siblings often get neglected when this happens. Her organisation steps in to address this vacuum. Solace takes care of the siblings’ education, and provides such families with funds to cover their travel and living expenses so that the child gets the treatment he or she needs.

Sheeba has now included programmes where the parents are taught different skills which enable them to earn a little money, while accompanying their children for treatment. She has also set up a play therapy unit in Kochi, next to the paediatric ward at the Government Medical College, Ernakulam.

The latest project completed by Solace is a respite centre on the outskirts of Thrissur built on donated land. She explains, “It is a place where anyone with a sick child can come and stay free of cost for a few days. We only ask for medical documents as proof. Often, after chemotherapy, they need a clean and private space till their hair grows back. The respite centre gives them that space.”

This centre can take 40 inmates at one time and it has an indoor play area equipped with toys, a library, small classrooms exclusively meant for the sick children to laugh and play with others. A nursing station is also provided here through which the immediate needs can be addressed.

Solace has saved many lives, enabled others to recover and move on to graduate or find jobs. The organisation runs on donations alone having spent about Rs 10 lakh a month last year to help people. This year, the amount has shot up to Rs 15 lakhs a month. Sheeba says, “We face a crisis many times, but we have never asked anyone for help. Keralites from across the world mostly come forward and donate on their own.”

A winner of the CNN-IBN Real Hero award, Vanitha Woman of the Year award and the Vanitha Rathnam award instituted by the Social Justice Department of the Government of Kerala, besides many more, Sheeba Ameer is the light that shines on the dark lives of many children suffering from life-threatening diseases. For being only a “housewife”, that is a tall achievement indeed. ■

# A monument to love

## The British Residency

The Taj Mahal may be India's best known monument to love but we have another manifestation right here in Hyderabad, in the British Residency. **Mallik Thatipalli** traces the love story of James Kirkpatrick the British agent, who fell in love with a local noblewoman, Khair un-nissa Begum, and ultimately built her a symbol of his devotion. The Residency was in the news recently for the international funding it received for its restoration

Photos: **Lakshmi Prabhala**

**T**aj Mahal is famously referred to as the greatest testament of love (justifiably so), but Indian history is also littered with mammoth complexes built on the edifice of love. The British Residency building in Hyderabad is one such riveting story to share—a majestic mansion—built to house a doomed tale of love and its slow descent into ruin only to be resurrected by painstaking restoration efforts in recent times.

Built between 1798–1805 as a symbol of opulence, the British Residency building was literally lost in obscurity hidden inside the Women's College in Koti, till a work of fiction (*The White Mughals*) detailing the love story behind the building brought it back into the limelight in 2002. Few, including the college students, know the full extent of its rich history resting on love.

Designed to impress by Lieutenant Samuel Russell of Madras Engineers, it induced awe even amongst its grand visitors, which included the then Nizam of Hyderabad, Mahboob Ali Khan. Built in the neo-classical architectural style popular at the time, its massive scale (originally 60 acres, now reduced to 42 acres) combined with its location on the banks of the River Musi ensured that it was the most sought after



Two majestic lions flank the wide staircase and are a perfect foil to the towering 40 feet Corinthian pillars at the main entrance of the British Residency. The photograph on the right reflects the opulent and grand interiors of the buildings of the colonial era

setting for social events. Garden parties, soirees and music *mehfils* by the stalwart artists of the day were held in its landscaped garden overseen by the *memsahibs* of the house.

The love story which inspired the building was Colonel James Achilles Kirkpatrick, who was the British Resident or Ambassador at the Indian court of Hyderabad between 1797 and 1805. An ambitious Kirkpatrick had come to India intent on making his name in subjugating the natives; but instead it was he, who was conquered, not by an army but by a Hyderabad noblewoman called Khair un-Nissa.

An exceptionally good-looking man (his portrait was recently discovered in the Salar Jung museum storeroom) his courtship of Khair un-Nissa was frowned upon both by his countrymen and the Hyderabad aristocracy. Braving opposition, the couple married in 1800 and Kirkpatrick not only adopted the local style of clothing

and living, but had actually converted to Islam, and wrote Urdu poetry.

Besotted by his wife, he built a lavish mansion for her which even included a separate *zenana* quarters. A miniature model of the building was installed in

**An ambitious Kirkpatrick had come to India intent on making his name in subjugating a nation; but instead it was he, who was conquered, not by an army but by a Hyderabad noblewoman called Khair un-Nissa**

the compound because, it is said, that Kirkpatrick's wife, who remained in

*purdah*, could see the entire mansion, including the front!

While the couple lived happily during the short duration of their marriage, their turbulent love story ended soon owing to their early deaths. Since Kirkpatrick's death, their erstwhile home was designated as the official residence of the British Residents in Hyderabad.

#### **The opulence of the building**

A vast villa surrounded by ancient trees, at first glance all you see is an imposing edifice dominated by massive Corinthian pillars 40 feet in height. At the entrance, 21 wide marble stairs have two majestic lions sprawled on either side. Inside, there are expansive galleried halls and drawing rooms, a Durbar Hall of astounding proportions with chandeliers from King William IV's Palace, painted ceilings, and parquet floors of inlaid wood flanked by giant mirrors. Once it

boasted of dungeons in the basement and oval ballrooms signifying the luxury and extravagance the British Residents in India were accustomed to.

Author William Dalrymple says, “The British Residency is generally recognised as one of the important British era buildings, the others being the one in Calcutta and Fort George of Madras. It is a perfect Palladian building, and not many know that it is extremely similar in design to the Donald Trump occupied White House. Even people in Hyderabad don’t quite know what a wonder they have in their midst.”

While most believe the building to be Palladian, conservation architect Anuradha Naik, who works on restoration projects differs saying, “Palladian architecture is a neo-classical style based on the designs of the 16th century Italian renaissance architect, Andrea Palladio. The style uses symmetrical designs and is characterized by Corinthian columns, pediments and architectural details from ancient Rome and Greece. It would be incorrect to term the Residency a Palladian building.”

Further she points out, “We must not forget that it was built by Hyderabad masons and craftsmen, who were immensely skilled in the use of lime and brick but had little or no knowledge of the tenets of classical architecture, nor would they have ever seen details like the acanthus leaf used to create the capital of a Corinthian column.”

### The Decay

When the British left Hyderabad in 1949, the Koti residency as it was also referred to, was converted into the Women’s College, and established in 1924. It is interesting to note that till the handover, the Residency was maintained by successive governments of the Nizams. Between 1949 and 1952, it was modified and modernised for the Women’s College.

Neglect coupled with the passage of time proved detrimental to the very foundations of the centuries-old building. Due to World War II and the ensuing Independence struggle, regular repair works were ignored

and once it was converted into a college, regulations were thrown to the winds and buildings in the complex were modified with no regard to structural requirements.

The Residency complex further shrunk since poor maintenance led to the collapse of structures. William Dalrymple recalls the first time he visited the building in the late 90’s. It created a huge impression on him.

The path to conservation was flagged off by a *White Mughals* fan—an anonymous British donor—who wrote a cheque for £1 million shortly after the book’s release. In 2001, the Residency was put on the 2002 and 2004 World Monuments Watch List as ‘Osmania Women’s College’ and a new story of conservation began

He reminisces, “It was all falling apart. There were classrooms in the main block with lumps of plaster crumbling down. There were pigeons in the rafters and the roof was leaking. In fact, as the central block of the house was deemed too dangerous for the students, most classes were held in the former elephant stables at the back.”

It was ironic that the erstwhile British Residency needed a British citizen like Dalrymple to evoke people’s attention. The author had embarked on a five year research which resulted in his bestseller, *The White Mughals*, which traced the doomed love story of Kirkpatrick and Khair un-Nissa and brought the spotlight back on the gorgeous building tucked away in the folds of the fortress-like-walls of the women’s college.

### Restoration Begins

The path to conservation was flagged off by a *White Mughals* fan—an anonymous British donor—who wrote a cheque for £1 million shortly after the book’s release. In 2001, the Residency was put on the 2002 and 2004 World Monuments Watch List as ‘Osmania Women’s College’ and a new story of conservation began.

It took 12 long years mired in red tape and activism for the restoration process to finally begin in 2013. Under the aegis of Government of Telangana and World Monuments Fund, the first phase of restoration was completed early this year. The original structure underwent changes—dummy windows were added on elevations and the roof required reinforcements. The first phase was an effort to safeguard the foundation first.

The first phase which took four years of hard work has made a world of difference to the structure. The work



Beyond the regal Durbar Hall is the impressive circular stairway



*The Durbar Hall, resplendent with chandeliers and papier mache ceilings, is reminiscent of colonial opulence*



*The intricate details of the ceiling at the entrance porch*

concentrated on restoring the ground floor, which had a grand staircase flanked by oval rooms on both sides. The dungeons or treasury (or the basement rooms) apart from the oval rooms and ballroom in the first level were also meticulously restored peeling away centuries of damage.

The restoration work wasn't an easy task considering the scale of the project. A massive wooden beam on the roof (weighing a couple of tonnes) was unstable and needed to be carefully modified, a mammoth task, considering the narrow openings.

### **Reviving the Residency**

The event Reviving Residency held on World Heritage Day last year, to mark the completion of the first phase of restoration, saw visitors thronging into this historic building to go back in time and experience the opulence of our colonial past.

While the first phase of restoration concentrated on structural enhance-

ment, the second, put onus on art conservation and restoration of the papier mache work. Dalrymple gives three reasons why it's important to restore this crown jewel: "It is one of the best known colonial buildings in India and the best in south India. Secondly, it gives a different view of the British rulers, as it shows Kirkpatrick's love and integration into local culture. Finally, it introduced a new style of architecture to Hyderabad."

The government plans to make it a cultural center returning the Residency Building to its original splendour. It was in its lush gardens performances by famous courtesans / poetess of Hyderabad of that time, Mah Laqa Chanda Bai was held. It was here, the nobility recited verses penned by Ibrahim Adil Shah and Quli Qutb Shah. It would also symbolically ensure that the monument of love, which stood as a silent witness to one of the greatest love stories in India, will be available for future generations in all its imperial glory. ■

# UBF

## Diary

November 2017

### Delivering the Presidential Oration at ABSICON 2017

Dr P Raghu Ram served as the President of The Association of Breast Surgeons of India (ABSI) from 2015 to 2017. Having conceptualised the formation of this dedicated breast surgical Society and having served as its Founder Honorary Secretary, he delivered the Presidential oration at ABSICON 2017—the Annual Congress of ABSI held in Bengaluru. Rich tributes were paid to Dr Raghu Ram for his vision and for ‘walking the talk’ by Dr Shiva Misra, President of the Association of Surgeons of India, the chief guest at ABSICON 2017.



Dr Raghu Ram being felicitated at ABSICON 2017 by Dr Shiva Misra (President ASI) and Dr Devendra Patel, Dr SP Somashekhar, Dr Diptendra Sarkar (Office bearers of ABSI)

### Dr Raghu Ram as Guest Speaker at INK 2017 Conference

Dr P Raghu Ram, director, KIMS-USHALAKSHMI Centre for Breast Diseases was invited to participate at the INK Conference 2017 held on November 26 and 27 at HITEX in Hyderabad, as a prelude to the prestigious Global Entrepreneur Summit.

With the theme, “Road to GES: Beyond Boundaries”, this was a unique conference since for the first time INK (India’s leading thought-leadership platform), T-Hub (India’s largest startup incubator), NITI Aayog (National Institute for Transforming India, GOI) and the Telangana government came together to host this event. At the event, Dr Raghu Ram highlighted the importance of counselling in cancer care and the urgent need to introduce this concept into the medical curriculum in a panel discussion titled ‘Stuff of Life: Exploring Health, Well-being and Society’. The panel discussion was moderated by Lakshmi Pratury, curator and host of INK 2017. The panel included Dr P Raghu Ram, Ananda Shankar Jayant (classical dancer and breast cancer survivor) and Raghu Gullapalli (executive director, LV Prasad Eye Institute).

It is the doctor’s duty to address a patient’s fears and anxieties, and equally prepare the mind to deal with the illness, said Dr Raghu Ram. “Cancer does not just affect the body—it affects the body and mind—and hence, treating just the body is not adequate. Preparing the patient’s mind helps enormously to cope with the cancer diagnosis” he explained on the panel. On her part, Ananda Shankar Jayant, breast cancer survivor also explained eloquently how counselling at every stage by her doctor, Dr Raghu Ram, helped her to come to terms with the diagnosis and to complete her treatment.

### Pink Ribbon Evening 2017 at Secunderabad Club



On November end, The Secunderabad Club’s 139-year-old building was illuminated in pink to demonstrate its unwavering support to the Pink Ribbon campaign championed by Ushalakshmi Breast Foundation. Modern musicals of the stage and screen classics of yesteryears were recreated by vocalists and performers from London, ensuring plenty of glitz and glamour.

## UBF's Tenth Anniversary: Asha Bhosle mesmerises Hyderabad



Asha Bhosle, the 84-year-old Bollywood's living legend mesmerised 4,000 Hyderabadis at a live concert held in Telangana and AP at HITEX grounds. The event was organised by Metalloid Productions with Telangana government to celebrate UBF successfully completing ten positively eventful years (2007–2017) serving the community

“The Foundation has been working with missionary zeal over the past decade towards empowering people about importance of early detection of breast cancer in the Telugu States through a number of innovative initiatives, in addition to implementing South Asia’s largest population based breast cancer screening programme in the

region. We are delighted to associate with Asha Bhosle Live concert, which has been a fitting year end tribute to the initiatives championed by the Foundation over the past decade.”

Dr P Raghu Ram, CEO & Director, Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation.

## A Landmark Training Initiative

In an endeavor to ensure bright, young surgical trainees from India obtain higher surgical training in the United Kingdom, Dr Raghu Ram, in his capacity as convenor, International Affairs for The Association of Surgeons of India (ASI) spearheaded a joint collaboration between ASI and The Royal College of Surgeons of England. Six trainees have been selected to obtain structured training through the International Surgical Training Programme (ISTP).



All the six selected trainees meet Dr Shiva Misra, president, ASI, Dr Dilip Gode, president elect, ASI, Dr Santhosh John Abraham, past president and director of surgical studies, ASI and Dr Raghu Ram, Convenor, International affairs, ASI at the inaugural ceremony of the 77th Annual Conference of ASI (ASICON 2017) held in Jaipur

## Col Pandalai Oration

Dr Raghu Ram has been selected to deliver ‘The Pandalai Oration’ for 2018 at the annual Conference of Association of Surgeons of India (ASI) to be held in Chennai, December 2018. The oration has been instituted in memory of Col Dr Pandalai, a legendary surgeon born in 1885, who served as the founder president of ASI, the largest surgical association in south Asia representing over 20,000 surgeons. Dr Raghu Ram is the first and the only surgeon from the Telugu States chosen to deliver this coveted annual ASI Oration since it was instituted 57 years ago in 1961.

## Dr Raghu Ram Conferred the Social Services Award for 2017

Dr Raghu Ram was conferred the ‘Social Services Award’ for the year 2017 by Dr Shiva Misra, president, The Association of Surgeons of India and Ashok Jain, chief secretary, Rajasthan government, at the inaugural ceremony of the 77th Annual Conference of The Association of Surgeons of India (ASICON 2017) held in Jaipur on December 27, 2017.

This award is bestowed annually to a surgeon in India in recognition of their outstanding service to the community. On getting the award, Dr Raghu Ram, the youngest and the only surgeon from Telangana and AP to do so, said: ‘To be recognised by peers is the greatest reward’.





**Happiness is a choice,  
with or without cancer.**

Karvy salutes the survivors and a million other battling with breast cancer.