

# PINK CONNECTION

UBF

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**'My cancer  
happened for  
a reason'**  
Mumbai Diva,  
Devieka Bhojwani

**Rediscovering  
Kolhapur**

**Jo Chopra McGowan**  
Being a mother to  
special children



# BEHIND The Scenes

When I see our generation obsessed with diets, exercise, health and longevity, I dream of the simpler times our grandparents lived in. A generation that mostly ate home-cooked meals, as restaurants were few and far, even in big cities like Hyderabad. They used to walk miles by foot in the absence of fancy cars and best of all, they used to have a good night's sleep without distractions of television, mobile or social media. They didn't obsess about their fitness or whether they ate too much, yet they lived long and stayed healthy.

We are a generation that worries about staying healthy, yet I hear of people coming down with serious, life-threatening diseases. God does not play dice with the universe, Einstein, the scientist-philosopher had written but with so many people in my own circle taking ill or passing on suddenly, I wonder, if indeed he does. Or, whether it's our life now that is riddled with many complexities and stress (that ubiquitous word we use for everything) or is it because of the environment we have pillaged that is triggering these dreadful ailments.

What sort of world are we leaving our children I wonder? The weather is no longer what it used to be, the snow-capped mountains and glaciers are melting at a faster rate than we can imagine, the rivers and water bodies are drying up, and forest covers are disappearing. There is a heavy usage of pesticides on the crops, so what we eat is laden with chemicals. We may think eating greens and carrots is going to keep us healthy, when, in fact, the chemicals entering the blood stream are doing more harm than good.

There is no use blaming god for the randomness of our lives, when it seems we are digging our own graves. Literally. One friend, who has been diagnosed with breast cancer, wrote to me that she is now living a healthier life than ever, drinking organic milk and eating organically grown vegetables, indulging in pranayama and meditation. Maybe, it has come too late for her.

*Ratna Rao Shekar*



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EDITOR  
Ratna Rao Shekar

CONTRIBUTORS  
Minal Khona  
Anil Mulchandani

DESIGN  
Malvika Mehra

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# “I believe in angels”

## Devieka Bhojwani

When Devieka Bhojwani, a celebrity in Mumbai, was told she had breast cancer, she decided to view the cancer as a means to a higher purpose. And, after her recovery, went on to establish a non-profit organisation to support economically disadvantaged women suffering from cancer. **Minal Khona** catches up with this multi-faceted achiever

Some people are born to lead a charmed life. Till she was diagnosed with a virulent form of breast cancer, Devieka Bhojwani had it all. A loving husband whom she refers to as her soulmate, two kids, a career in theatre as an actress and a singer; and her own successful event management company. Devieka is the daughter of the late Usha Khanna, who had set up one of Mumbai’s iconic cafés—Samovar—at the Jehangir Art Gallery. Devieka’s sister

is the noted editor and columnist, Malavika Sanghvi.

Shortly after celebrating her 25th wedding anniversary in May, Devieka’s life changed. In June 2000, she accompanied her daughter for the medical tests she had to do to study abroad. “I don’t know what made me get my tests done too,” recalls Devieka. She says, “I was healthy and had never been sick; but like most women leading a busy life, at 47, I had let myself go a bit, and had

gained some weight too. In the routine sonogram, the doctor found a dark patch on one of my ovaries. It was a dermoid, a benign cyst that sometimes develops on the ovaries. After the blood test and the mammogram, I was asked to wait till the doctor checked the X-ray plates. She had spotted a few microscopic specks on the X-ray of my right breast and wanted to repeat the mammogram. On the second mammogram, she picked up a micro-calcification on my right breast

(a cluster of tiny white spots). The specks were seen close to each other but confined in a small area. I was advised to have it investigated further.”

By now, Devieka was nervous. She broke the news to her husband Suresh and called her gynaecologist. She went through the reports, and suggested they consult an oncologist. “We actually asked her, ‘Who’s an oncologist?’ When she said, ‘A cancer specialist,’ our hearts sank. For the first time, somebody had used the dreaded C-word and we were stunned! I was healthy with no symptoms. I had my babies at a young age, breastfed both for a year, so what was all this about cancer? Suddenly, I couldn’t breathe,” she recalls.

Her gynaecologist recommended Dr Praful Desai. “I prayed like never before, gave myself Reiki, and went with a very positive mind-set to meet the doctor. Though, we were trying hard to be brave, we were scared,” she remembers. Dr Desai examined her thoroughly, studied her mammograms, and told her that a micro-calcification could be the first stages of a tumour. He advised her to have it removed to ensure that it would not grow and spread to the surrounding areas.

A lumpectomy was performed on her right breast, where only the cancerous area was removed. She reminisces, “I had to wait for a week for the

results and it was quite harrowing. My mother accompanied me to the hospital on all my visits. She had a problem with her knees and would lean on me while walking into the hospital. I would walk ramrod straight with my bag of reports, as if I was helping her. So, everyone presumed I was bringing her to the doctor. It helped because I was just not ready to face any questions.” A far cry from the Devieka of today, who speaks at TEDx talks about her battle with cancer.

After a week, the pathologist told her that the tests had shown a malignancy. She was devastated. Her mother was shaken too. She was detected with Interductal Carcinoma; the malignancy was at an early stage where it was still confined to the ductal areas, but it could have spread fast. It was a high-grade cancer, which was luckily caught early and removed with great precision and hopefully, completely.

Devieka relied on alternative modes of healing along with radiation therapy and drugs that she had to take for five years. She also practiced visualisation and meditation techniques she had learnt at Dr Deepa Chopra’s workshop a decade ago. She says, “I know it is hard to feel positive about what can potentially be an agent of death, but it is this catalyst that takes you closer to the Spirit, guides you to recovery every step of the way and I do feel very, very blessed.”

The doctors had prescribed two months of radiation. Sitting at the hospital for two whole months, waiting for her turn at the radiation centre, gave her a chance to interact with children, men and women of all ages fighting cancer. She was inspired by their courage.

Devieka however continued with her regular routine. She says, “While the radiation therapy was on, I was still going out as usual. I also had an important event where Maharani Gayatri Devi was going to be honoured.” But, the radiation took a toll on her and the side-effects led to memory loss and weight gain.

She reminisces, “I’d meet close friends and for a minute or so, I wouldn’t be able to recall who they were. My husband knew about it so he’d say, ‘Have you said hi to so-and-so’ naming them and I would get it and start talking.” Today, her memory is almost completely back and getting better. As for the weight gain, she walks and exercises regularly but she reckons, “At 65, I am a few kilos overweight but I think it is okay.”

Devieka genuinely believed at that time that a ‘higher being’ was taking care of her and she would survive this ordeal. She says, “I began to believe in angels, as help would come from different sources. Dr Chopra gave me some healing mantras to chant. A client asked me to organise a press conference for a homoeopath



Actress Rekha with Devieka at a breast cancer awareness event



Devieka Bhowani with Shabana Azmi, Dr Bhaskar Rao, MD & CEO, KIMS and other guests inaugurating Pink Ribbon Evening 2009 organised by Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation

who specialised in preventing the recurrence of cancer. My assistant Aruna guided me towards content online from where I got medicines to increase my immunity."

Anju Venkat, a nutritionist, gave her detox diets to negate the side-effects of radiation. Every morning, she would eat a kilo of fruit along with wheatgrass juice. Thrice a day, she had juice that was a combination of coriander leaves spiked with lemon and ginger. At noon, she had a big glass of reds—tomato, beetroot and carrot juice. In the evening, it was juice made of greens—cucumber, doodhi, amla and aloe vera etc., which minimised the side-effects and gave her a glowing skin.

Devieka was worried however that news of her cancer would spread. She wasn't sure how she would handle all the curiosity and attention. But, despite all her efforts to hide the fact that she had breast cancer, people got to know. She reveals, "Jaya Bachchan, who is a close friend, called me to ask if I was alright. Jaya and I have been friends for 20 years. She pressed on and asked me to tell her the truth. That's when I realised she already knew. She revealed that the designer duo Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla had seen me at the oncologist's clinic and told her about it because they knew we were good friends. Strangely, it was a relief, to be able to talk about it with someone close."

The actress has been an inspiration to her. She says, "Jaya has handled every crisis in her life and not let the bad times affect her. She was a support system and I don't think she knows how important she was to my recovery." Devieka's sister Malavika also helped. She was there for her but did not shower her with pity. Her in-laws too gave her space to deal with the disease in her own way. "But, my husband and kids were my greatest support—I never felt I was fighting cancer alone because of them," she says.

Today, Devieka believes the cancer had happened for a higher purpose. That purpose was revealed when she



*Her support system: Devieka with her husband Suresh and kids, Karan and Ruchika*

set up the Women's Cancer Initiative with Tata Memorial Hospital. She explains, "My radiologist, the late Dr Ketayun Dinshaw suggested that when I got stronger, I should create awareness about breast cancer and talk about the importance of getting mammograms done after 35."

**I know it is hard to feel positive about what can potentially be an agent of death, but it is this catalyst that takes you closer to the Spirit, guides you to recovery every step of the way and I do feel very, very blessed**

That prompted her to start the Women's Cancer Initiative—Tata Memorial Hospital (WCI-TMH), in 2003, as a partnership between Devieka and TMH. It is a not-for-profit NGO led by the director, Tata Memorial Centre, Dr RA Badwe, Devieka Bhojwani and Dr Sudeep Gupta along with other cancer physicians, surgeons and volunteers.

The WCI-TMH's core activity is to provide material and emotional support to economically

disadvantaged women diagnosed with breast and gynaecological cancers. Over 3,000 women have received help. The TMH has a system in place where social workers examine each case carefully and they decide on treatment protocol and who should be given aid, since many patients are abandoned by their families due to lack of funds.

She says, "Along with *Elle* magazine, we hold a carnival in three cities and we have tie-ups with other corporates. People have been very generous. We organise the Annual WCI-TMH Breast and Gynaecological Cancer Conference in October, and prominent oncologists from India and abroad deliberate on a focussed theme in each conference." There is also a yearly survivor meet attended by 30-40 survivors from Mumbai. Devieka gives talks on the importance of frequent breast examinations from the age of 25 at colleges, corporate offices, girls' hostels etc.

Finally, this cancer survivor says about her experience: "It has been a very rewarding journey to be part of a support group to help other women suffering from cancer, and raise funds to help them financially."

Devieka is a perfect example of how positive thinking can make a difference. She has also shown how to turn a calamity into an opportunity to do good. ■



# Jo Chopra McGowan

## When a special child shows the way

Jo Chopra McGowan, an American midwife runs a well-known school and centre for the specially-abled in Dehradun. This centre was founded because of Uma Moy Moy, her adopted daughter. At the age of six, Moy Moy had cerebral palsy and by 16, she had quadriplegia that had left her wheelchair-bound.

Here is an inspiring story of a mother, who set up a centre to help her daughter and other specially challenged children around the country. And, in turn, learnt an important life lesson from her daughter's vulnerability—that life rests on "shared humanity"—we are all vulnerable and need each other.

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**Nivedita Choudhuri** writes a heart-warming story of an indefatigable mother who refused to give up

Photographs: Latika Roy Foundation

There's a traffic jam of sorts on Jo Chopra McGowan's driveway. But, there are no hi-tech, snazzy sports cars or luxury automobiles in sight. Instead, there are three humble wheelchairs that her daughter uses to get around. And, for the 60-year-old Jo—her daughter Moy Moy is the centre of her universe.

Jo explains what makes 28-year-old Moy Moy the pivot of the family. "She wasn't meant to be conceived, but she was. She wasn't meant to be born, but she was. She wasn't meant to survive, but she did. She wasn't meant to be our daughter, but she is most certainly our daughter," says the Dehradun legend.

And, when the family needed a special school and there was none in their city, they simply decided to start one. "It never occurred to any of us that starting one would be a problem. Now, more than two decades later, Moy Moy's school serves hundreds of children from all over the country. Nearly 100 people have jobs and a purpose in life because of her," points out Jo.

An American by birth, and midwife by profession, Jo has lived in India for nearly 40 years with her Indian spouse. She is also the co-founder and director of the Latika Roy Foundation, a voluntary organisation for the specially-abled in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, which provides specialised services and support to families and children with disabilities. This organisation was started for Moy Moy, who has cerebral palsy and quadriplegia.



*A teacher and therapist with a child*

How did it all begin? Jo met her husband Ravi Chopra when both were activists of peace and social justice in the US in 1976. She moved to India after her marriage to Ravi and they went on to have two children, Anand and Cathleen. Then, something happened that transformed their lives forever.

Jo had always wanted to adopt a child. The dice was loaded against her since she had two children of her own. Adoption agencies in India, at that time, were unwilling to allow a couple with a boy and a girl, to adopt a third child.

In 1989, Jo heard of a baby girl, who had been born 12 weeks premature and weighed just a kilo. Born as the 13th child to the wife of a farmer in Uttar Pradesh, the baby had been conceived despite sterilisation. The mother had made up her mind to abort the child, but her doctor had advised her to have the baby and give it up for adoption.

A few months later, on the way to a routine prenatal appointment, the mother went into labour on the bus and her baby was born on the roadside. She was taken to a hospital where a couple of American doctors were working as volunteers. As the mother did not want the baby, the little one's fate hung in balance until one of the volunteers piped up and said her sister would adopt the baby. The sister happened to be Jo.

For the first few years of her life, Uma Moy Moy (Moy Moy means 'little sister' in Cantonese) seemed normal though

she had mild cerebral palsy. She could eat, speak Hindi and English effortlessly and generally was "a delightful girl full of tricks", according to her mother. Everyone assumed her life would be a normal one.

So, it was a big blow to the family when Moy Moy started to regress from the age of six. She began to get convulsions, and would forget things. Eating became a daunting task and she had no control over her bladder or bowel movements. By 10, she could no longer speak, and by 16, she had quadriplegia.

She needed a wheelchair to get around and ate through a feeding tube surgically inserted in her stomach. Now 28 years, she is severely disabled.

Jo says she was hit particularly hard when Moy Moy stopped talking. "She used to tell jokes; she even had—at four years—a flair for the dramatic. Once on a Sunday, I asked her: 'Moy Moy, are you ready to go to church?' She raised both arms over her head like a born-again zealot and said fervently: 'Hallowed be Thy Name!'," she narrates.

Faced with this crisis, Jo—one of seven children herself—showed plenty of forbearance. In fact, her mother had adopted one of those seven, a girl who was named Moy Moy. In fact, Jo's Moy Moy is named after her aunt. There were no good schools in Dehradun at that time to educate children with special needs. And, Jo decided to set up a school herself.

*She wasn't meant to be conceived, but she was. She wasn't meant to be born, but she was. She wasn't meant to survive, but she did. She wasn't meant to be our daughter, but she is most certainly our daughter*

Aid came in the form of a ₹ 2 lakh grant from the husband of the late Latika Roy, a Montessori teacher, who had been trained by the famous Maria Montessori herself. The Roys had a son who was Ravi Chopra's friend. Latika's death in 1994 prompted her husband and son to keep her memory alive by providing this largesse to Jo.

The Latika Roy Foundation (LRF) was born and the Karuna Vihar Special School for children and adults opened in 1995. Besides the special school, there is an early intervention centre, a child development centre and a centre for vocational training.

Currently, there are 300 children on the rolls at Karuna Vihar, where they are free to explore toys, books, dance, music, pottery, drama, sports and other activities at their own pace. The Foundation also does research on Acts and laws relating to persons with disabilities, educates the public, investigates complaints and contributes to the drafting of new Acts and policies on disability. What may have started as "just a school for Moy Moy" has now evolved into a network of centres that provide skilled early intervention for families, vocational training for adults with disabilities, and staff training. At LRF, the team radiate happiness, energy and optimism, attracting specialists and interns from all over the world to work with them.

Managing an organisation for special people can be overwhelming, but Jo still finds time to unwind with her daughter. Moy Moy, she says, enjoys flipping through old photographs, remembering the old days and laughing about how she and her siblings looked when they were little children. She also reads her favourite poems to her daughter. "We are doing a lot of Seamus Heaney and Mary Oliver these days... and their thoughtful, incisive ways of looking at things now permeates my days more thoroughly than when I was reading them silently", she writes in her Jo's blog.

Jo loves to go on long walks taking Moy Moy in her special stroller. She says she walks seven miles on an average every day. The stroller was a gift from her sister in America and it gave the duo the mobility and freedom to visit friends' homes for tea, go to parties, walk in the neighbourhood, and visit the local market and chemist. However, the stroller's road-

I believe that Moy Moy holds the secret to the world's salvation



A young girl at Karuna Vihar Centre for Vocational Training



Jo and Moy Moy with the family

worthiness diminished with age and to buy a new one was an expensive proposition.

Then one day, out of the blue, Jo received a letter from a lady, who wanted to buy a similar stroller for her specially-abled son. Three years later, she received another letter from the same lady informing her that she had bought a stroller, but it was too large to store in her flat. Would Moy Moy like to use it? She would be happy knowing that someone like her son was using it.

Such incidents have reinforced Jo's faith in people. She says she has come across plenty of amazing people on her journey. Like the time when a saleswoman took an order for Moy Moy's feeding tube over the phone. Before ending the conversation, the woman told her: "We wish you didn't have to call us. We pray that Moy Moy gets better soon and doesn't need the tube anymore".

"Moy Moy has enlarged my world in many ways. Her limitations have allowed me to reach out to people who respond to her needs with love and compassion, who remember her name and the size of her tube and who pray for her well-being and who want her to be well", writes Jo in her blog. This inspiring woman insists on being hopeful and positive. She insists on never giving up, and believing in the power of the community.

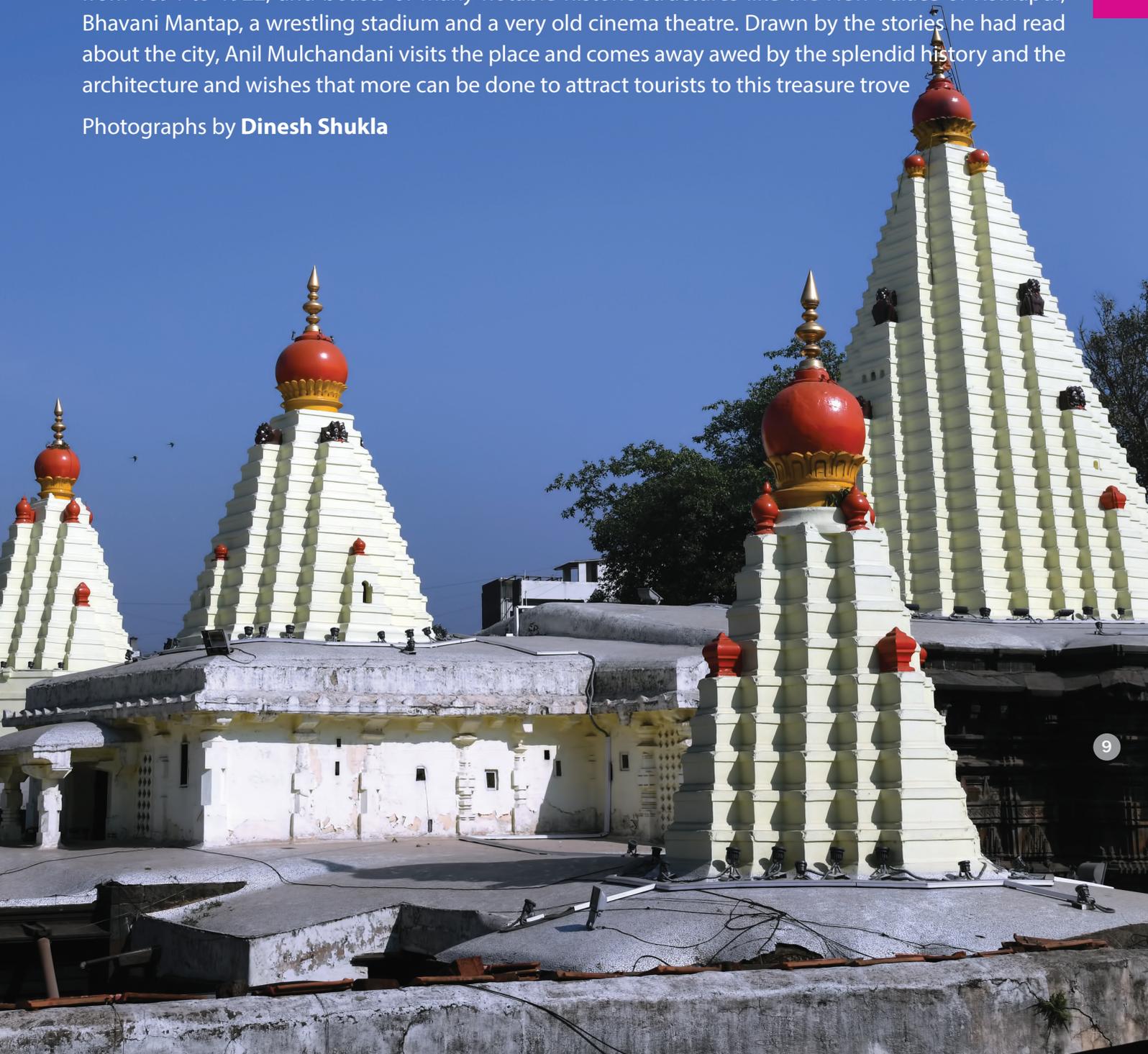
Jo's story is one of triumph of love and hope over adversity and despair. Moy Moy's birthday is the most emotional day of the year for her. As her daughter rounds yet another impossible corner, she says in her blog, "I feel an impossible mixture of pride, hope and dread... I believe that Moy Moy holds the secret to the world's salvation. Her vulnerability, her calling out to us, her simple, uncomplicated need for help (to cut her birthday cake, to get dressed, to eat, to sleep, to move across a room) is what we all need to remind us of our shared humanity: we are all vulnerable, we all need each other". Now, that is as true as it gets. ■

# Kolhapur, the Hidden Gem of Maharashtra

Kolhapur, situated on the banks of the river Panchganga, is renowned for its temples—the Mahalaxmi Temple—and for being an important commercial and trade centre and for its iconic Kolhapuri chappal. However, the city is also dotted with many little-known sites richly imbued with a lot of history.

Few know that Kolhapur dates back to the 10th century, and had a progressive Maharaja, who ruled from 1894 to 1922, and boasts of many notable historic structures like the New Palace of Kolhapur, Bhavani Mantap, a wrestling stadium and a very old cinema theatre. Drawn by the stories he had read about the city, Anil Mulchandani visits the place and comes away awed by the splendid history and the architecture and wishes that more can be done to attract tourists to this treasure trove

Photographs by **Dinesh Shukla**



**K**olhapur has a fascinating history. It was one of the largest and most affluent princely states in western India. And, it was one of the most progressive states under the reign of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj from 1894 till his death in 1922. The king of the Kolhapur kingdom, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, introduced wide-ranging social reforms, built the industrial base of the city, and patronised art and culture. Having read much about the heritage of Kolhapur, I was surprised that not many know about the city being an invaluable gem in the history of Maharashtra. Not many explore the historical sites of this city except for the Shakti devotees, who flock to the famous Mahalaxmi Temple in Kolhapur.

The Mahalaxmi temple is truly the sacred center of Kolhapur attracting religious tourists in large numbers. The temple is said to date back to the 7th century

All this made me want to visit this city. Further, I read that Kolhapur was known even back in the 10th century under the Yadava dynasty, and most of the heritage buildings of the city date back to the time of the Bhonsle dynasty, who ruled from 1710 to 1949. Interestingly, Rajaram 11, who ruled from 1866 to 1870 AD, began the modernisation of Kolhapur but died when he was just 20 in Florence, Italy. And, he was cremated on the banks of the River Arno, after special permission was granted by the Italian Council of Ministers. He was succeeded briefly by Shivaji IV, and then it was Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, a philanthropist and a reformer, who took the princely state to its zenith.

Shahu was influenced by Jyotiba Phule, the social reformer, who fought for the eradication of untouchability and championed women's emancipation and girl child education

in India. If you visit Kolhapur, you quickly learn about Shahu Maharaj's pioneering initiatives in constructing different educational institutions, which included a boarding school for socially challenged students and Vedic schools. Back then, he made primary education free and compulsory for all in his state and started schools to train village administrators.

Opposed to the caste system, he removed Brahmins from their posts of Royal Religious advisors, when they refused to perform religious rites for non-Brahmins. He ensured the untouchables equal access to public utilities, and discontinued the hereditary transfer of titles and tenures of revenue collectors, who exploited or enslaved people.

He also initiated the economic progress of Kolhapur by building the Shahu Chhatrapati Spinning and Weaving Mill in 1906, established banking facilities and co-operative societies for farmers, and laid the foundations of the Radhanagari Dam. The Marathi Film Industry also flourished in Kolhapur from 1917. It was because of his grand vision, and his numerous initiatives in social reform, he was given the title of Rajarshi Shahu.

Dinesh and I arrived in Kolhapur in the morning with a view to explore the city. In the old town quarter, we came across Juna Rajwada, the old palace of the Kolhapur rulers and the Bhavani Mandap; the Mahalaxmi temple and

structures related to the former rulers like Faras Khana and Hujur Paga.

The relatively new side of the city flaunts structures built in the late-19th and early-20th century like the New Palace, the Khasbag Maidan, Keshavrao Bhosale Natyagruha, Rankala Lake, Shalini Palace, Town Hall, Temblai temple, and institutions like the Shivaji University and old hospitals.

Major Charles Mant was a British architect commissioned in the 19th century to construct Kolhapur's buildings. He favoured the Indo-Saracenic Revival (also known as Indo-Gothic) style, which involved fusing stylistic and decorative elements from native Indo-Islamic architecture and Hindu temple architecture maintaining the layout and structure of the Gothic revival and Neo-Classical buildings. The buildings are therefore dominantly European in style but rich in Indian features and decoration.

The finest example of this eclectic style is the New Palace of Kolhapur, which was constructed between 1877 and 1884. A part of this palace houses the Shahaji Chhatrapati Museum, and the rest is a private residence. The palace is set in a park-like surroundings and can be accessed through a public park, which has a lake and small zoo. The forecourt of the impressive palace is built from polished black stone. The building is dominated by huge domes, turrets and a Victorian-style clock tower.



*The New Palace of Kolhapur, built in the 1880s and '90s, is dominantly Victorian in style with Indo-Islamic architecture*



*Top: The impressive portico of the old palace, called Rajwada and Bhavani Mandap  
Below: Another view of the New Palace of Kolhapur*

The palace museum offers an insight into the flamboyant lifestyle of the princes. The exhibits include silver elephant howdahs, some of them shaped like peacocks, ornate swings, antique furniture, paintings, a huge armoury of swords and gold-plated weapons, robes, crests, jewellery and stuffed animals. They also have walking sticks made from leopard and tiger vertebrae, ashtrays fashioned out of tiger skulls and rhino feet. Photographs depict a cheetah being trained to hunt down a blackbuck antelope.

One of the displays shows an elephant readied for a ceremonial procession with decorated tusks and elaborate saddles. The centrepiece of the palace is the Darbar Hall with huge chandeliers and carved galleries.

From here, we drove to see the Town Hall built by the architect Major Charles Mant under the auspices of the Maharajas. This stately neo-

gothic structure built in 1872-1876 is embellished with two spires, a steep roof and an imposing façade with a fine porch at the front of the building. The porch leads to a large central hall and gallery inside, with two rooms on either side joined to the main hall by a spacious verandah in the front.

The Khasbag Maidan, a wrestling stadium built around 1912 has a seating capacity of about 30,000 people

In the evening, we drove to Bhavani Mandap, located in the heart of the city of Kolhapur. It has a palace called Juna Rajwada and the Bhavani temple. Though, it was a palace once, it is now mostly patronised for the Bhavani

Mata shrine. A huge portico with carved arches marks the entrance, and a short distance away is the Mahalaxmi Temple.

The Mahalaxmi temple is truly the sacred center of Kolhapur attracting religious tourists in large numbers. The temple is said to date back to the 7th century and has been rebuilt after an earthquake in the 8th century. However, most of the present structure was built in the 18th century. The cream-coloured spired towers over the sanctuary are its most admired feature. The architectural style and layout is similar to Chalukyan temples, with a porch and an assembly hall leading to the sanctum sanctorum.

Around the temple is a bustling market selling Kolhapur's famous jewellery, textiles and footwear like the iconic Kolhapuri chappals.

A short distance from the temple you will find the Khasbag Maidan, a wrestling stadium built around 1912, which has a seating capacity of around 30,000 people. The 46th Hind Kesari wrestling championship was held here to mark its centenary. You can watch wrestlers sparring here or at the Motibagh Talim Kendra. The people we met around the wrestling arenas told us that Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj was a great patron of wrestling but he also promoted other sports, the arts and Marathi culture.

For dinner, we headed to the Padma Guest House, which houses one of the city's oldest restaurants. The owners Gauri and Raturaj Ingle told us that this restaurant was inaugurated on August 15, 1947. This restaurant is still functioning and it has old fans, furniture, screens and sepia-tinted photographs.

The late Col Nanasahab Daattajirao Ingle, a military secretary to the Maharaj of Kolhapur built a cinema hall here and called it New Talkies. Inspired by the 1930s art deco style of Mumbai's Metro Cinema of Bombay, the theatre was inaugurated by Lt Col P Gaisford, British Resident of Kolhapur in 1941 and renamed Padma Talkies after Princess Padmaraje, in 1942, with the consent of the royal



family. "This restaurant was opened by him in 1947 and also named after the princess," explains Raturaj proudly. "Over the years, the Padma restaurant curated a Kolhapuri menu and launched a thali. The famous Kolhapuri thali is inspired by this menu," he adds.

After dinner, they invited us to the Padma Talkies, which has been screening movies from 1941. Giving us some historical trivia, Raturaj Ingle says, "The theatre used to screen English films and housed a bar. In

those days, a camp for Polish Jews was created in Valivade on the outskirts of the city. And, the Jews used to frequent the theatre to watch English classics. The matinee 10 am show slot was fixed exclusively for Laurel and Hardy movies. The Padma Talkies also catered to the local audiences by screening Marathi and Hindi movies. The 3 pm show was reserved for women and the theatre provided separate seating arrangements for women for all the other shows!" While digital technologies are used

in theatres today, he has created a fascinating museum of projectors and other old equipment, and some cinema memorabilia from the theatre, for interested visitors.

While we were impressed by the quantity and quality of heritage buildings in Kolhapur, and its intangible history of enterprise, culture and cuisine, we feel that a heritage management plan needs to be drawn up to conserve and celebrate the city's heritage. And, in the process, attract more visitors to this city. ■

# Changing the landscape of Ibrahimpur

Three years ago, Dr P Raghu Ram and his family adopted a remote village in Medak district. The family has spent more than ₹50 lakh and **Dr Raghu Ram** the philanthropist, has pledged to undertake more initiatives in the village. Meanwhile, Harish Rao, the cabinet minister in the government of Telangana, inaugurated all the projects that have been completed until now, on the auspicious anniversary of Telangana Formation Day—June 4. In his quarterly column, Dr Raghu Ram details the work the family has done in the village of Ibrahimpur



*In adopting Ibrahimpur, the remotest village in Medak district, the Lord showed me the path to the joy of working for the welfare of people who I had never known prior to 2015. To see the happiness on their faces today is satisfying. All the projects conceived in the village by me over the past three years have been completed. I am very happy that my younger son chose to accompany me, to see for himself the landmark initiatives that were undertaken in the village, which have been recognised with local, regional and national awards.*

Let me start with ‘Vaikuntadhamam’, a modern crematorium built on a one acre plot in the village. Catering to many villages around Ibrahimpur, this project provides the much-needed relief to residents in the area during the most difficult time in their lives. A lot of care has been taken to ensure that this place looks like a spacious home with facilities and open spaces with greenery to provide solace.

We have also erected 46 sheep sheds (for all the 46 families in the village who own cattle), along

**I am very happy that my younger son chose to accompany me, to see for himself the landmark initiatives that were undertaken in the village, which have been recognised with local, regional and national awards**

with solar electrification. These sheds have been built on the village outskirts—on a space—spread over three acres of land. The idea was to house the sheep away from the village to prevent animal-borne diseases from spreading in the village community. This is the first-of-its-kind initiative undertaken in Telangana and AP.

Until now, 50–100 sheep were crammed inside the small homes of the 46 residents of the village. They lived in close proximity with these animals, which was unhygienic and led to air-borne and water-borne infections to spread in both the sheep and the residents.

Green energy is the future, and we installed home solar systems for 26 houses that is a reliable source of 100 per cent free electricity. This facility has been provided to the poorest of the poor in the villages to ensure zero electricity bills for a lifetime, and at the same time this project is also creating eco-friendly homes and a cleaner environment.

Reading opens minds and doors for even the poorest of the poor. So, we laid the foundation stone for a community library, which will provide access to newspapers, magazines, and books. In addition, there will be an Internet cafe for residents to improve the quality of their lives. This place would also be used to conduct targeted awareness sessions by community healthcare workers, using the available audio visual facilities in the library.

Some of the initiatives we took up and completed in 2017 and are currently functional are listed below:

- A dining room in the village school has been built and is used by the students, who were earlier eating their lunch in an open compound. Students now have access to a closed, convenient and aesthetically constructed place for dining, which also ensures hygiene.
- We also constructed a digital study room in the village school. Students now have access to state-of-the-art audio visual facilities, which provides a serene environment to study during school breaks and school holidays. ■



Central minister, T Harish Rao with Krishna Sai, Dr Raghu Ram's son

# UBF Diary

April 2018

## The Secret of Success

**April 7, Bhopal:** Dr Raghu Ram was the chief guest at the graduation ceremony of the 2012 graduation batch held at the Gandhi Medical College (GMC), Bhopal. Established in 1955, GMC is one of the oldest and prestigious medical schools in MP.

In his speech, the doctor highlighted the relevance of an important component of the Hippocratic Oath 'to keep the good of the patient as the highest priority', and emphasised the importance of communication skills in medicine. He also shared the core principles that have shaped his life so far and what he would define as "success". The budding doctors were advised to never forget their parents and teachers, and equally, to work hard, to think out-of-the-box, serve the needy and above all, to remain grounded at all times.



## Look After Your Mom!



**April 21, Hyderabad:** Dr Raghu Ram was invited to participate along with Pinky Roshan, the mother of Bollywood star Hrithik Roshan, and other prominent people from all walks of life, in a panel discussion at the launch of the Million Moms community, to discuss what motivates moms to take care of their health and fitness.

Dr Raghu Ram shared his story with the audience—the turning point in his life when his mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and his decision to relocate to India to look after his mother. His poignant message: 'Look after your mom, treasure her and value her. In turn, you will be blessed!'

## A Round for Cancer Conquerors at Mrs India Telangana

**April 22, Hyderabad:** Dr Raghu Ram was the chief guest at the Mrs India Telangana Pageant 2018. The winner will represent Telangana at the Mrs India National Pageant 2018 later this year. The event was organised by Mamata Trivedi (Mrs India 2017, Mrs Asia International 2018 and the regional director for Mrs India Telangana Pageant 2018).

With one million new cases diagnosed every year, India accounts for the third highest number of cancer cases among women after China and the USA. Due to lack of awareness and absence of a screening programme, more than 70 per cent are diagnosed in advanced stages. As part of a strategy to increase awareness about cancer in women, Dr Raghu Ram suggested to the organisers to include a round for cancer 'conquerors' in the Pageant.



## Guest speaker at the National Judicial Academy



**June 6, Bhopal:** Dr Raghu Ram was the guest speaker at the National Judicial Academy, Bhopal. The Academy imparts training to judges from all over India. In his speech, the doctor empowered the staff on different breast health issues and spread the message about the importance of early detection.

## Celebrating 70 years of NHS

**July 6, Hyderabad:** One third of the doctors, employed at the National Health Service in the UK, are of Indian origin. They are the backbone of the world's largest integrated health system. The British Deputy High Commission, Hyderabad & KIMS Hospitals hosted a quintessential British evening reception to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the UK's National Health Service (NHS). The NHS is the world's largest integrated health system, which provides universal healthcare, free to all qualifying UK residents. It treats over one million patients every 36 hours and performs over six million procedures per year.



In his address, Andrew Fleming, British Deputy High Commissioner, Hyderabad, said: "As we celebrate the NHS' 70th anniversary, this is a chance to reflect on the extraordinary contribution of Indian medical professionals to the NHS over seven decades and the close links that exist between our two healthcare systems. It is also an opportunity to celebrate future collaboration. The UK has developed some of the most innovative healthcare services and systems in the world. We want to work with close partners such as India in order to combine our respective expertise, jointly deal with new challenges and changing healthcare needs and embrace opportunities presented by the development of new technology."

There are many, personal examples of the close links that exist between the UK and Indian healthcare systems, including in Hyderabad itself. One example is Padma Shri awardee Dr P Raghu Ram, recipient of the Dr B C Roy national award. Having obtained higher specialist training at some of the world-renowned centres of excellence in the UK, Dr P Raghu Ram and his wife Dr Vyjayanthi, relocated to India in 2007. He has since established south Asia's first stand-alone breast healthcare centre at KIMS Hospital. Dr Vyjayanthi heads the KIMS Fertility Centre—the largest fertility centre in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

Dr P Raghu Ram, director, KIMS-USHALAKSHMI Centre for Breast Diseases, who organised the event said: "Vyjayanthi and I are very fortunate to have been able to train in the NHS, and equally, grateful to the Board of Directors at KIMS Hospitals for giving us an opportunity to incorporate and exemplify the best of British practices into our sphere of work over the past decade. On this very happy occasion, celebrating 70 glorious years of the NHS, we extend our heartfelt best wishes to the thousands of dedicated staff working in one of the most trusted and renowned public health services in the world."



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

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