

# PINK CONNECTION

UBF

Issue 41: Aug - Oct '25

**The last  
vestiges of**

Art Deco in  
Hyderabad

**Miss Wales**  
From glamour  
to goodwill

**Gowthami Pooja**  
beats cancer with  
courage



# EDITOR'S Desk

Young children today spend excessive time on social media and on their mobiles, which limits their interactions with the world around them. For that reason, many Swedish countries are even restricting smartphone use for children younger than 13 years.

The Netflix series, *Adolescence*, in which a bullied schoolboy, who spends enormous time on social media, ends up murdering his classmate due to peer pressure, is an eye-opener. This makes me think, how we as adults too are addicted to social media, which pulls us into its vortex of reels, stories and posts that we are unable to get off from for hours.

What's more, we see so much of our family and friends on social media that we hardly make an effort to catch up with them since we assume we know everything that's going on in their lives. And, it seems far more simpler to text than to call or meet!

Phones are useful but excessive use is warping our minds. We don't form an opinion anymore and accept what social media is telling us. In an earlier age, there were editors who were gatekeepers to the news we consumed. Editors are a dying breed now, and all kinds of misinformation has crept into social media. I don't want to get into the issue of "influencers", who for the sake of some remuneration can influence you on social media where to eat and what to buy.

A part of me yearns to turn back the clock (another extinct object today) and go back to staying in touch by calling or meeting friends.

Ratna Rao Shekar



## Contents

- 3 **CANCER CONQUEROR**  
Gowthami Pooja was diagnosed with Stage 2 breast cancer when she was just 27 years. This is her story – how she fought the Big C with grace and determination
- 6 **WOMAN OF SUBSTANCE**  
Meet Miss Wales – Millie-Mae – a beauty queen with a mission to raise awareness about knife crime, cancer and other causes. All she wants is to make the world a better place
- 11 **MY VIEW**  
Being diagnosed with breast cancer at a young age can be an agonising experience. Dr Raghu Ram explains how counselling plays a critical role in the fight against breast cancer for young women
- 13 **HERITAGE**  
100 years of Art Deco: Learn about the quiet treasures of this enduring architectural style tucked away in and around Hyderabad. This grand legacy, however, is under threat
- 17 **UBF DIARY**  
From visits by Miss World 2025 contestants to KIMS Hospitals to Dr Raghu Ram's participation in breast cancer awareness programmes, this quarter at the UBF has been an eventful one

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# I didn't mind losing a breast, I wanted to get rid of the cancer



At just 27, Gowthami Pooja was diagnosed with Stage 2 breast cancer. She underwent a mastectomy and chose to freeze her eggs, yet she continues to live a full life after her recovery.

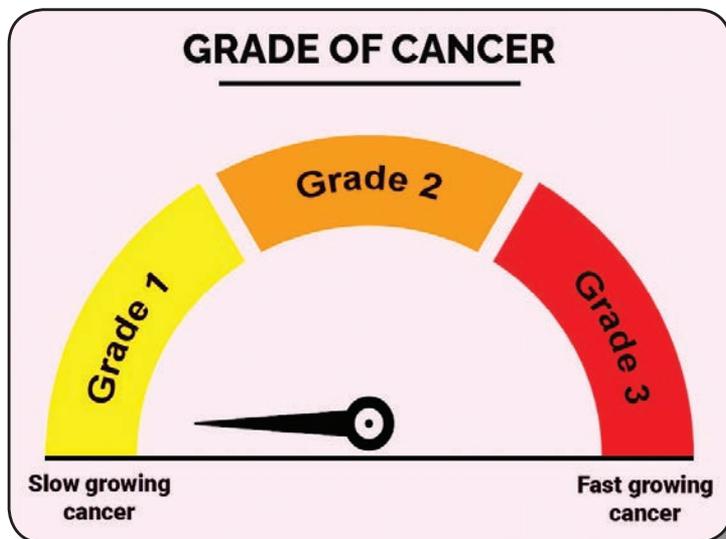
**Minal Khona**

She was working as a data analyst in Australia when she found out that the lump in her breast was malignant. Gowthami Pooja was just 27 at that time.

Having gone to Australia to study, she had got a job with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. It was meant to be the best years of her life when she received a shock. She was diagnosed with Stage 2 breast cancer though she had no history of cancer in the family.

Gowthami, who has recovered since then and married the man who stood by her throughout her ordeal, and lives a full life despite a mastectomy, shares details about her battle with cancer with *Pink*.

It was the second Covid lockdown. "This was around March or April 2021. I was changing my clothes when I felt a lump on my left breast. It seemed suspicious so I went to the doctor who asked me to get an ultrasound done. The test confirmed the presence of a lump, after which I had to undergo a mammogram and ultrasound



**MYTHS VS FACTS**

Breast cancer only happens to middle-aged and older women.

Younger women can and do get breast cancer.

guided core needle biopsy. The results confirmed my worst fears. I was in complete shock when I heard that I had cancer. I thought my life was going to end,” she recalls.

Gowthami also admits that she hadn’t even heard of breast cancer until then, and was only aware of blood cancer having seen it in the movies.

**Gowthami remembers being ‘terrified’ by the prognosis. “I told my parents about it and they were quite upset, because there is no family history of cancer. But my father asked me to come to Hyderabad, saying he would get the best doctor for me,” she recalls**

**Shock and terror**

Gowthami remembers being “terrified” by the prognosis. “I told my parents about it and they were quite upset, because there was no family history of cancer. But my father asked me to come to Hyderabad, assuring me that I could receive the best possible treatment here,” she recounts.

On her return to India, Gowthami went to meet the surgeon. She recalls, “The doctor counselled me well and explained all that I needed to know about the cancer in a simple and easy-to-understand format. His reassurance that everything will be well comforted me enormously.”

The repeat imaging that was done in India showed multiple abnormal nodes in the arm pit (axilla) and she underwent a PET CT scan, which fortunately did not show any spread of the cancer in her body, except in the lymph nodes in her armpit, making it a Stage 2 cancer.

“I was also counselled regarding fertility preservation and I decided to preserve my eggs as treatment can affect fertility,” she shares.

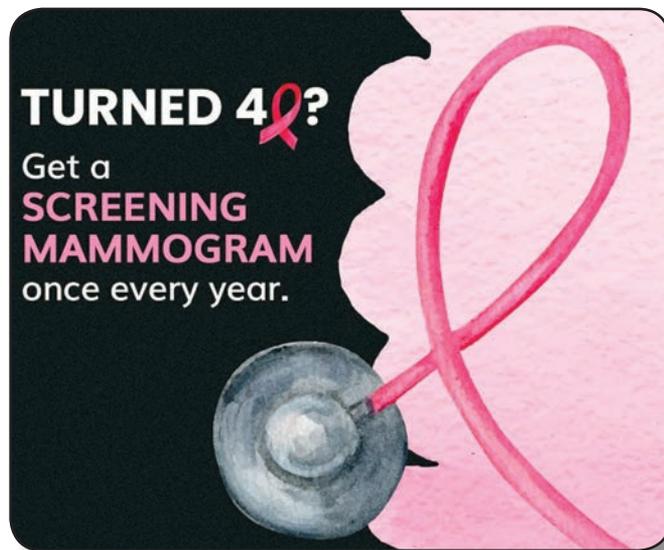
**The treatment**

Gowthami’s treatment began with chemo, followed by surgery, after which she had another round of chemo and radiation. “I was fine until the day of my surgery on July 19, 2021. But when I saw other patients waiting, I was consumed by fear. Thankfully, the robust counselling I received and the meticulous attention to detail from the multidisciplinary team helped me stay calm. My surgery went smoothly, and my post-operative recovery was equally seamless,” adds Gowthami.

One major aspect of Gowthami's cancer treatment is the fact that despite being so young, she chose to have a mastectomy instead of a lumpectomy. "Although I was counselled regarding the distinct possibility to have breast conserving surgery (lumpectomy), I chose to have mastectomy and will consider delayed reconstruction at some point in the future. The lymph nodes in my armpit were also removed, which were affected with cancer."

"I did not mind losing my breast, I wanted to get rid of the cancer," she adds.

**The medicines had more side effects in the second round of chemo after surgery. I had horrible body pain and every bone in my body hurt. My sleep routine got disrupted. I was unable to eat any spice and had ulcers in my mouth, so I used to eat Pongal and other mild food. I love food but I maintained my weight throughout, and I did not lose weight even with the change in the diet**



After four cycles of chemotherapy before the surgery, Gowthami underwent a further four rounds of chemo after surgery, with another set of medications, which was followed by a month of radiation.

#### Side effects

She recounts, "The medicines had more side effects in this second round of chemo after surgery. I had body pain and every bone in my body hurt. My sleep routine got disrupted. I was unable to eat any spice and had ulcers in my mouth, so I used to eat pongal and other mild food. I love food but I maintained my weight throughout, and didn't lose weight with the change in diet. I was also bald by the third cycle of chemo. But my hair grew back soon after the therapy ended. Though I had straight hair earlier, now it is curly."

Since she was so young, the chemotherapy and hormonal therapy affected her periods. "I didn't get my periods since I was on Zoladex injections, a drug used to suppress oestrogen production which is meant to minimise cancer recurrence. Now, after three-and-a-half years, I have stopped taking them since I am trying to get pregnant," she shares.

#### Supportive family

Gowthami points out that she was able to undergo the cancer ordeal because of her supportive family. "My husband Sudhir Marella, who was my boyfriend at that time, and my parents and sister stood by me throughout. My sister was in the tenth standard but due to Covid, she was there since the schools were shut," she says.

Sudhir and Gowthami got married in October 2021, after the last round of chemo.

Gowthami continues to work full time but has changed her lifestyle. "I've stopped eating meat completely. I eat home-cooked vegetarian food and occasionally eggs. I don't take dairy products too and don't eat much sugar anyway. I do mild cardio at the gym, and for exercise, I walk," she says.

#### Positive mindset

In the end, it is Gowthami's positive mindset and a strong will that helped her to fight cancer. "I don't have a fear of the cancer returning. If it has to, it will. Of course, I pray it doesn't but if it does, I will deal with it now that I know more about breast cancer," she says emphatically, on asked if she is worried the cancer will recur.

Indeed, fighting cancer requires extraordinary courage, and Gowthami drew deeply from her inner reservoir of strength to face it with grace and determination. ■

# Millie-Mae

## Beauty with a mission



Millie-Mae, who qualified for the 2025 Miss World contest in Hyderabad, actively campaigns against knife crime and works with UK Charity Street Doctors. This medical student has also created a series of videos to educate the public about cancer since she has a strong family history of cancer.

**Nivedita Choudhuri** catches up with this young medico with a mission

**M**edical student, beauty pageant participant, and educator of youth. Welsh speaker Millie-Mae Adams wears multiple hats with panache.

The 22-year-old medical student from the University of Exeter was crowned Miss Wales in 2023 and qualified for the 2025 Miss World contest in Hyderabad, where she spoke about knife crime and her work with award-winning UK charity, Street Doctors, which helps to equip young people with emergency first aid skills. Also, stirred by a strong family history of cancer, Millie-Mae has created a string of videos to educate the public about the disease.

Millie-Mae grew up around Caerau, a former mining village, and Ely near Cardiff in Wales. Raised in a challenging environment, she faced many barriers to study further since not many people from her community ever went to university.

“I grew up in a disadvantaged area and saw a lot of gang violence while growing up. Sometimes, I felt uneasy while walking on the



Welsh speaker Millie-Mae Adams wears multiple hats with panache

streets. However, knife crime among the youth was a taboo subject. People did not think it could happen at your doorstep," says Millie-Mae in a conversation with *Pink*.

### Young global scholar

A dogged resolve not to let negative childhood events influence her future led Millie-Mae to join the Yale Young Global Scholars (YYGS) programme, an academic opportunity for exceptional high school students from around the globe.

The YYGS programme affords participants from over 150 countries the chance to take part in an interdisciplinary, two-week session at Yale University in USA every year. Millie-Mae also started studying medicine at Exeter but she always wanted to highlight knife crime and teach youngsters how to deal with injuries from stabbings. She wanted to use the skills gained at



Millie-Mae always wanted to highlight knife crime and teach youngsters how to deal with injuries from stabbings. She wanted to use the skills she gained at medical school to give back to her community

medical school to give back to her community.

### Street doctors

"I founded the Exeter branch of Street Doctors, an organisation started in Liverpool in 2008 by a group of medical students, to provide basic medical training to young people between the ages of 11 and 25 years. There wasn't a branch of Street Doctors in the south-west of England and I wanted to start a branch of this organisation in the south-west and continue the amazing work they were doing," she shares.

The aim of Street Doctors is to help youngsters respond instantaneously to violent incidents such as assaults and stabbings that are on the rise in society. The approach is very hands-on –volunteers, including nurses, doctors, and paramedics, teach young people how to deal with victims who have suffered heavy bleeding or those who are unconscious.





Millie-Mae works with Street Doctors, a voluntary organisation that provides basic medical training to young people between the ages of 11 and 25 years

Training is delivered in youth clubs, schools, and community centres. “Youngsters are empowered to become part of the solution to violence and the psychological and physical after-effects of violence are communicated to them,” adds Millie-Mae.



The aim of Street Doctors is to help youngsters respond instantaneously to violent incidents such as assaults and stabbings that are on the rise in society

The enterprising Millie-Mae, who is proud of her native Welsh language, also coordinated the first-ever Street Doctors session in her native language.

### Helping knife crime victims

Street Doctors has around 150 team members and they managed to educate around 13,000 youth last year, she points out.

The charity runs three programmes: The ‘Reducing Violence’ module teaches youngsters how to support unconscious individuals and stop bleeding. The StepWise segment aims at educating adolescents about safety, healthcare, and the role they can play in the wellbeing of society. The youth are encouraged to become trainers themselves and given leadership training through the ‘Young Leaders’ programme.

The most recent campaign of Street Doctors called ‘8 Minutes to Save a Life’ imparted training to young people on how to act as a first responder if they came across a victim of knife crime, explains Millie-Mae.

“I spoke about Street Doctors at the Miss World pageant in Hyderabad too. Countries can benefit from organisation such as Street Doctors, as knife crimes happen everywhere though people display naivete and think such things cannot happen in their backyard. It’s not specific to the UK, and it happens everywhere. Many doctors in Hyderabad told me the kind of teachings Street Doctors imparts will be valuable in India too. I don’t see why the Street Doctors model cannot be applied in India,” adds the beauty queen.

### Miss World pageant

Asked about her experience at the 72nd edition of the Miss World pageant in India in May 2025, the medical student explains: “I came across a Facebook post and entered the Miss Wales contest in 2019 as I liked the charity element to it. I was only 16 years old at that time. I contested again in 2023 and winning the title led me to Telangana and the Miss World stage in Hyderabad. We, i.e., the UK girls, bonded very well. We share a common culture and that helped us become close. Miss Poland, Miss Somalia, Miss Uganda...we all shared a lovely bond.”

### Love India

“Frankly, I have loved every minute of my time in Hyderabad. I was completely spellbound by the clinical expertise and state-of-the-art facilities at a multi-specialty hospital that I visited. I was offered the chance to do my elective at the hospital and



Many doctors in Hyderabad told me the kind of teachings Street Doctors imparts will be valuable in India too. I don't see why the Street Doctors model cannot be applied in India, says the beauty queen

I am now considering this offer. I have always felt welcome and at home in India. I love sarees. If India will have me back, I will come back and embrace the culture again," she said.

This is not her first trip to India. She had visited India earlier with A-Sisterhood, a UK-based organisation, whose goal is to empower and protect women worldwide. She got involved with A-Sisterhood through the director of Miss Wales. Since 2016, A-Sisterhood, a combination of the words 'assist' and 'sisterhood', has been supporting the Stop Acid Attacks team in India.

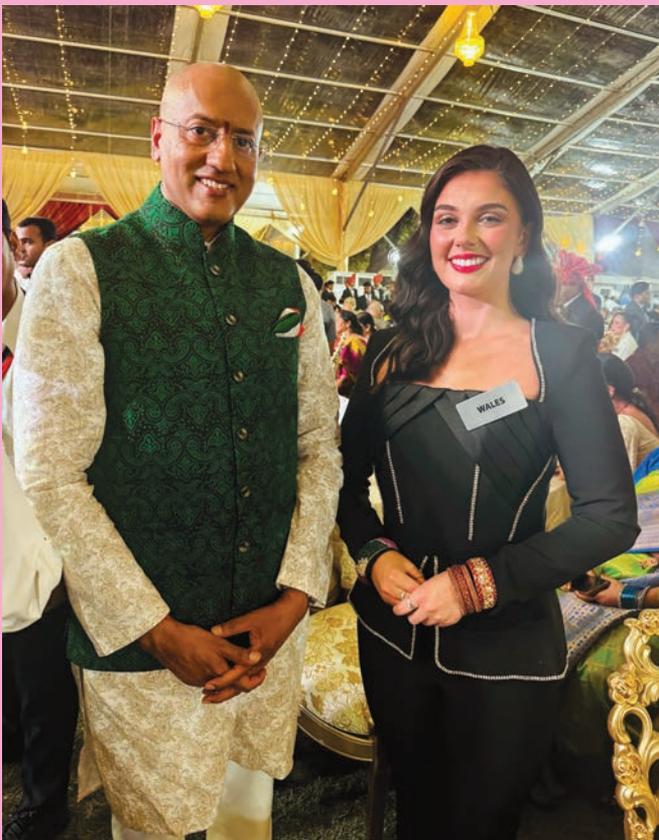
"I visited India as an ambassador for A-Sisterhood and met representatives of the Stop Acid Attacks campaign. I came across some truly inspirational heroes and learnt how cruel life has been to them but how they continue to smile and treat people with kindness," recalls Millie-Mae.

"I also visited all three heroes Hangout cafes – in Delhi, Agra, and Lucknow – that act as safe spaces for acid attack survivors and help them regain control of their lives and destinies. I met the founder of Heroes Hangout, Alok Dixit, and I

even managed to catch a glimpse of the Taj Mahal. It is so beautiful and incredible. I just stared wide-eyed at everything," she adds.

Millie-Mae, who is also ambassador for Calan DVS, one of the largest domestic abuse charities in Wales, and a volunteer for a campaign to increase the number of Welsh speakers to one million by 2050, is clearly a medic with a mission. Be it knife crime, domestic violence, or women's empowerment, she is in the midst of it all, striving to make the world a better place. ■

### More power to Dr Raghu Ram in his noble endeavours: Millie-Mae



Millie-Mae met Dr Raghu Ram Pillarisetti, surgeon, and founding director of KIMS-USHALAKSHMI Centre for Breast Diseases at KIMS Hospitals, as well as founder and chairman of NGO, Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation, at Chowmahalla Palace in Hyderabad, at a welcome dinner organised by the Telangana government for Miss World participants.

Asked about Dr Ram's projects, Millie-Mae had this to say: "It was an honour to learn about Dr Raghu Ram's breast cancer foundation and hear the story of his courageous mum. I have seen breast cancer in my family and so could relate quite a lot to his story. His missionary zeal to create the much-needed awareness about importance of early detection of breast cancer in India is commendable, and I wish him even more power in this noble endeavour that would undoubtedly save scores of lives in the country."

Millie-Mae has created 'Medic Millie Mondays', a series of videos to teach the public about medical topics, for instance how to check your breasts for lumps, recognise red flag cancer signs, how to keep exacerbations to a minimum if one has asthma, what to do if a stroke strikes, etc. Millie-Mae's role as an ambassador for Cancer Research Wales is special to her since she has a strong family history of cancer .

# What younger women with breast cancer need to know

In his quarterly column, **Dr Raghu Ram** breaks down the many challenges faced by younger women with breast cancer. Counselling is crucial for recovery in younger women, he says, since they need to tap into their 'inner strength' to fight this disease



**B**reast cancer has overtaken cervical cancer to become the most common cancer affecting women in India. A woman is diagnosed with breast cancer every 4 minutes and someone somewhere succumbs to the disease every 8 minutes in the country. Due to lack of awareness and absence of a robust organised population-based breast cancer screening programme, more than 60 per cent present in the advanced stages with poor survival. For every two women newly diagnosed with breast cancer, one woman dies of it in India.

Compared to the west, where most breast cancers are diagnosed after 50 years, most breast cancers in India are diagnosed in younger women between 30 to 50 years, at least a decade earlier than their western counterpart.

**In my view, counselling is more than 50 per cent of the treatment and is an extremely important component of breast cancer care**

Being diagnosed with cancer at a young age can be a shock and an agonising experience. The thought of having cancer may never have crossed the young woman's mind as it is a common perception that breast cancer mainly occurs in older people. A range of emotions set in.

One may find it very difficult to accept the diagnosis and often many women may question if it's really true.

Younger women diagnosed with breast cancer report a range of complex emotions including anxiety, anger and fright. Everyone responds differently and one may

have some, or all these feelings at different stages of treatment. Issues faced by younger women with breast cancer are different to those faced by older women with breast cancer.

## **Importance of counselling**

Cancer does not just affect the body. It affects the mind and soul as well. Just treating the physical aspect does not complete the cancer treatment.

Cancer diagnosis can leave a host of problems in its wake, particularly in younger women. Physical, financial and emotional hardships often persist after diagnosis and treatment.

In my view, counselling is more than 50 per cent of the treatment and is an important component of breast cancer care. It is important to ensure that the patients and their relatives are better informed, better prepared, and importantly, feel more in control at every stage of their treatment.

Counselling involves discussion about the diagnosis and various treatment options by the specialist in a sensitive and supportive environment. Equally, adequate psychological and emotional support are provided during counselling sessions to be able to take care of the individual needs of patients and their families affected with breast cancer.

For younger women with breast cancer, there are bound to be many questions and it is crucial that they are addressed well.

Right from the point of diagnosis throughout treatment, and beyond in the face of adversity called 'cancer', a survivor comes across many difficulties. It is important to draw upon courage, determination and

perseverance to fight this disease as 'inner strength' is critical in the victory against cancer.

### **What are the possible questions one may want to ask the specialist?**

One should feel free to ask questions to the specialist relating to various treatment options. They might include:

Why is this the best treatment for me?

Are there any options?

What are the possible side effects?

**It is important to ensure that the patients and their relatives are better informed, better prepared, and more importantly, feel more in control at every stage of their treatment**

Are there any short-term and long-term complications?

How will these treatments impact everyday life?

It is the duty of the specialist to clarify the patient's questions in a calm and empathetic manner and in a simple language that it becomes easy for the person to understand.

### **Can cancer come back?**

Women diagnosed at a young age are faced with this question since they are still very young. It worries them as they can experience a relapse. The treatments offered are aimed at reducing the chance of recurrence. Most will not have recurrence if detected early. However, some do develop recurrence. I counsel my patients to focus on the importance of being positive, always.

Finally...

One size does not fit all. Every woman, more so, younger women diagnosed have a number of issues to deal with. A flexible tailor-made approach with abundant counselling will help cope with the treatment, and they can then bounce back to life after treatment.

It is important to be 'breast aware' after completing treatment. There are only two ways to fight breast cancer:

1. Women and indeed men of all ages must be 'Breast Aware' and should report any new changes in the breast to the specialist without delay
2. Women over the age of 40 must have a mammogram screening at least once in two years (ideally every year) ■



**Is counselling important in breast cancer treatment?**  
**Yes, counselling is a very important component of breast cancer care.**

# 100 years of Art Deco: Hidden gems of Hyderabad



Even as the architectural movement called Art Deco became popular in Mumbai and Chennai, the aristocracy in Hyderabad too were influenced by flamboyance of this style, writes **Mallik Thatipalli**, after going on a heritage walk of these buildings in the city



The Zinda Tilismath building: Like Mumbai and Chennai, Hyderabad too has some elegant structures inspired by the Art Deco style

Rarely has any architectural style remained as enduring as Art Deco. Presented to the world at the landmark 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris, where designers such as Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann, Jean Dunand, and Pierre Chareau displayed their ground breaking work, it has percolated into every sphere of design, from jewelry and furniture to automobiles and even sarees.

Art Deco arrived in India in the 1930s, ushered in by a newly-global Bombay eager to embrace modernity. With its sleek lines, geometric motifs, and nautical elements, the style quickly found favour among Indian architects and patrons alike.

Bombay, cosmopolitan and booming became the canvas for this glamorous aesthetic, second only to Miami in its concentration of Art Deco buildings.

Landmarks such as Eros Cinema, Regal Cinema, and the residences along Marine Drive reflect a fusion of European design with

Indian influences, marking a bold architectural shift that symbolised aspiration, progress, and a distinct urban identity.

#### Hidden gems

While Art Deco in India, is known more by the stunning structures of Mumbai and Chennai, tucked away in Hyderabad are some quieter but equally elegant structures spanning residences, commercial buildings, banks, schools, universities and cinema halls inspired by the subtle geometry and streamlined elegance of the style.

The first Art Deco buildings came to light in the city in the 1930s and they seem to have been in vogue till the late 50s. Architects including Karl Heinz (who originally hailed from Austria), Mohammed Fayazuddin, Eric Marret (of England), and Zain Yar Jung were some of the pioneers of the Art Deco movement in the city, whose many buildings still dot the city's landscape.

Today, approximately only over 1,000 buildings remain in Hyderabad, most

of them famous for their art deco features, including zigzags, geometric patterns, stylised floral patterns, and especially vertical windows.

#### Making an appearance

The grand-uncle of Anuradha Reddy, historian and convenor of INTACH Hyderabad, was the Raja of Wanaparthy, Raja Ramdev Rao, who built one of the first Art Deco buildings in Hyderabad (which is now the Muffakham Jah College of Engineering and Technology), for a new residence he was building

Art Deco arrived in India in the 1930s, ushered in by a newly-global Bombay eager to embrace modernity. With its sleek lines, geometric motifs, and nautical elements, the style quickly found favour among Indian architects and patrons alike



Arya Samaj Mandir

in the early 1930s. She credits architects Fayazuddin and Heinz for Hyderabad's Art Deco riches.

"Heinz came to Bombay as a refugee, as he was part of the Bauhaus Art Movement in Germany whose members were hounded by Hitler. He made his way to Hyderabad thanks to the German Circle in the city, a cultural group with close links to the country," Reddy explains.

Hyderabad, with its unique Qutb Shahi and Asaf Jahi influences, has co-opted the style and gave it a new syntax. Right from symbols like the Swastika and Om to the geometric patterns that are seen in the city's older buildings, the Art Deco design in Hyderabad has incongruously assimilated local iconography into its lexicon



A house in Hyderabad's Jeera Colony has co-opted the Art Deco style and given it a new syntax

While Fayazuddin was exposed to the best architectural practices owing to his education at JJ College in Mumbai and later in the UK, she adds.

"Later on, while returning to India from England, he came via Spain and was greatly inspired by the Moorish architecture of the country," Reddy points out.

After the devastating 1908 floods of Hyderabad, the city began growing outside the Old City. Newer areas like Banjara Hills were being developed, and the aristocracy of the Princely State of Hyderabad were inspired by the flamboyance of Art Deco, which was being embraced by royalty elsewhere. They were also exposed to this new style during their travels to Europe and were keen to replicate the prevailing trend of the time.

The topography of the Deccan enabled these visionary architects to build grand structures that were seen as symbols of a new age. The geography, elevation, and views afforded in the city ensured that the structures that came up were unique to the terrain.

#### A unique confluence of styles

Architect G Srinivas Murthy of the Architectural Design Foundation coins the term 'Indian Art Deco' and

says, "This style was unique because it used the elements of the past in a decorative manner. Indian Art Deco has adopted elements from different styles—the jharokas and floral patterns from the Hindu temples, the pointed arches and jaalis from Islamic architecture, the chaitya or the arch from the Buddhist viharas, and the columns and the grand staircases from Europe."

Hyderabad, with its unique Qutb Shahi and Asaf Jahi influences, has co-opted the style and gave it a new syntax. Right from symbols like the Swastika and Om to the geometric patterns that are seen in the city's older buildings, the Art Deco design in Hyderabad has incongruously assimilated local iconography into its lexicon.

What's also interesting is that the personal experiences of the architects have also contributed to building the style. Some buildings by Heinz (perhaps influenced by his global travels) are designed in the forms of ocean liners and airplanes, while Fayazuddin's designs, from the Salar Jung Museum to the State Bank building, retain influences from the Moorish styles.

#### A rare repository

Art Deco buildings are characterised by the distinct use of curvilinear forms, parapets, rounded staircases

(that gracefully resemble parts of circles), and their emphasis on horizontality rather than verticality.

Senior architect Yeshwant Ramamurthy adds, "Sunshades that swirl around a building, the top of boundary walls in the form of waves that rise and fall, as well as circular grills, are other distinct features of the style. This architectural style is deeply rooted in the city's cultural sensibilities and serves as a reflection of its historical legacy."

In fact, one such last remaining haunt of the city is the Jeera Colony in Secunderabad, which is a treasure house of this style, with around 30 sprawling houses that still survive. Built by the Gujarati communities in the 40s that migrated to the city, it is a residential enclave with pastel facades, decorative balconies (with motifs ranging from parrots and lotuses to even a boat!), and the in-situ terrazzo finish flooring that makes this street a portal into the past, even as the rest of the city has surged forward.

What makes it poignant is that many buildings are in a precarious state with no protection or attention from heritage bodies.

As time erodes memory and the appetite for glass-and-steel towers grows, Hyderabad's Art Deco treasures face quiet extinction. Without robust heritage protections or public awareness, these buildings risk being lost to hasty redevelopment

Other popular structures surviving in the city include the Arts College at Osmania University, the Zinda Tilismath building, the State Bank of Hyderabad in Gunfoundry, the Congress Bhavan, Arya Samaj Mandir, Niloufer Hospital, and the State Central Library at Afzalgunj, which are the last few sentinels of



A building from the 1940s Hyderabad with elements from the Art Deco style



The State Central library at Afzalgunj in Hyderabad

this famed architectural style. Many are dotted across older colonies in the city, including the bylanes of Afzal Gunj, Padma Rao Nagar, Himayat Nagar, and parts of Secunderabad.

The future of these buildings, though, is in question as many are increasingly being demolished (including the recent Secunderabad railway station). As Hyderabad marches into the future, the legacy of Art Deco stands at a crossroads caught between reverence and redevelopment.

Yet, as time erodes memory and the appetite for glass-and-steel towers grows, Hyderabad's Art Deco treasures face quiet extinction.

Without robust heritage protections or public awareness, these buildings risk being lost to hasty redevelopment.

Their survival depends not only on conservationists and architects but on everyday citizens recognising their worth. Preserving them is about holding on to a distinct chapter of the city's cultural imagination, one that fused the global with the local, and art with identity. ■

# UBF Diary

May 2025

## The Miss Worlds from five nations drop in at KIMS-USHALAKSHMI Centre for Breast Diseases



Miss World 2025 contestants with Dr Raghu Ram at the Breast Centre in KIMS Hospitals

On May 21, impressed with the disruptive breast cancer advocacy initiatives spearheaded by Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation & KIMS-USHALAKSHMI Centre for Breast Diseases, a focussed group of Miss World 2025 contestants, representing five nations made time to visit the centres of excellence at KIMS Hospitals in Hyderabad.

These Miss World 2025 contestants were from India, United Kingdom, France, Cameroon and USA.

To begin with, Julia Morley, chairman and CEO of Miss World Limited and Miss World 2025 contestants, commended Dr P Raghu Ram for his laudable initiatives to improve breast cancer care in India for the past 18 years.

While Dr P Raghu Ram, founding director of KIMS-USHALAKSHMI Centre for Breast Diseases & Founder and Chairman of Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation, especially congratulated Miss World 2025 - Opal Suchata, who is spearheading a Breast Cancer Foundation in Thailand and is actively involved in breast cancer advocacy in Thailand.

Welcoming the gathering, Dr B Bhaskar Rao, chairman of KIMS Group of Hospitals said, "A very warm welcome to Miss World 2025 delegation visiting the Institute. Whatever Dr Raghu Ram undertakes, he accomplished his goals with 100 per cent success rate. Having watched him closely for close to two decades, I can vouch for this fact. His

unwavering love for his mother and motherland brought him back from the UK to India, where he has been working with missionary zeal to transform breast cancer care through countless innovative initiatives. I extend my best wishes to him and anticipate many more milestones in his tireless service to the nation.”

The five Miss Worlds – Nandini Gupta (Miss India 2025), a business management executive; Hannah Johns (Miss Northern Ireland 2025), a nurse; Issie Princesse (Miss Cameroon – Central Africa), a breast cancer advocate; Dr Neomi Milne (Miss Guadeloupe 2025 – France) and Dr Idil Bilgen (USA) – radiation oncology trainee, all paid glowing tributes to Dr Raghu Ram for gaining inspiration from his mother, Dr Ushalakshmi’s breast cancer journey and creating the much-needed breast cancer awareness in the country, where more than 60 per cent present in advanced stages with poor survival.

They shared their perspectives and their role in improving breast cancer care in their respective countries.

They also said that they would take back with them the learnings from Dr Raghu Ram’s educative power point presentation and try to incorporate the initiatives implemented by Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation back home.

Addressing the gathering, Dr Raghu Ram, said “My heartfelt thanks to the Miss World contestants for taking the time to visit KIMS-USHALAKSHMI Centre for Breast Diseases and for their warm and encouraging remarks on my presentation. My mother’s breast cancer journey has been my inspiration, and I remain deeply grateful to my colleagues, friends, and the government for their unwavering support and guidance.”

Further, he added that early detection of breast cancer saves lives and affirmed, “I dedicate my life in my mission to improve breast cancer care in my motherland.”

In her speech, Dr Ananda Shankar Jayant, a renowned classical dancer and breast cancer ‘conqueror’ shared her own journey of fighting breast cancer. She said, “In my own tryst with breast cancer, I managed to emerge strong and successful because of the extraordinary quality of treatment, empathetic care and counselling provided by Dr. Raghu Ram throughout the period of my treatment and emerged a ‘conqueror’.

“I commend him for staying focused in spreading the message of hope and creating the much-needed awareness about early detection for close to two decades,” she concluded.

#### **Link to the programme at KIMS Hospitals**

[https://youtu.be/OJ9IS0-8yKQ?si=H0SZJTrX\\_hsZcUux](https://youtu.be/OJ9IS0-8yKQ?si=H0SZJTrX_hsZcUux)



*Kuldeep Didi, Head of Brahma Kumaris Centre in Hyderabad greeting Miss World 2025 contestants*



*Dr Ananda Shankar Jayant addressing the gathering*



*Miss World contestants – all smiles!*



*Dr. B. Bhaskar Rao, Chairman KIMS Hospitals group and Dr. Raghu Ram with the Miss World contestants*

*Miss World contestants showcasing a recent issue of Pink Connexion*



*Hanna Johns, Miss Northern Ireland highlighting her work*

*Dr. Raghu Ram with Krystyna Pyszková (Miss World 2024) and Opal Suchata (Miss World 2025)*

## Rare distinction bestowed on KMC's highly valued alumnus



*Dr Raghu Ram presenting the TMA Pai Gold Medal to Dr Janet Joy, the Best Outgoing MBBS Student from KMC Mangalore*

On June 6, Dr P Raghu Ram achieved the rare distinction of becoming the first doctor to be conferred with the "Distinguished Alumnus Award" in the 70-year history of Kasturba Medical College, Mangalore.

The singular recognition was bestowed upon Dr Raghu Ram by Prof HS Ballal, Pro Chancellor of Manipal Academy of Higher Education, (MAHE) during the Platinum Jubilee College Day celebrations, held at the TMA Pai International Convention Centre in Mangalore, where Dr Raghu Ram was also invited as the chief guest.

Paying glorious tributes, Prof HS Ballal, Pro Chancellor, MAHE said, "Dr Raghu Ram is an accomplished and highly

valued alumnus of KMC Mangalore and we at MAHE are very proud of his outstanding contribution to breast cancer care in India and life-transforming philanthropy in his adopted village, which has resulted in him being conferred with the Padma Award, Dr BC Roy National Award and Officer of the Most Excellent Order of British Empire (OBE) at a very young age. It is in recognition of these exceptional achievements by our alumnus that KMC Mangalore has felicitated him for the very first time in its history."

Delivering his chief guest's address, Dr Raghu Ram said, "It is truly a humbling experience to become the first-ever recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award. It is also a pleasant coincidence that precisely 30 years ago, in June 1995, I had obtained first place in MS University Examinations from KMC Mangalore. This was my first turning point in my life, and there was no looking back thereafter. I shall treasure this recognition and dedicate this award to my parents. Without them I'm a nobody."

Dr Raghu Ram alluded to the importance of being a good human first, which is of more value than any measure of success that one can attain. He cautioned the younger generation to not get sucked into the never ending "Rat Race" of private practice, which results in enormous stress and burnout at a young age, with detrimental effect on the well-being of the individual and family.

**Link to Dr Raghu Ram's address**

<https://youtu.be/VMIBMOgUlqs?si=UrbYu0G3NV1GJp1P>



*Dr Raghu Ram being felicitated by Prof HS Ballal (Pro Chancellor MAHE), Prof Sharath K Rao and Prof Dilip Naik (Pro Vice Chancellors MAHE), Prof B Unnikrishnan (Dean, KMC Mangalore), Prof Suresh Shetty, Prof Shrikala Baliga and Prof Sheetal Ullal (Associate Deans, KMC Mangalore)*

## First-ever Surgeons' Week: Instagram Live with Dr Raghu Ram achieves highest reach in ASI's history



Dr Raghu Ram, a former President of the Association of Surgeons of India (ASI), which is the world's second largest surgical organisation, participated in the first-ever Surgeons' Day celebrations that were held in Aurangabad.

The Surgeons' Week was observed from June 9 to 15 and culminated in the Surgeon's Day, conceived and organised under the leadership of

Dr Pravin Suryawanshi, president ASI for the year 2025. Several thoughtful, innovative and landmark initiatives were launched by ASI during the week, which attracted national attention and appreciation.

One of the aims of the week was to undertake public awareness campaigns across India. Notably, on June 9, Dr Raghu Ram spearheaded an Instagram live stream of a session on breast cancer awareness with well-known actor Shriya Saran.

Subsequently, short duration clips of the interview were released on Instagram during the course of the Surgeons' Week. Over 7,00,000 people viewed this insightful session, and it had the highest reach for a public awareness campaign in ASI's 87-year history. It created an unprecedented impact emphasising the importance of education, empowerment, and early detection.

**The five-day Instagram posts have been compiled to view on YouTube**

Link:

[https://youtu.be/\\_\\_\\_VK-Y7Mscs?si=Ty1iirmQ7MmkiCmw](https://youtu.be/___VK-Y7Mscs?si=Ty1iirmQ7MmkiCmw)

**Dr Raghu Ram's message to commemorate Surgeons' Week**

Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iaFhSEheOQ>

## Raising awareness about breast cancer

On June 22, Jishnu Dev Varma, governor of Telangana inaugurated a large-scale breast cancer awareness programme titled "ABCs of Breast Cancer – What every woman must know", at Shanti Sarovar, the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Hyderabad.

Addressing close to 1,000 people who attended this event, the governor said, "I am very happy to note that three months ago, Dr Raghu Ram has secured two Guinness World Records (onsite and online) for conducting the "Largest Breast Cancer Awareness lesson" at Brahma Kumaris world headquarters in Mount Abu in March 2025. And today, he has replicated this awareness lesson at Shanti Sarovar in Hyderabad."

Further, he added, "I appreciate Dr Raghu Ram, who has been illuminating the Telangana Raj Bhavan in the colour 'Pink' during the International Breast Cancer awareness month (October) for five years in an earnest endeavour to empower people about the importance of early detection,



*Governor of Telangana inaugurating the awareness programme*



Telangana Governor appreciating the remarkable achievement of two Guinness World Records led by Dr Raghu Ram



Dr Raghu Ram addressing the gathering



Kuldeep didi addressing the gathering

and equally, give confidence to those fighting the disease. To do this even during the peak of the Covid pandemic speaks volumes about his passion, determination and commitment to breast cancer advocacy. I commend him for his pioneering work of spearheading several landmark initiatives over the past 18 years that have transformed breast cancer care in India and wish him continued success in his noble mission, which will go a long way in saving scores of lives through early detection."

In his talk, Dr Raghu Ram debunked common myths surrounding breast cancer with evidence-based facts and stressed that early detection is the key to long-term survival.

Dr Raghu Ram concluded with a powerful message that resonated with the audience. He added, "We must not

forget that a woman is the nerve centre of the family. If she is well, the family would be well. It is the duty of men to take care of the healthcare needs of their loved ones. Instead of gifting or in addition to gifting a saree during festivals, please do consider gifting an annual screening mammogram to your mother, spouse, grandmother and sister."

BK Kuldeep *didi*, in-charge of Brahma Kumaris Centre for Hyderabad is a breast cancer "conqueror". Sharing her own journey of fighting breast cancer, she said, "I am deeply grateful to Dr Raghu Ram for his outstanding care and unwavering support. My cancer journey inspired him to conduct the world's largest breast cancer awareness lesson, and I find solace in knowing that through my illness, countless women around the world have become more aware of the importance of early detection. I wish him even greater strength and continued impact."

#### Links to Governor's Address

Part 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4JOQYKLwsEs>

Part 2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3czwx9uAX7A>

## ABCs of Breast Cancer – What every woman must know!

On July 8, Sandhya Kode, a breast cancer ‘conqueror’, a well-known tech leader, entrepreneur and educator arranged an insightful session to empower staff and employees of the Vignana Jyothy Institute of Engineering & Technology in Hyderabad.

Dr Raghu Ram in his talk highlighted every aspect of breast cancer in a simple, easy-to-understand format.

Interestingly, the Q & A session lasted even longer than the awareness talk itself — a clear reflection of the deep engagement and impact the session had on the audience.

**Link to view the programme**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRWf4XDa7DY>

## Making a mark at TOI Social Impact Summit

On July 12, Dr P Raghu Ram was invited as a distinguished speaker and panelist at the Social Impact Summit organised by the *Times of India* in Mumbai.

The two-day event brought together visionary leaders, innovators, and changemakers from across India to engage in meaningful conversations on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Environmental Social Governance (ESG), with the aim of catalysing real-world impact and fostering a sustainable, socially responsible future.

As the sole representative from the Telugu States, Dr Raghu Ram shared insights on the innovative breast cancer advocacy initiatives championed by the Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation, as well as the large-scale population-based breast cancer screening programmes that he has spearheaded in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

The doctor flagged the crucial imbalance in CSR funding within the oncology space, noting that the majority of resources are directed toward tertiary care, with limited attention to advocacy, early detection, screening, and palliative care.

He urged stakeholders to rethink CSR priorities in healthcare, advocating for a shift from conventional philanthropy to strategic philanthropy—focused on sustainable, preventive, and long-term impact.

The panel discussion was moderated by Malathy Iyer, a senior editor at the *Times of India*.

Dr Raghu Ram’s participation brought a valuable perspective to the summit, reinforcing the importance of inclusive and forward-thinking healthcare strategies within India’s evolving CSR landscape.



Ms Malathy Iyer (Moderator -TOI), Ms Jaya Jairam (MOHAN Foundation), Ms Shalini Jatia (ImPaCCT Foundation), Dr Raghu Ram, Dr Bharat V Shah, Dr Sultan Pradhan and Mr Rameshwar P Naik (In-charge of Maharashtra CM Medical Cell)

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