

UBF Diary

July 2021

ASGBI Bestows a Rare, Prestigious Honour

Dr P Raghu Ram, OBE, has achieved the rare distinction of being conferred with the Honorary Fellowship of the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland (ASGBI), an organisation that represents the surgical fraternity in UK and Ireland.

Neil Welch, ASGBI President bestowed the honour upon Dr Raghu Ram during the 100th centenary annual general body meeting of the Association, which was held virtually at July 20, 2021 at 11 pm.

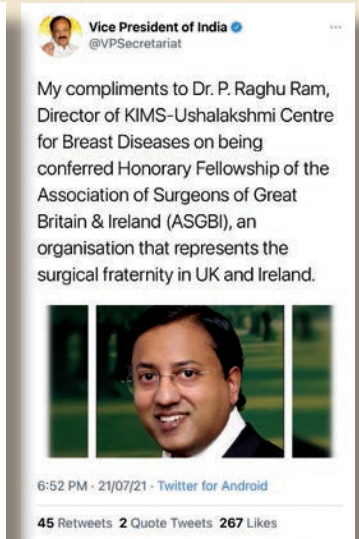
Addressing this special annual meet, Neil Welch said, "Raghu Ram is the first surgeon of Indian origin to have this honour conferred on him in the 100-year history of ASGBI and we are delighted to welcome him as Honorary Fellow of ASGBI." M Venkaiah Naidu, the vice-president of India tweeted about the honour received by Dr Raghu Ram appreciating the good doctor's work.

Responding to the honour bestowed upon him, Dr Raghu Ram addressing the ASGBI's AGM said, "This is a great honour to India and I dedicate this prestigious award to the Indian surgical fraternity the world over for their outstanding contribution towards promoting the art and science of surgery, and equally, to my patients who have given me an opportunity to be involved in their care."

Over the past 14 years, Dr Raghu Ram has striven to replicate and exemplify the best of British practices and has served as a "Living Bridge" between the UK and India, in an earnest effort to improve the delivery of breast healthcare in India. "I express my profound gratitude to everyone who has made this journey possible," said Dr Raghu Ram.

Established 100 years ago in 1920, ASGBI is a world-renowned organisation that represents surgeons from all surgical specialties practising in the UK and Ireland. The membership also includes surgeons in the armed forces, academic and research surgery and surgical trainees in the UK and Ireland.

The founding objective of ASGBI, which is celebrating its centenary year, is "the advancement of the science and art of surgery".



Neil Welch, ASGBI President bestowing the honour upon Dr Raghu Ram (below)



UBF-HELP: The launch of a unique National breast cancer and benign breast disease helpline

A 'helpline' to spread awareness about breast cancer and reassure the worried well

The world over, October is recognised as the International Breast Cancer Awareness month. At the eve of the beginning of this significant month, the vice-president of India, M Venkaiah Naidu launched a one-of-its-kind national breast cancer and benign breast disease helpline being spearheaded by the Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation (UBF) on September 30 2021.

This landmark initiative aims to raise awareness, spread hope and fuel the fight against breast cancer while reassuring the "worried well" about benign breast disease. Any queries and anxieties about breast health issues will be resolved by a team of breast cancer conquerors, counsellors and dieticians.

In her opening remarks, Dr Kotha Ushalakshmi Kumari, the 88-year-old breast cancer conqueror, in whose name the UBF Foundation has been established, lauded the fact that her son, Dr Raghu Ram and her daughter-in-law, Dr Vyjayanthi left their lucrative career opportunities in the UK to relocate to India only to take care of her and serve the country.

Delivering the chief guest's address, M Venkaiah Naidu paid rich tributes to Dr P Raghu Ram, the founder, director and CEO of UBF for spearheading this path-breaking initiative under the auspices of a "not-for-profit" breast



Dr P Raghu Ram at the launch of the UBF's Helpline

cancer charity based out of Telangana. The vice-president Naidu further applauded the group of breast cancer conquerors, who will be the face of the UBF-HELP. He appreciated their efforts and unwavering commitment towards spreading awareness about breast cancer, especially after going through the hardships involved in the treatment of breast cancer.

Praising the inclusion of trained counsellors in the helpline, who will be providing one-on-one confidential support to the callers, Naidu said that counselling is an inseparable part of the entire cancer treatment protocol or any other life-threatening medical condition. He said that no doubt cancer affects a patient's physical health but it takes a huge toll on the mental health as well.

"Counsellors can help in keeping the patients motivated to fight the illness spiritedly," he added. Naidu commended UBF-HELP for making available every facet of breast cancer and benign non-cancer breast health issues in the helpline's resource section of the website in English and 11 other Indian languages.

A Timely Initiative

Meanwhile, in his speech, Dr P Raghu Ram said, "There is robust evidence from the west to suggest that a dedicated breast cancer helpline providing emotional support and evidence-based information would ensure patients finish their treatment schedule, experience less distress, cherish improved quality of life and have better outcomes. And so, this initiative is very timely in our country."



The Vice-President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu virtually launching UBF-HELP



He continued, "What makes this initiative unique is that a group of passionate breast cancer conquerors who have been through the gruelling grind of breast cancer treatment, will be providing one-to-one confidential support, along with a team of trained counsellors."

This is the first dedicated national helpline in India to address issues related to both breast cancer and non-cancer benign breast health issues as well (far more common than breast cancer). The latter can cause a lot of anxiety to patients.

Nine out of 10 breast health issues are benign. So, the helpline also aims to reassure this segment of "worried well", who think they may have cancer but in fact it has to do with non-cancer breast health issues. The helpline can be useful to those undergoing chemotherapy as well. Importantly, the Foundation will specifically address diet-related concerns for patients undergoing cancer treatment with the assistance from dietitians.

Pertinently, Dr Raghu Ram added, "More than 60 per cent of breast cancers in India present in advanced stages are primarily due to lack of awareness. Consequently, India's breast cancer survival rates are low. With upcoming festivals such as Deepavali, I urge the men to gift their loved ones a screening mammogram test, which is the only proven way to detect breast cancer in the early stages, which would undoubtedly save scores of lives."

Citizens can avail one-to-one support by calling the UBF-HELP at 08046983383 to talk to our breast cancer conquerors, counsellors and dietitians

www.ubfhelp.org

'From Surviving to Thriving' – Dr Beth Dupree delivers the 2021 edition of the annual UBF Oration



Soon after the launch of UBF-HELP, Dr Beth Dupree, a world-renowned breast surgeon from Arizona, USA, delivered the 2021 edition of the annual UBF Oration instituted by UBF. Titled 'From Surviving to Thriving', the oration highlighted how the diagnosis of breast cancer can be a devastating moment in a woman or man's life. When one is able to embrace this process as a journey to healing and focus on living life as a 'thrivers' and not simply as a survivor of cancer, one is able to see life in a different perspective. Adversity is our greatest opportunity for spiritual growth, she added.

For 11 years in a row, Hyderabad turns Pink

To raise awareness about the breast cancer, for a record 11th consecutive year, UBF illuminated the Raj Bhavan, Charminar, Buddha Statue and KIMS Hospitals in the colour pink on September 30. Hyderabad is the only city in the entire Asia Pacific region, where so many prominent buildings and monuments turn pink to raise breast cancer awareness.

For the second consecutive year, Dr Tamilsai Soundararajan, Telangana governor gave permission to the Foundation to illuminate Raj Bhavan in pink to extend her unstinting support towards promoting breast cancer awareness. She also tweeted a picture of her taken alongside Dr Raghu Ram against the backdrop of the illuminated Raj Bhavan in pink.

She complimented him for his outstanding efforts over the past 14 years towards creating awareness about importance of early detection through a number of innovative projects that has attracted national and international appreciation. In fact, it is the only Raj Bhavan in India to turn pink in support of breast cancer awareness.

Illumination of prominent buildings in pink is just one way to attract the curiosity of people and raise awareness about importance of early detection of breast cancer.

