

1 Matters of the Heart

First Coronary Artery Graft, 1975

The first successful coronary artery graft was done in 1975 at the Southern Railway Hospital, Perambur, in Chennai by Dr K.M. Cherian. Twenty years later in 1995, aided by the most advanced technology, cardiac care and surgical skills, he performed the first heart transplant at his International Centre for Cardio-thoracic and Vascular Diseases, Chennai. This was made possible only after the legislation for brain death and the law permitting transplantation of human organs was passed in the country. With phenomenal experience and far-sightedness, he also conducted the first bilateral lung transplant, the first paediatric heart transplant as well as the first heart and lung transplant.

2 Product of Labour

First Test Tube Baby

The first test tube baby in India was born in Kolkata on October 3, 1978. Dr Subhash Mukhopadhyay claimed the child was the first through vitro-fertilisation. "Ridiculed by the scientific community, the physiologist is heading back to anonymity" (INDIA TODAY, January 1980). Tragically, he hung himself on June 19, 1981, while his contribution was finally recognised in 2005.



APPHOTO

5 Line of Sight

Eye Transplant, 1998

Eye specialists Virendra Sangwan and Geeta Vemuganti at the L.V. Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad, grew corneas in a petri-dish in 1998 using adult stem cells extracted from the oral mucosa of a patient and transplanted it to restore sight. The path-finding work promises to save huge sums incurred on immunosuppressants that patients have to take after the transplant.



APPHOTO

3 Sweet Medicine

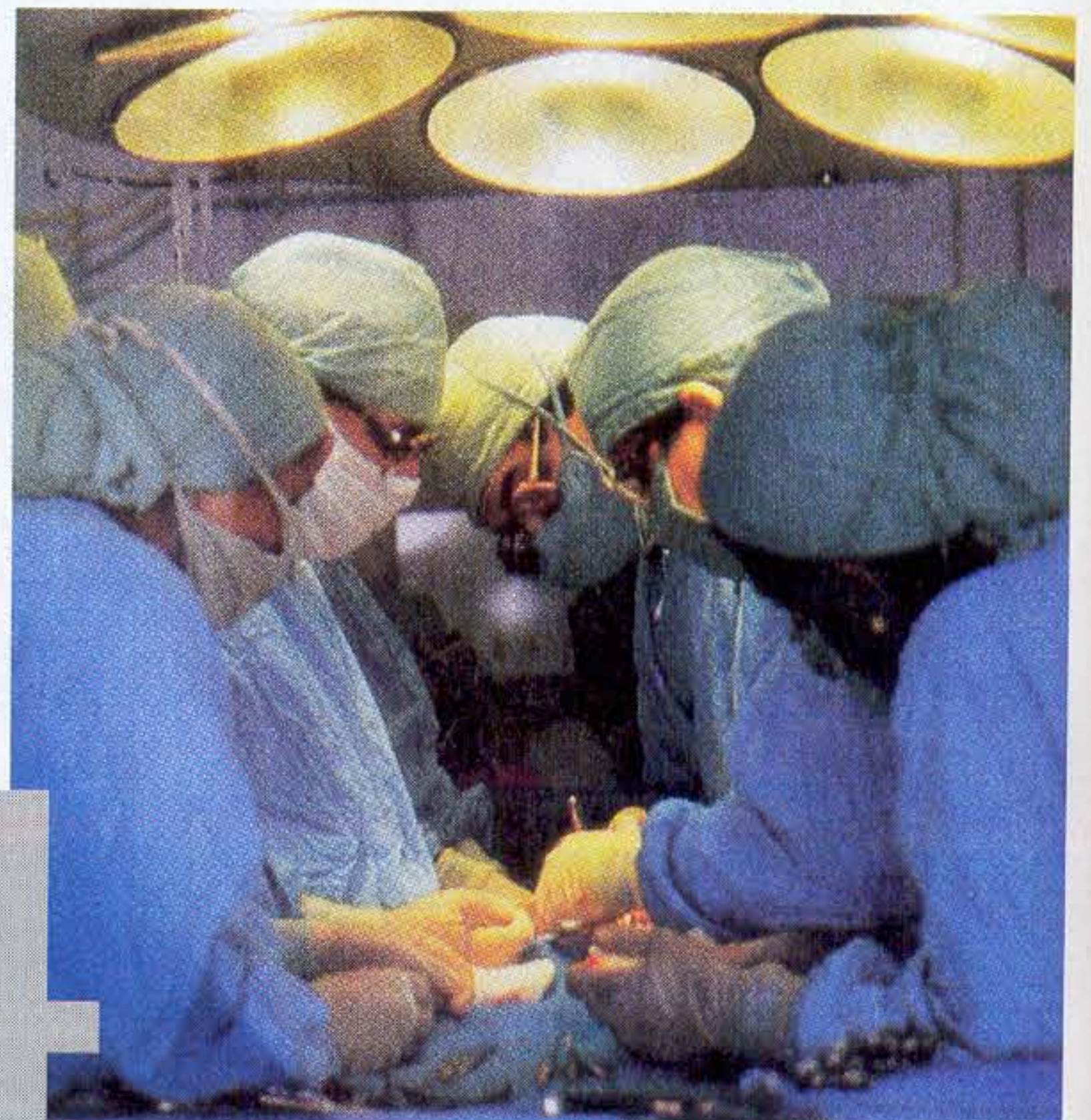
First Genetically-Engineered Vaccine

In 1997, Shantha Biotechnics, Hyderabad, founded by electronics engineer K.I. Varaprasad Reddy, launched India's first genetically engineered vaccine for Hepatitis-B, at half the price charged by the MNCs in India.

4 Life Guard

Organ Transplant

The first successful liver transplant was performed on two-year-old Sanjay Kandaswamy at the Indraprastha Apollo in Delhi in 1998. The transplantation of solid human organs was undoubtedly one of the greatest medical breakthroughs of this century. But still, the shortage of donors and organs has impeded the necessary thrust that is required to save more lives. "In the West there is a 20 per cent acceptance rate of those agreeing to donate organs" (INDIA TODAY, March 1996).



10

medical miracles

Organ transplants, test tube babies, stem cell advances. Despite often inadequate resources, healthcare in India has made possible innovations that are better than the best.