

Ex-nurse flown in from Dubai to donate organs

DurgeshNandan.Jha
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Shashi Bala Gupta's life was spent caring for the sick. Even in death, the former nurse at Safdarjung hospital wanted to save lives by donating her organs, including the skin. Last Saturday, the 76-year-old was flown in from Dubai in a critical state just to fulfil that wish.



Gupta had suffered irreversible brain damage after a cardiac arrest last week in Dubai. "It is difficult to donate organs in Dubai due to the legalities involved. But we had to fulfil our mother's last wish so we flew her to Delhi," Naveen Gupta, her son who heads the business opera-

tions of a private company in Dubai, told **TOI**.

The former nurse was declared brain dead on Sunday at Max Hospital, Saket, after which her liver was used to save a 55-year-old woman battling liver failure. Doctors said her corneas have been preserved and the skin sent to Safdarjung for grafting on to burn patients.

"My mother always wished to donate organs, including the skin, after her death. Not many people know how burn patients suffer due to unavailability of skin grafts. But she had seen it all when she was posted at the burns unit of Safdarjung hospital," her son added.

► **Donated kidney in '98, P 4**

Nurse donated kidney in 1998 against family's will

► Continued from P1

Naveen Gupta, 45, said the family was celebrating his mother's life and the fact that even in death she was able to save others. "There are many more people willing to donate organs. My mother's act would inspire them even further to do so," he said.

In 1998, when a family doctor and neighbour of Gupta's suffered kidney failure, the former nurse went against her family's will to donate one of her kidneys. "We kept protesting but our mother remained steadfast. She donated one of her kidneys to save the doctor and kept telling us that post-death her only wish

was that her organs should be donated," the son recounted.

The former nurse had been under the treatment of Dr Sujeet Jha at Max hospital. Jha, director of endocrinology, diabetes and obesity, said he received a call from the family on Friday. "The doctors in Dubai had given up on chances of her recovery. Her son told me he wanted to airlift her to Delhi to donate organs. I have never heard anything like this before. It is an overwhelming experience to know a person and her family who is willing to make this effort to save other lives," he said.

Dr Subhash Gupta, chief liver transplant surgeon at Max Saket, confirmed that

the recipient of Gupta's liver was doing fine post-surgery. "The donor arrived at the hospital on Saturday night. Her brain death certification was done on Sunday and the transplant took place on Monday morning," he said.

More than two lakh Indians require transplantation but due to lack of donors most suffer or die without the life-saving procedure. Experts say a brain dead patient can help save more a dozen people by donating organs and tissues, including heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, intestines, pancreas, eyes, heart valves, skin, bone marrow, connective tissue, middle ear and blood vessels.