Heart, kidneys and liver harvested in 11th organ donation in city this year

Kolkata: When Ispita Ghosh and her husband Apratim pledged their organs at a medical camp last year, little did she know how providential it would turn out to be. On Tuesday, Ipsita signed the consent letter even as Apratim was wheeled into the operation theatre at Peerless Hospital to harvest the heart, liver, kidneys, cornea and skin. This is the 11th organ transplant of the year.

Barely 42, Apratim suffered cerebral haemorrhage on Sunday and slipped into irreversible coma. When doctors declared him brain dead on Monday, Ipsita steadied herself and told them that she wished to honour the pledge and donate his organs. On Tuesday, the organs were retrieved at the hospital in an operation that lasted six-and-a-half hours. The harvested organs were then swiftly transported to SSKM and Command Hospital after cops made arrangements for green corridors three times in less than 90 minutes. Apratim’s organs breathed new life to four persons, including a 25-year-old soldier, suffering from renal failure. The heart, liver and one kidney was transplanted at SSKM. The second kidney was allocated to Command Hospital. Peerless, where the harvesting happened, has a licence to transplant kidneys but did not have a matching patient at the time.

According to Apratim’s elder brother Asimabha, he had initially complained of headache on Saturday. The pain turned so acute on Sunday morning that they rushed him to hospital. There, immediately after a CT scan, Apratim slipped into coma. “The patient had suffered a cerebral stroke and his coma gradually deepened. At 11am, doctors declared brain stem death. When the spouse of the deceased informed us that the patient had earlier pledged his organs, we got in touch with authorities at Swastha Bhawan to prepare the modalities for organ donation,” said Peerless Hospital medical superintendent Sudipta Bhattacharjee.

This is the third brain death declaration at Peerless, the first being that of Sovona Sarkar in 2016 that kick-started the organ donation movement after it had remained in comatose for four years. The second brain death declaration did not translate into
a donation as the organs were not in fit condition.

“It was Ipsita who first told us that Apratim was no more and then disclosed that they had pledged the organs and intended to keep the pledge. I, too, felt likewise but did not know how her 8-year-old daughter Aratrika or my 80-year-old mother Krishna would react,” recounted Asimabha. They were pleasantly surprised when both of them embraced the idea.

Once the nod from the family came through, the Regional Tissue & Transplant Organisation east head Aprita Roychowdhury took over and streamlined the allocation of organs. Police organised the green corridors to transport the heart in 25 minutes, the liver in 15 minutes and the kidneys in 14 minutes.