



SightLife partners with KGMU and The Hans Foundation to open state-of-the-art eye bank and center of excellence in Uttar Pradesh, India

Seattle, WA (December 5, 2016) – [SightLife](#) and King George Medical University (KGMU) today announced the opening of the KGMU UP Community Eye Bank, a state-of-the-art facility in Lucknow, the capital of the state of Uttar Pradesh in India. Dedicated to restoring sight to the corneal blind, the new eye bank is supported by The Hans Foundation, and operated by SightLife in technical partnership with Sitapur Eye Hospital Trust. The new eye bank is the result of a public-private partnership—the first of its kind in Uttar Pradesh—and will provide a full scope of services, including counseling for families, cornea recovery and processing, distribution of corneal tissues to surgeons and training for technicians and surgeons.

“Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India, with two-thirds the population of the U.S.,” explained Monty Montoya, president and CEO of SightLife. “The U.S. performed almost 50,000 transplants last year, but in UP only 650 cornea transplants were done. This eye bank will enable us to facilitate life-changing surgeries and restore sight to so many more people waiting in darkness. It is a critical step in SightLife’s mission to eliminate corneal blindness worldwide by 2040.”

The first corneal transplant using tissue from the KGMU UP Community Eye Bank was performed on November 21, 2016. Located inside the trauma center at KGMU, the new facility has state-of-the-art microscope technology to ensure technicians determine suitability of corneal tissue for transplant. It also is integrated with the 24-hour exclusive national help line, which connects all inquiries directly to the KGMU UP Community Eye Bank.

“With the advent of this eye bank, we are now in a position to remove corneal blindness in our state and we are very excited about that,” states Dr. Arun K. Sharma, Associate Professor of KGMU, Ophthalmology Department and KGMU UP Community Eye Bank Medical Director.

Lt. Gen S M Mehta, CEO of The Hans Foundation added, “Eye care has been a significant part of health interventions supported by our organization. Supporting SightLife and KGMU in setting up this eye bank in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh is a manifestation of our continued resolve in this direction. It will contribute significantly to reducing the backlog of corneal blindness in the state and creating awareness around eye donation. With support from THF, the facility over the next few years will be developed as a center of excellence for corneal transplantation surgery and recovery in Uttar Pradesh.”

The new KGMU UP Community Eye Bank also received financial support from the Indiana Lions Eye Bank and staff at SightLife.

With plans to replicate the eye bank in other states with a similar need, Sightlife intends for the KGMU UP Community Eye Bank to be the gold standard of partnership, excellence and commitment to eliminating corneal blindness across India and beyond.



About SightLife

Founded in 1969 and based in Seattle, SightLife is the only global health organization working relentlessly to eliminate corneal blindness worldwide by 2040. Sight restoration has a profound impact on recipients, their families and communities—no one should have to wait to experience the joy and possibilities that vision brings. With partners in 33 countries, SightLife is increasing the number of corneal transplants performed each year to transform millions of lives around the globe.

About KGMU

King George's Medical University, for a while known as Chhatrapati Shahuji Maharaj Medical Univeristy, is a medical school located in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India. It came into being after the upgrade of King George's Medical College (established in 1911) into a University Act passed by government of Uttar Pradesh on 16 September 2002. Located in Lucknow, it serves the over 2 million people of the city and Prof. Ravi Kant serves as Vice Chancellor.

About The Hans Foundation

The Hans Foundation (THF) is a charitable trust created to provide a source of endowment of funds for nonprofit organizations in India. THF is committed to strengthening India by addressing the areas of health care, education, and disability. It holds a powerful vision of India where human suffering is alleviated and a strong foundation for the future is built.

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