Padma Shri neurosurgeon Ashok Kumar Mahapatra (74) passes away – pioneer in separating twins joined at the head

Health · 5 November 2026 · https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/current-affairs-english/2026/11/05



News

Padma Shri neurosurgeon Prof. Ashok Kumar Mahapatra (74) died at AIIMS New Delhi at about 9.15 pm on 2 Nov 2026 (Monday). First treated at SUM Hospital, Bhubaneswar, for a severe headache, he had been under treatment at AIIMS Delhi since 2 Oct. In 2017 at AIIMS Delhi he led the surgery to separate Odisha's craniopagus twins (joined at the head) Jaga and Kalia – recorded in the Limca Book of Records as India's first successful craniopagus separation. Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi and former CM Naveen Patnaik condoled his death.

Key facts

Death	2 Nov 2026, AIIMS New Delhi; aged 74
Award	Padma Shri (announced 2025; conferred by the President in Apr 2025; medicine)
Posts	Head of Neurosurgery, AIIMS Delhi; founding Director, AIIMS Bhubaneswar; Director, SGPGI Lucknow; Vice-Chancellor, SOA University
Twins	Jaga–Kalia (some reports: 'Balia'), Kandhamal district, Odisha; 28 months old
Surgery	Stage 1 on 28 Aug 2017; separation on 25–26 Oct 2017 – about 16 hours

Background

- Types of conjoined twins: head – craniopagus; chest – thoracopagus; abdomen – omphalopagus; pelvis – ischiopagus. Craniopagus occurs in about one in 30 lakh births, and half of them die at birth or within 24 hours (AIIMS doctor, 2017).
- Polity: the Padma awards were instituted in 1954. Article 18 abolishes titles; in Balaji Raghavan v. Union of India (1995) the Supreme Court held that the Bharat Ratna and Padma awards are not 'titles', but must not be used as a prefix or suffix to names.
- Science: the brain and spinal cord are covered by three protective membranes, the meninges – dura mater (outer), arachnoid (middle) and pia mater (inner). Cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) cushions against shocks. Inflammation of these membranes is meningitis.
- AIIMS Bhubaneswar is one of the six new AIIMS started in 2012 under the first phase of the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) – the others being Bhopal, Jodhpur, Patna, Raipur and Rishikesh.

Tamil Nadu link: Dr Jacob Chandy started the neurosurgery department at Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore, in January 1949; formal M.S. Neurosurgery training began there in 1958 (CMC website).

Shanmugam IAS Academy – your next step

- **Courses:** TNPSC Group 1, 2 / 2A (Prelims + Mains), Group 4, UPSC / IAS – Coimbatore · Madurai · Online – https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/fees
- **Books (PDF):** TNPSC PYQ books, UPSC books – https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/study-materials
- **Free quiz + daily PDFs:** https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/free-pdf-download · All news of this day: https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/current-affairs-english/2026/11/05

Admissions – call / WhatsApp: 99941 46662 · 99944 27714 · www.shanmugamiasacademy.in