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Separated Pygopus twins to fly home today



Eluidi and Ericana from Tanzania with their mother Grace and chairman of Apollo Group of Hospitals Prathap C. Reddy at their first birthday celebration at Apollo Specialty Hospital, Vanagaram

A crying one-year-old boy calms down the moment strains of a Tamil film song filter into the room. Not that one can predict baby behaviour, but this is completely surprising because the baby is from Tanzania.

Meet Eluidi, one of the separated Pygopagus twins from the African country. He and his twin Ericana were conjoined at the end of the spine and shared vital organs. They were separated in an 18-hour surgery on December 16, 2013, at Apollo Specialty Hospitals, Vanagaram.

The twins, along with their mother Grace, are all set to fly home on Wednesday morning after their nine-month stay in the city. Tuesday was special as the twins celebrated their first birthday at the hospital. This also marked their debut appearance in the media.

In June, last year, Grace, a resident of Kasumulu, a village in Tanzania, had brought the conjoined twins to the hospital. Twenty doctors drawn from various specialities operated on the twins.

In a video telecast on the occasion, Eluidi was seen dancing, while lying on the bed, on a Tamil filmy number 'Fy fy fy kalachify' from the Vishal-starrer 'Pandiya Naadu.' Ericana, however, prefers western classical music.

"Eluidi also loves the song, 'Oodha colour ribbon.' We have recorded the songs on a mobile phone and play it for him. The twins are familiar with Tamil words and babble the word 'amma' for their mother, 'akka' for young nurses and 'athai' for elderly staff," said J. Santhi, nursing superintendent at the hospital.

Grace has also picked up a few Tamil words. The twins also seem to like the essentially Tamil rice and lentil dish.

Surgeons said the Pygopagus twins are the fifth in the world and the first in the country to be successfully separated. "They will come back after six months for a surgery for some procedures," said Venkata Sripathi, senior consultant paediatric urologist.

The neurosurgeons will check if the spine is straight and how the twins are moving their limbs. "We will monitor them at least till they are four years old. We are co-ordinating with doctors at Muhimbili Hospital at Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and will keep in touch through telemedicine if required," he said.

Prathap C. Reddy, chairman of Apollo Group of Hospitals, said there are plans to make the Vanagaram hospital paperless soon.