

# Plastic surgery for real smiles



Dr Dilip Gahankari operates in a remote part of India

## A doctor's visit to mend broken lives

by Katie Miller  
health reporter

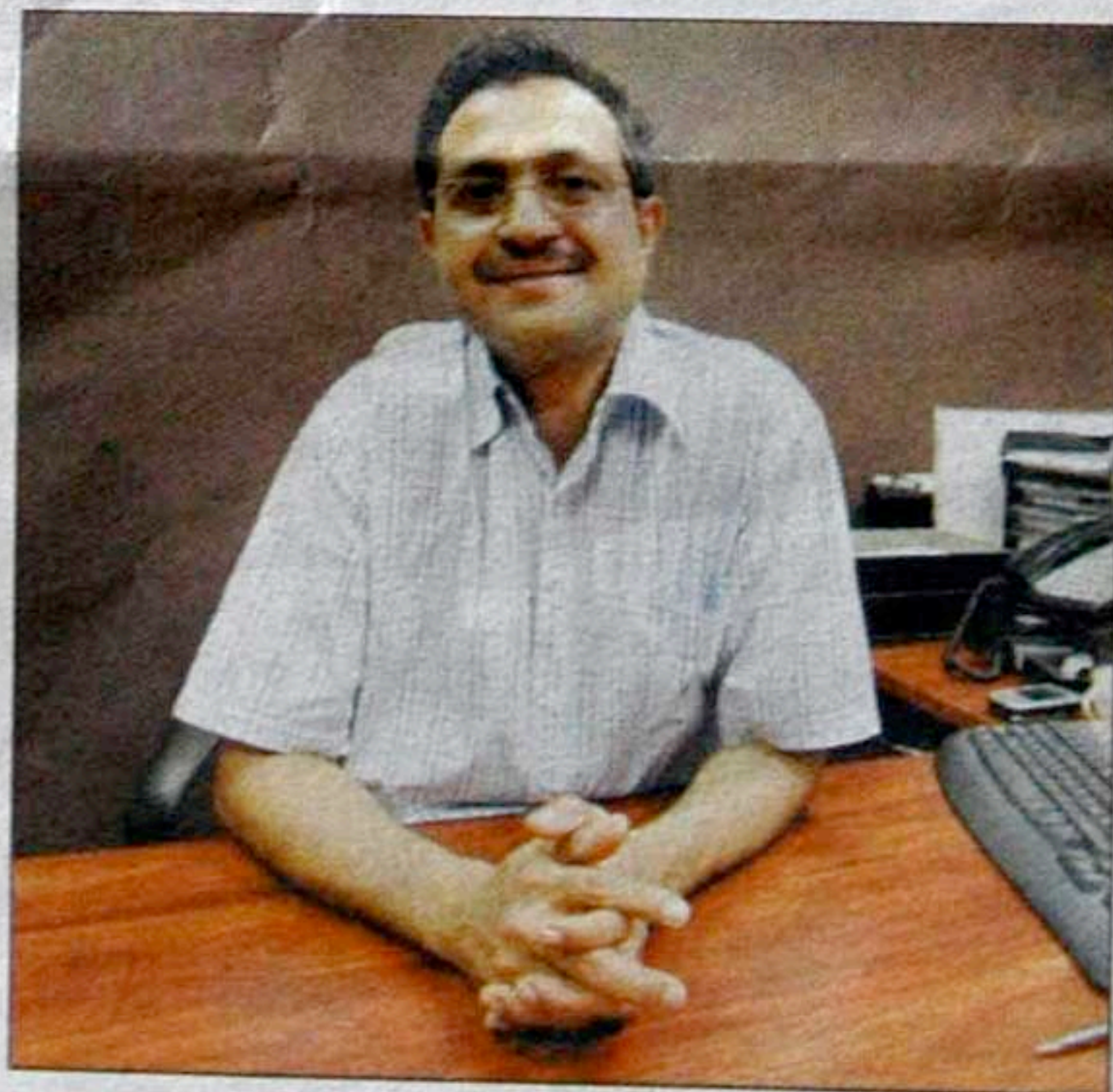
**SURGEON** Dilip Gahankari loves seeing smiles and new hope on radically changed faces.

The Benowa-based cosmetic and plastic surgeon saw many grateful grins in India last month when he volunteered his expertise to help people living with birth defects, deformities and tumours.

Dr Gahankari and Gold Coast Hospital nurse and anaesthetic technician Lisa Kiddle spent five days in the remote village of Utavali, about 600km from Mumbai, helping those with almost no access to modern medical care.

Ms Kiddle is still overseas but Dr Gahankari, back at work on the Coast, said the trip had been a great success.

The two Gold



Dr Gahankari – making a difference

Coasters joined with an Indian medical team to treat about 70 patients, about half of whom were under 12, during four days in the operating theatre.

Dr Gahankari said the surgeries were performed in a hospital – funded by charity – which was still under construction.

“We were at a small town of a few hundred

people surrounded by farms and fields,” he said. “Most people came from a radius of about 200km to see us.

“We were using the theatre facility for the first time for major cases, so we were initially a bit apprehensive as to how everyone would go but everything just went beautifully.”

Dr Gahankari said the group operated on

birth defects such as cleft lips and palates, birth defects of the hand, deformities caused by burns, tumours and some ‘other small lumps and bumps’.

He said one of the trip highlights was seeing a boy who he had operated on during his first philanthropic trip to India the year before.

“His cleft lip was quite wide and technically difficult so to see a good result and almost a normally appearing face was very gratifying,” he said.

“That kind of makes your trip, just one patient like that.

“I feel doing something that you know has made a difference is probably the most important thing.”

Dr Gahankari said he was planning another trip to the tribal region, in one of India's few remaining tiger reserves, at the end of the year.