



Govt is committed to providing quality healthcare to every citizen, especially in remote & island territories: Raksha Mantri

First time in the islands: Joint Services Multi-Speciality Mega Surgical Camps, organised by Indian Navy, restore wellness across the Lakshadweep Archipelago

Nearly 50 sight-restoring surgeries conducted in just two days

'Synergy', 'Scope' & 'Scale' have made the camp unique: CNS

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“Government is committed to providing quality healthcare to every citizen of the country, especially those living in remote and island territories,” said Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh as he virtually addressed, on January 13, 2026, a nearly week-long Joint Services Multi-Speciality Camp organised by the Indian Navy at the Indira Gandhi Hospital, Kavaratti in Lakshadweep, the first time in the islands. He described the initiative as a shining example of the Indian Navy’s significant role in nation-building and humanitarian assistance beyond maritime security, adding that through the camp, the Tri-Services team of the Armed Forces Medical Services has brought advanced diagnostic facilities and specialist care directly to the people’s doorsteps, including services such as planned surgeries and cataract operations.



Raksha Mantri noted that a comprehensive screening, early diagnosis, timely medical advice, medical interventions, and free distribution of medicines would contribute to long-term health benefits for the island community. “We’re working with the resolve of a Swasth Bharat. We have not only promoted physical infrastructure in the health sector but have also taken care of the people’s well-being through initiatives like Ayushman Bharat and Jan Aushadhi Kendras,” he added.

Formally inaugurating the camp, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi highlighted that the initiative is unique in three ways - ‘synergy’, with the camp representing a truly joint endeavour with professionals from all three Services and local administration; ‘scope’, considering the range of medical specialists from cardiology, ophthalmology, cataract surgery, nephrology, neurology, gastroenterology, dermatology and endocrinology; and ‘scale’, with the sheer numbers of medical professionals and support personnel deployed for this camp. He emphasised that such joint initiatives strengthen inter-service synergy and civil-military cooperation while contributing meaningfully to the welfare of citizens.



Following the inaugural ceremony, the Chief of the Naval Staff interacted with the patients and handed over spectacles, eye drops, and medicines to the beneficiaries of the cataract surgery. The inaugural ceremony was attended by Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command Vice Admiral

Sameer Saxena; Director General, Armed Forces Medical Services Surgeon Vice Admiral Arti Sarin; Advisor to the Administrator Shri Sai B Deepak along with senior officers of the Armed Forces, representatives of the civil administration, and members of the local populace.

As envisioned by Raksha Mantri, the Indian Navy is conducting multi-speciality camps across five islands - Amini, Androth, Agatti, Kavaratti, and Minicoy - to provide comprehensive medical care to residents, ensuring maximum outreach and accessibility. A dedicated ophthalmology team has been deployed at Kavaratti to undertake cataract surgeries for eligible patients.



As part of the camp, 29 Medical Officers, two Nursing Officers, and 42 Paramedical personnel from the Armed Forces from establishments across the country have been deployed. Lakshadweep has an established government healthcare system comprising district hospitals, community health centres, and primary health facilities. To complement these services, medical equipment, stores, and medicines have been augmented, enabling access to specialist and super-specialist care at respective healthcare facilities. Dedicated surgical teams have also been deployed at Agatti and Minicoy to manage operative and procedural requirements.

Nearly 50 sight-restoring surgeries within just two days is a major highlight of the camp, delivering world-class ophthalmic care to the island residents by the specialists from Army Hospital (Research & Referral), with many more to follow in the next few days.



Restoring the Patriarch (Kavaratti Island)

Kuni Koya, 65, a local resident of Amini, suffered from hypermature cataract that had led him to near blindness. His successful surgery represents the core mission of the camp - ensuring that the residents of India's smallest Union Territory are never left behind in the dark.

The Agatti Breakthrough (Khalid C, 68)

For years, Khalid's world was a gray ghost of its former self. Today, he became a symbol of this historic mission as the sophisticated technique was deployed on Agatti soil for the first time. "I thought the fog of the sea had entered my soul," he whispered, his eyes clear for the first time in a decade. "Today, the Navy gave me back the blue of my home," he said.

Beyond clinical treatment, the camp has also placed strong emphasis on holistic wellbeing, in line with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision that good health is not merely freedom from disease but the assurance of overall wellness and welfare for all. Citizens were counselled on preventive healthcare, lifestyle modification, mental well-being, and nutrition. Dietary guidance highlighting the benefits of millets, as part of India's traditional and sustainable food systems, along with yoga and wellness practices, were provided to promote long-term health benefits.

The initiative aligns with the vision of the Prime Minister to ensure equitable access to quality healthcare for every citizen, including those residing in the most remote regions of the country. Reflecting the spirit of flagship national initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, the camp underscores the country's global health philosophy of 'One Earth, One Health', by integrating curative care with preventive and promotive health services.

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