



KANWAD MELA

FREE MEDICAL CAMP

2025

REPORT ON DSF FREE MEDICAL & WELLNESS CAMP DURING KANWAD YATRA 2025

Introduction :

The Kanwad Yatra, one of the largest annual pilgrimages dedicated to Lord Shiva, draws millions of devotees who travel long distances on foot, carrying the sacred Ganga water to offer at Shiva temples. This sacred journey, while deeply spiritual, is also physically demanding, with pilgrims often exposed to extreme weather conditions, exhaustion, injuries, and health concerns during their walk.

To serve these devotees and ensure their well-being, DSF, in collaboration with Parmarth Niketan, established a Free Medical and Wellness Camp during this year's Kanwad season. The camp was strategically set up on the Neelkanth Mahadev Temple Road, behind Parmarth Niketan in Rajaji National Park, a location that witnesses heavy footfall of pilgrims en route to the holy Neelkanth Mahadev Temple.

Our Volunteers :

The Free Medical and Wellness Camp was inaugurated under the guidance and divine leadership of Parmarth Niketan's President, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati Ji. The camp began with a beautiful lamp-lighting ceremony in the presence of Pujya Swamiji, symbolizing the light of healing, service, and hope. During the inauguration, Pujya Swamiji warmly interacted with the doctors and volunteers, enquiring about their plans for the Kanwad camp and the arrangements made to serve the thousands of pilgrims.

In his inspiring words, he emphasized the importance of seva (selfless service) as a true form of worship and encouraged everyone to extend their dedication not only to serving humanity but also to protecting Mother Earth. He lovingly blessed the entire team for the successful completion of the camp and motivated them to continue engaging in such noble initiatives in the future.



During the inauguration, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati Ji personally presented cloth bags to many Kanwariyas as well as to all the members of the medical team. With great compassion and vision, he urged everyone to take a collective oath to avoid single-use plastics and to commit themselves to the protection of Mother Earth.

Swamiji reminded all present that devotion to Lord Shiva and service to the Ganga must go hand in hand with responsibility towards the environment. By encouraging pilgrims and volunteers alike to carry and use these cloth bags, he inspired them to make small but impactful lifestyle changes that would contribute to reducing pollution and keeping the sacred river clean for future generations.



Medical Services Provided:

The camp was manned by a dedicated and compassionate medical team. The healthcare services were supported by the Parmarth Niketan Medical Team, the Yamkeshwar Block Medical Team from Pauri Garhwal Government Hospital, and the Care Nursing College Team. Together, these groups brought in a total of 25 volunteer doctors and nurses who selflessly dedicated their time and expertise for the service of the pilgrims. Their combined efforts ensured that the camp functioned smoothly and that every devotee in need received proper care and treatment.



On average, more than 1,500 patients visited the camp daily. Each patient was examined carefully, prescribed medication as required, and provided with medicines completely free of cost. The spirit of service was at the core of this initiative, ensuring that no devotee had to struggle for healthcare during their sacred journey.



Common Ailments Treated :

During the course of the Kanwad Yatra, the medical camp attended to a wide range of health concerns. Many of these ailments were directly linked to the strenuous nature of the pilgrimage, exposure to extreme weather, long hours of walking, and limited access to hygienic facilities on the route. The camp was well-prepared with both trained doctors and essential medicines to handle such conditions. Some of the most frequently treated ailments and their management included:

- **General Common Illnesses (Cold, Cough, Fever):** A large number of devotees presented with seasonal illnesses such as fever, cough, and cold. They were treated with basic medications including Paracetamol, antihistamines, and cough syrups, which provided quick relief and allowed them to continue their Yatra with improved comfort.
- **Cuts, Burns, and Skin Allergies:** Pilgrims often suffered from minor injuries, burns, and rashes due to constant walking, exposure, or accidental mishaps along the route. These were treated with antiseptic solutions, burn creams, and antihistamine creams or tablets, ensuring proper wound care and prevention of infection.
- **Snake Bite and Monkey Bite Cases:** Since the Yatra passes through forest areas, occasional cases of snake bites and monkey bites were reported. Patients were immediately given first aid, and critical cases were referred to the nearest hospital for advanced care. Where required, anti-venom (for snake bites) and rabies vaccines (for monkey bites) were administered in consultation with government hospital teams.
- **Blood Sugar and Blood Pressure Management:** Many elderly devotees sought assistance for routine management of chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension. The camp facilitated basic monitoring of blood sugar and blood pressure and provided commonly prescribed medicines such as Metformin, Glimepiride, and Amlodipine to help them maintain stable health during their pilgrimage.
- **Urinary Tract Infections:** Several women and elderly patients reported symptoms of urinary infection, often due to dehydration and lack of sanitation facilities. They were treated with doctor-prescribed antibiotics, oral hydration, and alkalizers, helping them recover quickly.
- **Boils and Pimples:** Skin issues, particularly boils and pimples, were fairly common due to excessive sweating and unhygienic conditions. These were managed with antibiotic ointments and anti-inflammatory medicines, ensuring both relief and prevention of further infection.

● **Dehydration, Vomiting, and Diarrhea:** Given the long hours of walking in heat, dehydration and gastric disturbances were common complaints. Patients were provided Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS), intravenous fluids, anti-emetics, zinc supplements, and probiotics as required. This ensured that they regained strength before resuming their journey.

● **Dizziness and Fatigue:** A considerable number of pilgrims experienced dizziness, weakness, and fatigue due to low energy levels and overexertion. They were treated with glucose, adequate hydration, routine blood pressure checks, and supportive medicines to stabilize their condition.

● **Foot Blisters from Walking:** Blisters and wounds on the feet were among the most common issues faced by Kanwariyas walking barefoot or with minimal footwear. These were treated with antiseptic cleaning, soothing ointments, and proper bandaging, allowing pilgrims to continue their Yatra with reduced pain.

● **Gastric Issues and Indigestion:** The long journey, irregular eating, and limited diet options often led to gastric discomfort and indigestion. These were managed with antacids and digestive enzymes, which provided quick relief.



Free Medication and Services :

In addition to free consultations and treatment, the camp ensured that essential medicines worth over ₹50,000 were distributed free of cost to the devotees throughout the Yatra. This provision not only gave pilgrims immediate relief but also reduced the financial burden of healthcare during their journey.

To prevent dehydration, Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) were distributed widely, particularly among those showing symptoms of weakness and exhaustion. For devotees who complained of dizziness or fatigue, special care was taken to provide ORS and proper rest before they continued their journey.

The camp also offered free Blood Pressure checks for all those who requested it. Many devotees expressed gratitude for this service, as it helped them keep track of their health during the demanding pilgrimage. Additionally, a large number of bandages and wound dressings were provided to pilgrims suffering from injuries or foot blisters, which are among the most common ailments during the Kanwad Yatra.

Overall Impact :

By the end of the Yatra season, the DSF camp had successfully treated and benefitted a total of 31,449 patients. This extraordinary number reflects both the immense need for such medical facilities during the Kanwad Yatra and the dedication of the teams involved in running the camp.

The initiative not only provided medical relief but also offered the pilgrims a sense of safety, care, and compassion during their spiritual journey. For many devotees, the camp became a place of comfort and support, reinforcing the principle that seva (selfless service) is an integral part of spirituality.



Wellness and Spiritual Support :

Understanding that the Kanwad Yatra is not just a physical journey but also a deeply spiritual one, the camp went beyond medical support and offered opportunities for pilgrims to rejuvenate both body and mind.

A total of four **yoga and meditation sessions** were conducted by professional yoga trainers from Parmarth Niketan, who are globally recognized for their expertise in yoga and holistic health. These sessions were open to all devotees resting near the camp.

The gentle yoga sessions focused on stretching, relaxation, and breathing practices that helped pilgrims relieve physical strain and stiffness after their long walks. Many participants reported feeling lighter, more flexible, and refreshed after these practices.

The meditation sessions provided a much-needed pause for the mind. In the midst of the crowded and hectic Yatra environment, the guided meditation helped devotees calm their minds, reduce stress, and reconnect with the spiritual essence of their pilgrimage. The sessions were deeply appreciated, and many devotees shared that this experience made their Yatra even more fulfilling.





Special arrangements were provided for Kanwad yatris in Parmarth Niketan such as drinking water facilities, toilet etc and aarti was monitored extra carefully so that pilgrims have a divine experience. Yatris were also welcomed to participate in the morning hawan with Rishikumars and volunteers of Parmarth Niketan.

Hygiene Awareness Initiative :

In addition to providing medical treatment and wellness support, the camp also focused on promoting preventive healthcare practices among devotees. Recognizing that good hygiene is the foundation of good health, DSF partnered with the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA), a leading NGO working in the field of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), to spread awareness about the importance of hand hygiene during the Kanwad Yatra.

At the camp, devotees, patients, and especially children were educated about the significance of regular handwashing in preventing infections and maintaining overall well-being. Practical demonstrations and simple awareness talks were conducted to encourage pilgrims to adopt hand hygiene as a daily habit, even beyond the Yatra.

To reinforce this effort, 16,000 soaps were distributed free of cost, generously sponsored by Dettol. The distribution of soaps not only ensured immediate access to hygiene supplies during the pilgrimage but also empowered devotees to continue practicing proper hand hygiene after returning home.

This initiative highlighted the message that prevention is better than cure, complementing the medical services of the camp and contributing to a healthier and safer Kanwad Yatra experience for thousands of devotees.



Environmental Awareness:

Alongside hygiene awareness, the camp also made dedicated efforts to raise environmental consciousness among devotees. Understanding that the Kanwad Yatra is not only a spiritual journey but also an opportunity to inspire positive social and ecological change, our team took small yet meaningful steps to promote environmental responsibility.

Through interactive sessions, devotees were educated about the harmful effects of pollution and how both industrial and domestic waste severely impact the River Ganga, especially for the communities who depend on it for drinking water and daily needs. The campaign highlighted critical issues such as the dangers of open defecation, the importance of toilets, and the need to reduce reliance on single-use plastics by adopting sustainable alternatives.

To make the message more engaging and memorable, a puppet show was performed by the Rishikumars of Parmarth Gurukul. This creative approach captured the attention of pilgrims, especially children, and conveyed important lessons about keeping the Ganga clean, protecting the environment, and living in harmony with nature. The show also emphasized long-term actions like tree plantation and the use of eco-friendly products in daily life.

As a practical step, the camp distributed cloth bags to hundreds of devotees, each carrying strong messages about climate change and environmental protection. Pilgrims were encouraged to use these bags to collect and carry their plastic waste, such as discarded water bottles or juice cartons, instead of throwing them near the sacred river. This initiative was well received, and many devotees expressed their willingness to adopt more sustainable habits even after the Yatra.

Through these collective efforts, the camp not only healed bodies but also planted seeds of awareness in the hearts of thousands of devotees, ensuring that the Yatra became a moment of reflection not just on spiritual devotion, but also on our responsibility to Mother Earth.



Conclusion:

The DSF Free Medical and Wellness Camp during Kanwad Yatra 2025 was a shining example of holistic service. Through the combined efforts of volunteers of DSF, Parmarth Niketan, government medical teams, and volunteers from Care Nursing College, the camp successfully provided healthcare and wellness services to over 50,000 pilgrims and awareness to over 1,00,000 devotees.

By addressing medical needs with free consultations and medicines, caring for injuries and ailments, distributing essential health supplies, and conducting rejuvenating yoga and meditation sessions, the camp truly embodied the spirit of compassion and service. All the volunteers received certificates from Pujya Asanganand Saraswati ji Maharaj who motivated them to do such services more.

