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# Indian peacekeepers provide free veterinary services in South Sudan

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DUBAI: Indian veterinarians serving with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) have provided free veterinary services for livestock owners in the country's Kodok, Upper Nile area. According to a mission statement on Monday, the doctors have treated around 1,494 animals for numerous infections, including parasitic infestations, diarrhoea, anaemia, pneumonia, and tick infestations.

In South Sudan, livestock plays a pivotal role for communities, enabling them to be economically empowered. However, often, animal breeders do not have access to adequate veterinary assistance.

"It's an essential task that the Blue Helmets are happy to take on," said Lieutenant Colonel Manoj Yadav. "Our job as peacekeepers is clear—we are in South Sudan to protect civilians as well as boost trust and confidence," he said.

"As a veterinary doctor, I have the privilege to see firsthand the immediate impact of our assistance on the communities we are on the ground to serve. I believe we make a fundamental difference by ensuring that their animals are healthy, and they can eke out sustainable livelihoods," Yadav added.

Besides medical treatments, Indian peacekeepers also boosted capacities among livestock owners on disease prevention, the importance of rotational grazing and habitat management.

"It's not enough for us to treat diseased animals. We make every effort to engage livestock breeders and empower them with the necessary knowledge on animal management best practices," explained Dr Yadav.

Yagub Olam, a cattle owner, appreciated the initiative. "It's not always easy for us to provide the best for our animals and this free veterinary camp by Indian peacekeepers has benefited us greatly. I hope they will continue to help us," he said.

Joseph Aban, County Commissioner of Fashoda, echoed these sentiments. "We request UNMISS to conduct more such veterinary aid drives in future, which will go a long way in maintaining a healthy livestock population and improving the overall quality of life for community members," he said.