

An unparalleled vision

Dr Lalit Verma Gives A Peek Into The World Of Ophthalmology

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A stalwart in the field of ophthalmology, Dr Lalit Verma is a highly respected vitreo-retina surgeon with decades of experience in managing complex retinal disorders. He currently serves as the Director of Vitreo-Retina Services at the Centre for Sight and is secretary general at South Asian Academy of Ophthalmology. Speaking to GT at the 21st AUUP Convocation, where he received an honorary doctorate, he emphasised the fact that knowledge holds value only when translated into service to humanity.

The first calling

My journey into ophthalmology was not an overnight decision; it evolved during my MBBS years at AIIMS. A defining moment came when I read Parsons Textbook of Ophthalmology - from the index to the final chapter - not once, but twice. That effort paid off when I received the gold medal in ophthalmology during my MBBS. Another reason I chose ophthalmology was that it was considered an end-specialty at the time. Unlike medicine, which demands further super-specialisation, ophthalmology offered a sense of completion. However, within ophthalmology itself, there are nearly 17-18 super-specialties. I chose retina because it is the neuro-sensitive layer - the very reason we can see. It is an extension of the brain. At the time, retinal science was challenging,



Dr Lalit Verma shares his vision with GT

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underdeveloped, and full of possibilities.

The 8-to-8 mantra

I am a strict disciplinarian, and my life follows a simple mantra: 8 to 8. My workday begins sharp at 8 am and continues till 8 in the evening. Patient care usually ends around 6, but my day does not. I spend the evenings with students and colleagues - discussing cases and understanding what we could have done better. I enjoy giving homework because science - and life itself - is never a full stop; it is always a comma.

Medicine equals service

One philosophy I live by is to never say no. If a patient arrives late, we may ask them to wait - but we never deny care. Once, after

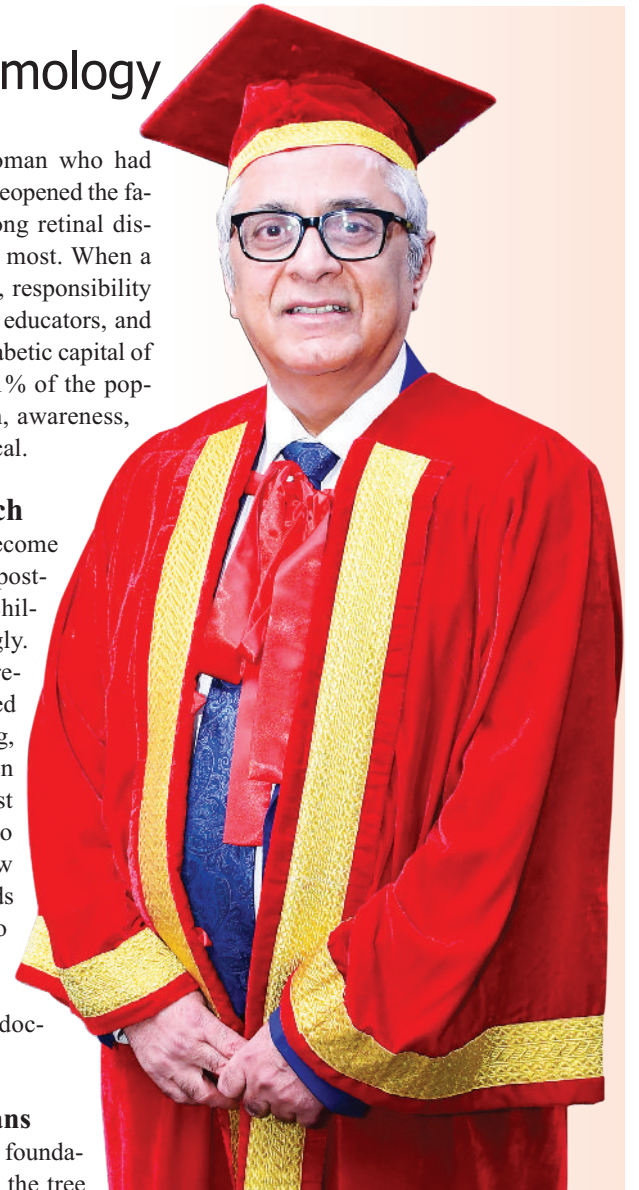
hospital hours, I saw a woman who had brought her injured son. We reopened the facility to examine him. Among retinal diseases, diabetes interests me most. When a diabetic patient loses vision, responsibility lies with all of us - doctors, educators, and policymakers. India is the diabetic capital of the world, affecting over 11% of the population. Lifestyle correction, awareness, and early screening are critical.

The right approach

Excessive screen use has become unavoidable, especially post-COVID. Myopia among children is rising alarmingly. Prevention is simple but requires discipline - reduced screen time, proper lighting, and outdoor activity. Children mirror adults, so change must begin at the top. AI has also entered ophthalmology. I view it as a support system. It aids screening, allowing doctors to focus on treatment. Technology may guide us, but ethics and judgement remain the doctor's responsibility.

Message for Amitians

Build discipline and a strong foundation. If the roots are strong, the tree will flourish. Learning never ends, and true success lies in service.



Dr Lalit Verma, director, Vitreo-Retina Services Centre for Sight

India This Week

Shailja Singh, GT Network

While we sit on our couch just breathing, a lot of things happen around us, and sometimes in our very own country. We bring you the ones worth mentioning.

Nepal's territorial claim

News: Nepal has objected to India and China conducting the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra 2026 through Lipulekh Pass, claiming the area as its own territory. The country says it was not consulted before the route was finalised and emphasises that Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura, and Kalapani are integral parts of Nepal based on the 1816 Sugauli Treaty. Nepal has urged India not to undertake activities like road

construction, trade, or pilgrimage in the region. India maintained that Lipulekh belongs to it, dismissing Nepal's assertion as untenable. It also defended the use of the pass as the route for the yatra, a tradition dating back to 1954.

Views: The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra is a sacred pilgrimage that must continue, as it holds deep religious importance for millions of Indians. More than 1,000 people, including the elderly, are expected



to participate in the yatra this year. India should exhaust all diplomatic means to resolve the issue, ensuring that pilgrims do not face any inconvenience. The common man should not be a victim of geopolitical entanglements. Besides seeking a solution through dialogue, India should develop an alternative route to ensure long-term convenience. Furthermore, the country should prioritise the infrastructure needs of non-disputed regions before focusing on disputed territory.

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Noida gets wings

News: Noida airport operator, Yamuna International Airport Pvt. Ltd, has announced that the city's first international airport in Jewar will begin its domestic operations on June 15, 2026. Indigo will operate the first flight after which Akasa Air and Air India Express will start their flights. However, international operations are expected to get finalised around Diwali. Noida International Airport is expected to have a passenger handling capacity of 12 million passengers per annum in the first phase, with scalability expected to go up to 70 million passengers per year upon full development.

Views: The airport will reduce the congestion at Delhi's main IGI airport while at the same time it will also improve the connectivity across Delhi-NCR and western Uttar



Pradesh. This airport promises to support the surge in passengers and cargo observed in recent times. It underscores the push for India's growing infrastructure and understanding of the need for balanced regional development. It could improve connectivity and drive long-term economic growth. While widely welcomed, and considered to be a necessity, its success will depend on efficient execution, strong airline participation, and accessibility for passengers.

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