

#EVENT

OF GENDER, POWER & POWERLESSNESS

The first in-person session of 'The Universe Writes' in Jaipur hosted Mineke Schipper in conversation with Major Dr. Meeta Singh at ITC Rajputana. The Universe Writes is organized by Prabha Khaitan Foundation, in association with Shree Cement, Siyahi, Nederlands Letterenfonds (Dutch Foundation for Literature), Ehsaas Women of Jaipur and Spagia Foundation.



Major Dr. Meeta Singh and Mineke Schipper.



Tusharika Singh
Freelance writer and city blogger

An evening filled with contemplative proverbs and captivating discussions on gender issues, along with a profound exploration of the power and vulnerability of the female body, took center stage as Mineke Schipper, an emeritus professor and accomplished Dutch author, who has written over thirty books, unfolded an engaging conversation with Major Dr. Meeta Singh, a doctor, soldier as well as a humanitarian. The occasion was the first in-person session of 'The Universe Writes' in Jaipur.

"To address gender disparity and foster a more equitable and just society, it is crucial to have a deep understanding of human history. Women, in particular, need to be cognizant of their historical roots and the pivotal role of mothers becomes paramount in this awareness. Establishing equality within households serves as a significant foundation for a society that values gender equality. Mineke emphasized the importance of teaching boys to actively participate in routine household chores as a means to reduce gender disparity in our society," opined Mineke while talking about ways to reduce gender disparity in the society.

The conversation further delved into the rich tapestry of oral texts, myths, stories and folklore which have been the cornerstone of her literature. Mineke's journey into the realm of oral traditions began in the 1960s when she and her husband, driven by the belief in the power of distributed knowledge, embarked on a teaching mission in Congo. While teaching French literature and collaborating on projects in China, Mineke found inspiration in the proverbs shared by people from different worlds, life - from waiters in London to taxi drivers in China. It was within a year that Mineke had amassed a staggering collection of over 15,000 proverbs.

She cited proverbs such as one from England, which said, "Never marry a widow unless her husband was hanged" and a Turkish

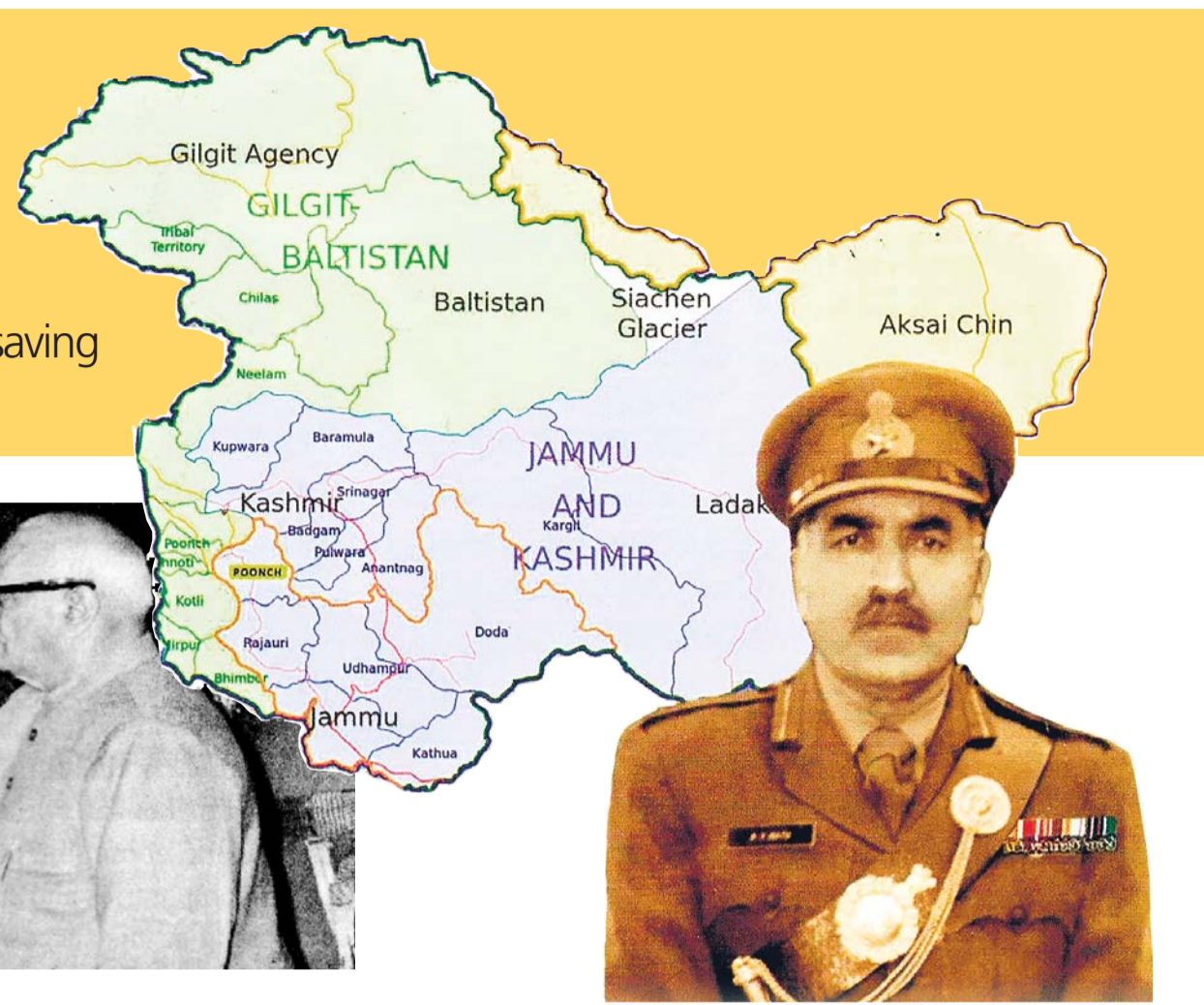
As I consider a unit to be the most important part of one's service, I will write an instance, when Second Lieutenant Natu was going on leave from Abbottabad in May 1947. He had accompanied Captain Usman Shaikh from his battalion, when their bus was surrounded by an unruly mob of Muslim League supporters at Attock, who wanted to pull out and slaughter all Hindus travelling to Punjab and beyond. It was at this stage that Captain Usman kept quiet and did not reveal his religious identity, thus saving him 'from lynching and certain death'. The 'camaraderie and bonding' endured.



Maj. Manohar Parikh, Defence minister, presenting a memento to Major General AV Natu 28th May, 2015, at The Sanik, Samman Samarokha, Pune



Brigadier A V Natu being Awarded Mahavir Chakra By President Shri V V Giri.



SAVIOUR OF POONCH



Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh VSM (RETD)

Brigadier Vijay Natu (Retd) has written an excellent biography on his father, Major General AV Natu, MVC, 'A Soldier's Soldier: Saviour of Poonch 1971'. In this inspiring account, the author has recalled the important events in his father's life and talked about how these impacted him and shaped his personality.

A weak boy at a boarding school at Akola in Maharashtra, Anant showed signs of leadership at a very young age when he challenged an older bully at school to a wrestling bout and beat him. He thereafter became fearless in life and this character trait remained with him. Having joined the Ramakrishna Mission, to be initiated as a monk in 1945, he could not resist the uniform calling and left the Belur Math to join the Army. He was then commissioned into the 13th Frontier Force Rifle in October 1946 after passing out from the Officers' Training School at Belgau. Post-Partition General Natu was transferred to the 9th Gorkha Rifles and served in challenging appointments, in operational areas, participated in wars and held important command and staff appointments.

General Natu had on the various people, whom he came into close contact with and most particularly, the unit bonding and esprit de corps when he discusses the family ties that existed between him and Colonel Nasib Singh as well as the ethos of the 9th Gorkha Rifles.

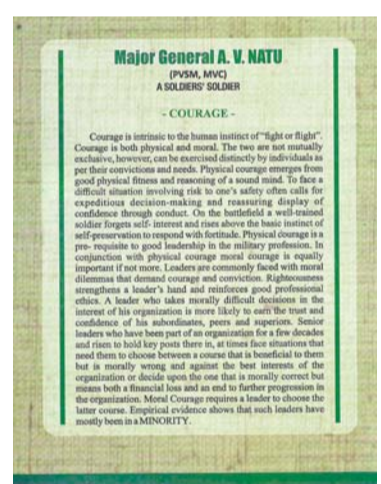
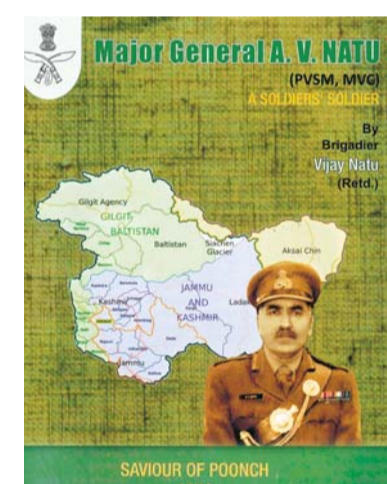
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Joining 1/9 Gorkha Rifles Post-Independence, he saw action in 1947-48, at Naushera in Jammu and Kashmir. It is here that he served with Major Eric Vas who later rose to be an Army Commander, whom he described as 'a straight forward and courageous man'. Eric once submitted a report to the Division Headquarters on a 'chapatti' and when asked to explain the unusual behaviour, had sent a classic retort. "I regret the use of my stationery, but atta is the only commodity I have for fighting, feeding and for futile correspondence." He was the brainchild behind setting up the Higher Command Course in the College of Combat, one of the most incisive courses in the Army. Anant looked up to him as a friend, philosopher and guide throughout his service and even later in life.

Posted to 4/9 Gorkha Rifles on the raising of the battalion in 1960, he was the Second in Command under Lieutenant Colonel Nasib Singh in Dehradun. In June 1962, the Battalion was moved to Ahilal in Himachal Pradesh but was airlifted to Bomdila, in October 1962. During the move, one aircraft flew a platoon to Bombay which was promptly deployed for airport security!

Post war, the Battalion was involved in a series of exercises where the Commander of 77

#BOOK REVIEW



Infantry Brigade, Brigadier Sartaj Singh was greatly impressed by his professionalism. Incidentally, General Natu served under him while commanding his Battalion, when he was GOC 5 Mountain Division and later as Commander 93 Infantry Brigade, when he was GOC 15 Corps. General Sartaj's professionalism, values and conduct left a deep impression on him.

Nasib, who raised 4/9 Gorkha Rifles had joined Hodson's Horse as a Sowar in World War II and General Messervy, who was their Commandant, 'saw a spark' in him and groomed him to become an officer. He laid strong foundations for the battalion. General Natu 'considered him, his professional Guru'. Later, Nasib was selected to be part of the raising of ITBP. Incidentally, the sons of the first three CO's of 4/9 Gorkha Rifles, Colonel Rajinder Singh, Brigadier Vijay Natu and Major General Kishen Singh, the son of Lieutenant Colonel (later Brigadier) Hari Singh took over the Battalion from General Natu. All joined 9 Gorkha Rifles while Major General KVS Lalotra, the younger son of Nasib, joined 11 Gorkha Rifle, as per Lieutenant General Anil Bhatt (Retd), who also belongs to this Battalion. The tradition still endures and he said that General Natu's grandson, Varun

Vaidya also joined the Battalion and was his ADC.

General Natu's best came when he went on to win glory for India in Poonch during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War. The author has captured very well the events and remanences by those who served with him during the defence of Poonch, for which he was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra, the second highest gallantry award in India.

He had prepared the formation extremely well, but not only physically visiting each post since taking over but also rehearsing the drills and putting his formation through a two-sided exercise. In a novel step, he ensured that he was 'party to the process of distributing compensation to the civilians whose land had been appropriated for security reasons'. By accompanying the DC, he instilled a 'sense of trust about the Army'.

During the war, though attacked in superior strength, his Battalions 6 SIKH, 1/4 Gorkha Rifles, 8 JAT and 11 J&K Militia stood firm and repulsed the attacks. 13 MAHAR and elements of 9 PARA Commando also successfully counter attacked Thampur, a location which had been captured, taking the Pakistanis by surprise, by attacking along a 'precipitous slope'.

He also heeded to the advice of his Brigade Major, the Major (later Brigadier) AK Sahni of not executing an offensive plan initially and waited for artillery build up and for the situation to stabilize before General Natu intervened. He drove up to Base of the Post against all apprehensions and then walked to the Post and with a loud hail, talked to the officer and told him that the officer's elder brother had served with him during his previous tenure and when the officer admitted that he was 'fearful that he would be killed, if he surrendered', he assured him of his physical safety but told him that he would face disciplinary action. The officer and NCO then surrendered. This 'prevented an ugly scenario'.

No wonder Field Marshal, Sam Manekshaw, at the Investiture Ceremony remarked, "Sila, do you remember the young Captain from 1/9 GR on our days in Ferropur in the early 50's? Here, he is a decorated soldier. I knew he would not let me down when I selected him to command the strategically important 93 Infantry Brigade at Poonch."

On promotion, General Natu went on to command 4 Infantry Division at Babina and here too, he left his mark. This is where he instituted the concept of

Universal Human Rights Month

Throughout history, there have been instances of wanton cruelty and a blatant violation of the rights and privileges of mankind. Whether that was based on the colour of one's skin, their nationality, religion or merely being unfortunate enough to be living under the regime of another country, people have regularly been treated like animals or worse. Universal Human Rights Month is here to remind us of that day in 1948 when the United Nations General Assembly codified basic human rights of every individual on the planet.

#J'ADORE

Adorning Jacket with a Saree

Imaginably stylish ways you can wear your saree with jackets.

If there is a garment that makes us weak in the knees, it is the 6-yard of timeless beauty. Nothing makes us fawn over an attire like fangirls like the elegant and quite magnificent - Sarees. An unbeatable ensemble for any occasion, sarees, are as dramatic as they are simple.

With versatility like no other, today, we have paired the regal 6 yards with different types, materials and styles of jackets, just to prove the timeless versatility of this number and the imaginably stylish ways you can wear your saree with jackets.



Patola Jacket

For the love of Indian handloom and the impeccable craftsmanship of the artists of India, this patola saree matched with a contemporary long jacket is simply divine. With a striking color combination and commendable detailing, this outfit is hard to miss.



Saree Adorned with Jacket Blouse

Ditch your blouse and style your plain saree with a printed jacket blouse to add a hint of oomph to your outfit. This ensemble, though casual, has a certain pizzazz that is going to make you stand out from the crowd. Opt for an easy-breezy fabric with an eye-catching print for the jacket and style it with a plain saree in a bold shade.

Hakoba Jacket

Synonyms with impeccable craftsmanship and intricate embroidery, hakoba fabric was the fabric of the rich and was worn by kings and queens. This regal fabric is again gaining traction in recent times, thanks to its rich appeal and also breathability. A printed saree styled with a contrasting hakoba jacket is the perfect office wear outfit, you were looking for.

White Fringe Jacket

Fringes are making a huge comeback this season and this printed saree styled with the white fringe jacket is the exact combo, you need to nail this trend, this winter. Effortlessly chic, this cheery number is young and fresh with a hint of classic beauty that you can wear at your farewell party or to a brunch with your friends.



Shoulder Cape Jacket

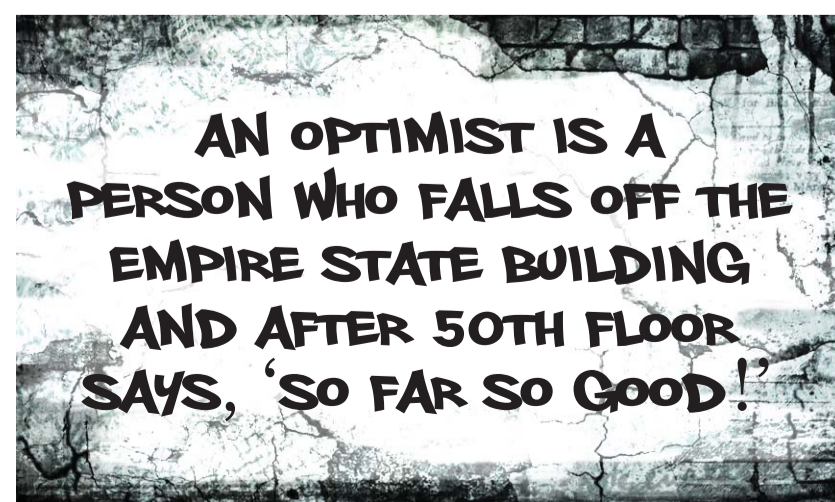
Strut like a superwoman in this chic and trendy saree with a shoulder cape jacket combo at the next wedding and garner compliments for your splendid fashion sense. This satin saree with net cape jacket has grabbed our attention and rightfully so.



Classic Leather Jacket

Hello, our rocker-chic girls, we have got something fantastic for you. A silk saree paired with the classic black leather jacket and styled with a belt is the bold and beautiful outfit, you need to raise your street style outfit game to a solid 10. Style it with a chunky bracelet and aviators and turn the streets into your runway.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman