

#TRUE GRATITUDE

How should it be

‘Today, we are not honouring Sundar Pichai, we are honouring a mother who once gave up her food so that her son could study.’ - P.M.



A warm evening at the Grand Convention Center in New Delhi. Camera flashes were flashing everywhere. Security guards were chatting on walkie-talkies and people in loose shoes were milling around. The hall was packed with ministers, businessmen, dignitaries, and foreign guests. The most powerful men and women of the country were sitting in the first row.

In a corner chair in the third row, a petite woman dressed in a pale cotton sari was sitting. Her presence was not something that anyone would notice. The woman's name was Lakshmi Pichai. Very few people knew who she was. In the spotlight was her son Sundar Pichai, Google's CEO and the pride of India.

Sundar Pichai, a man who had overcome many obstacles to reach this position.

Today, this evening, the Government of India would honour this son of Bharat. His felicitation was a rare event, for which the intelligent minds of the country were brought together. Sundar's gaze seemed to turn to her mother. She did not like being paid attention to. She was sitting quietly with her hands on her lap, but her eyes were filled with peaceful emotion.

As soon as Prime Minister Modi came on the stage, the program began with a round of applause. His speech, filled with very effective words and the passion for fulfilling dreams, hard work and basic values, was very powerful. He mentioned the names of industrialists, scientists and artists, which inspired enthusiasm in the audience. Then, his voice came from deep. And he said, "Today we are not just honouring Sundar Pichai, we are honouring the life journey of a mother who once gave up her food so that her son could study."

Sundar's heart beat was faster. He had never said this publicly. There was absolute silence in the hall. Cameras moved to capture the incident. People looked around.

Modiji quietly got down from the podium, but he did not go towards Sundar, but towards a woman wearing a plain cotton sari sitting in the corner of the third row. Lakshmi was confused. She looked up. Her hands trembled. Everyone seemed to hold their breath. Modiji exclaimed very humbly, this has been possible only because of your sacrifice.

And Modiji bent down and touched the feet of, and offered his respects. The entire hall stood silent. The flashes of the cameras flashed. Reporters rushed in. Sundar's eyes welled up with tears. He had never expected this even in his



dreams. He had spent many years in Silicon Valley, he had met the presidents, prime ministers, and kings of many nations there. But no one had honoured his mother like this. Lakshmi tried to stand. Modiji supported her and gently made her stand in front of the stage, in front of everyone present. She resisted but Modiji firmly made her stand. And the audience gave a huge applause. Sundar came to the spot with great joy and stood. As he stood on the stage with his mother, memories of the past flooded his mind.

He remembered his colourful two-room house in Chennai that did not even have a simple refrigerator. Sundar's father worked as an electrical engineer. He used to bring home blueprints and soldering wire. He could not even afford to bring toys for his children. So, he used to bring broken radios to the children so that they would open them and learn. Sundar would ask him questions for hours. His mother would teach him mathematics using grains of rice.

When Sundar got admission in college, his mother never told anyone that she had sold her gold bangles. She would just say, "We will make arrangements."

Sundar was a very quiet boy during his school days. He was never aggressive. But he was very attentive. His teacher said, "Sundar's memory is like a mirror. He would memorize a number or a code he had dialed once."

Sometimes, at night, the lights would go off at home, and the fans would not work. Sundar and his brother would sleep on the floor and sweat. At that time, his mother would fan them with a cardboard box for several hours without sleeping, and then would get up early in the morning for house chores.

When Sundar got a scholarship to study in America, Sundar did not believe that he would be able to go. Because the ticket to America was very expensive. But his mother said, "You go, I will talk to the bank." But she did not talk to the bank. She sold the last gold jewelry she had.

Sundar remembered that night when she returned quietly to the hotel, her mother held his hand like a child and said, "You have not forgotten, that is enough for me." To this, Sundar replied, "Mom, you have never asked for anything, that is the reason why I will never forget you."



Waking Up To Your Weakness And Hardening Up

Nanavatty was 'unsparing in his indictment of the senior leadership.' He felt that there was a complete lack of foresight and planning and the Army had been reduced to a 'mere peacetime machine,' physically unfit, ill-equipped and ill-trained. The other issues which he touched upon would remain his focus throughout his career; 'build defences where we can provide easy logistics support, train extremely hard, junior leaders to take the initiative and create an offensive spirit.'

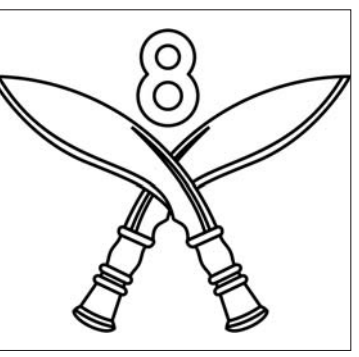


hooting Straight' is the biography of Lieutenant General Rostum Nanavatty, undoubtedly a man of stellar character, with a passion and commitment for soldiering and a military leader who ten-

anted some of the most challenging operational assignments in the Indian Army with a sense of purpose and the ability to speak 'truth to power.' The book has been meticulously researched by Air Vice Marshal Arjun Subramaniam, undoubtedly one of India's most accomplished contemporary military historians.

Arjun has not only captured details of Nanavatty's transition from a tactical to operational and thereafter a strategic level, but also given a rare insight into the people and events that shaped his values and leadership style. His unique journey in uniform commenced from being commissioned into 2/8 GORKHA RIFLES soon after the 1962 War with China to commanding the Northern Army during Operation Parakram.

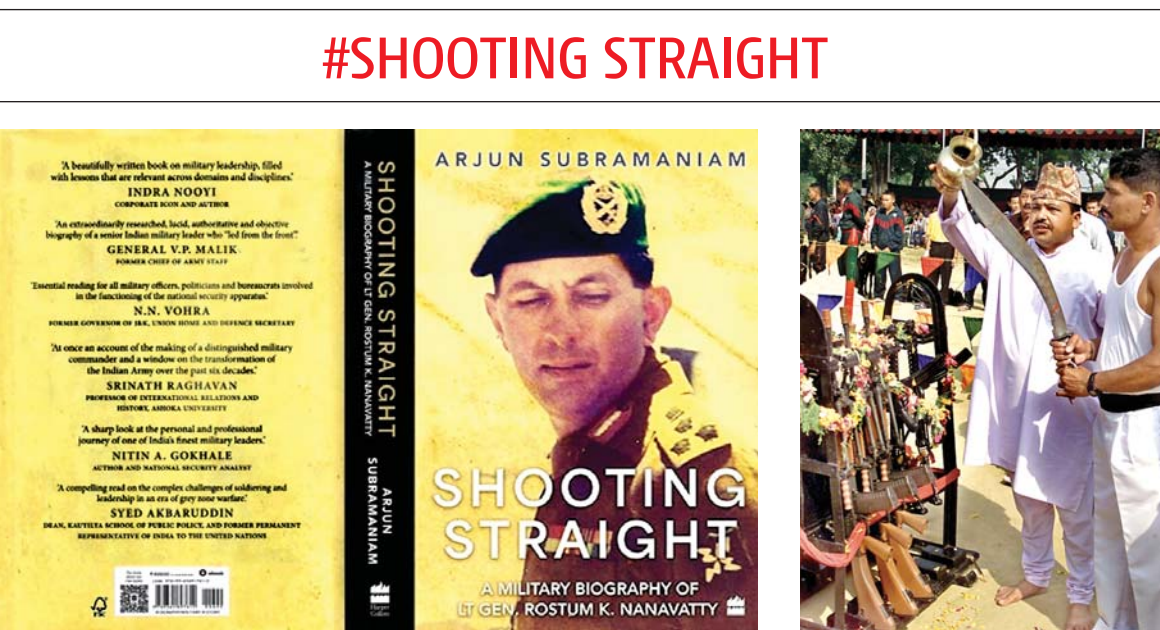
Written chronologically, it is a book that can be read at multiple levels, a personal story, the evolution of the Indian Army and leadership lessons. What stands out in this book is the manner in which the sheer depth and breadth of his insights and his rich operational repository have been captured by Arjun. The intellectual dimension of war fighting also comes out very clearly as does his strategic mindset.



The Book

When Nanavatty joined his Battalion, they had withdrawn to Along, after 1962 war and had lost a large number of personnel including the Commanding Officer. When he got the opportunity to pen his thoughts on the war, Nanavatty was 'unsparing in his indictment of the senior leadership.' He felt that there was a complete lack of foresight and planning and the Army had been reduced to a 'mere peacetime machine,' physically unfit, ill-equipped and ill-trained. The other issues which he touched upon would remain his focus throughout his career; 'build defences where we can provide easy logistics support, train extremely hard, junior leaders to take the initiative and create an offensive spirit.'

The Battalion was soon moved to Nagaland, where as a young officer, he got involved in operations against insurgents. The new Commanding Officer Colonel Shamsher Singh "was a man on a mission, determined to see that misfortune did not strike the battalion twice." He credits him and Colonel (later Lieutenant General) Anand Swarup, who embodied the ideal Commanding Officer, physically tough and mentally very robust of laying the high training



standards of the unit. During Operation Pawan, Nanavatty headed the Para Commando Task Force for a few months. His meticulous approach laid the foundation for Special Operations in Sri Lanka. As per him, 'the LTTE was the most efficient guerrilla outfit the Indian Army has ever encountered.' It is here that he put into place his observations regarding the functioning of Special Forces units based on his interactions and observations when he was the Indian Army Liaison Officer in the UK. But he was scathing in his assessment regarding how infantry units were equipped during the early days of the IPKF deployment.

About General Sunderji, whom he served under at multiple times, admired and shared a personal rapport with he states, "The brilliant General Sunderji was and ever remained an ardent proponent of the 'big battle.' Consequently, he paid little attention to counterintelligence."

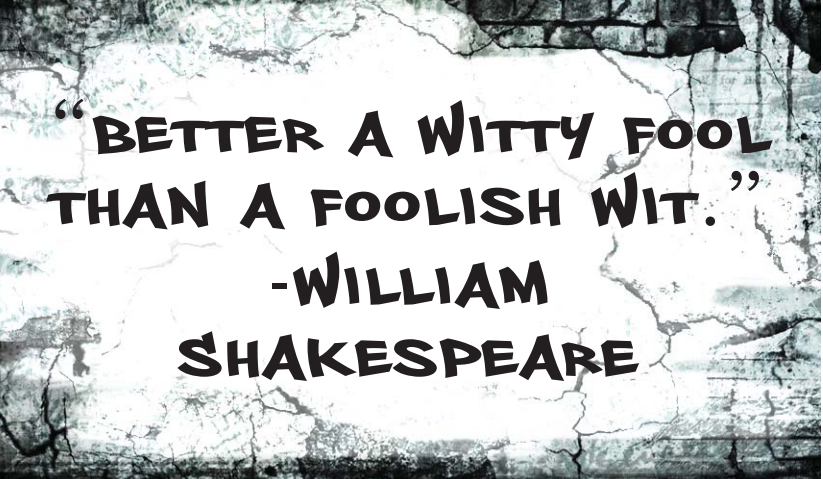
As the Brigade Commander of the Siachen Brigade, he walked to every Post and was instrumental in improving the quality of training at the Siachen Battle School and focused on achieving ascendancy over the enemy and improving the living conditions of those who served on the glacier. He remembers his GOC, Major General VR Raghavan, as 'a fine, clear thinking and erudite Commander in the soldier scholar mould.' Nanavatty's mind throughout his career and even after retirement argued against the prevailing hawkish perspectives of retaining significant deployment on the glacier.

In June 1993, Nanavty assumed command of 19 Infantry Division at Baramulla. There, he focused on Counter-Terrorism (CT) operations and felt that Pakistan was only likely to resort to a conventional war if CT opera-

BABY BLUES



THE WALL



At a Seminar at 16 Corps, in October 2001, he had clearly stated that with time, Pakistan's role has dwarfed that of the Kashmiri separatist. He emphasized that India was now faced with a relentless covert war in the guise of a freedom struggle, planned, organized, directed, coordinated and controlled by Pakistan.

tions fail. He also opined that 'however successful the Indian Army was in securing the peripheral areas, the centre of gravity of the secessionist movement would remain Srinagar.' He also felt that the Pakistan Army needed to pay a heavy price for abetting and supporting terrorism and 'changed the rules of the game by dominating the no man's land.'

Intelligence was also given the highest priority and his leadership style was both enabling and empowering.' He states that his Corps Commander General Padmanabhan 'had a razor-sharp mind.' In his assessment after handing over, he said that North Kashmir was a war zone and there was a sense of alienation and deprivation amongst the people. He felt that the government and civil administration needed to move the peace process forward.

Though he desired to command either 15 or 16 Corps, Nanavatty was posted to 3 Corps, where he was responsible for the insurgency-ridden states in NE India; Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and parts of Arunachal Pradesh. In September 1988, in Manipur, he told the then Home Minister Indrajit Gupta that the dire situation in Churachandpur was due to the



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



#SHOOTING STRAIGHT

ergy of political, diplomatic, economic, intelligence and military effort, and an uncharacteristic single-mindedness of purpose.'

In April 2002, he, with the assistance of Colonel (later Lieutenant General) Sanjeev Langer, submitted a paper suggesting a 'whole of government' approach for the resolution of conflict in J&K. General Padmanabhan had given the go ahead, but told him to 'be brief and ensure that there are no accusations or recrimination.'

He sent copies of it to many senior government functionaries like then-Home Minister LK Advani, Home Secretary NN Vohra, and Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh, but except for Jaswant Singh, who took time off to discuss the strategy document with Nanavatty, there was little interest in other quarters. However, Lieutenant General Panag, who was the Northern Army Commander in 2007, calls the paper 'a clear and bold contemporary roadmap for conflict resolution.' Unfortunately, the national security establishment did not leverage his experience post-retirement.

Conclusion

Given General Nanavatty's ability to put things down in writing and predict what needs to be done in



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the future, it is surprising that his thoughts on China have not been articulated in depth. Though he has stated that 'deciding the mutually acceptable LAC is 'a matter of the highest priority,'

This stands out due to two reasons, the first being his joining his Battalion soon after they had been de-inducted from Mechuka after the 1962 conflict, and as a result, he was witness to the plight of the Army at that time and had penned down very relevant observations. The other being that he held the appointment of the Northern Army Commander during Operation Parakram and was responsible for operations both against Pakistan and China.

What stands apart is his professional excellence, integrity, unflinching moral courage and the ability to always stand up for what he believed was right and unhesitatingly put across his views with courage of conviction. Though he did have critics which included Lieutenant General Arjun Ray who states that innovation, mental mobility and foresight are not his strengths and he had little understanding of the big picture.

The book is a masterpiece which holds leadership lessons across domains and is strongly recommended to be read not only by those who don the uniform but also by academics, practitioners and students of national security.

It also gives a prism of the country's security challenges and the Indian Army's operational art through the lens of one of its accomplished and distinguished soldiers. Arjun has yet again added a valuable contribution to India's national security literature.

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#FLOWER POWER

8 Uses for Chamomile

Chamomile is a sleepy-maker, so that it can cause drowsiness. Most experts say chamomile is safe, though it can trigger allergic reactions in some people.

Chamomile is an amazing flower. On appearance, it's a sweet little daisy with a delicate flavour. But underneath that demure exterior, it is a potent powerhouse that has been used in traditional medicine for thousands of years. One comprehensive study lists 54 traditional uses for it, from treating sleep and skin problems to soothing nausea and cramps.



Ease insomnia and stress

Chamomile is maybe best known for taking the edge off of stress and promoting a good night's sleep. One study notes, "Chamomile is widely regarded as a mild tranquilizer and sleep-inducer. Sedative effects may be due to the flavonoid, apigenin, that binds to benzodiazepine receptors in the brain." Curiously, there has not been a lot of clinical trials proving all of this, but based on my own experience and thousands of years of tried-and-true folk wisdom, I'm standing by this claim.

Treat diabetes and lower blood sugar

This is a pretty lofty claim, but some studies have found that chamomile tea can lower blood sugar in people with diabetes, though probably not enough to replace diabetes medications. But still, it could provide a boost to existing treatments. Likewise, a 2008 suggests that chamomile tea could prevent blood sugar from increasing, which could help to reduce the long-term risk of diabetes complications, suggesting that chamomile could improve diabetes outcomes, reports Medical News Today.

Improve skin conditions

Chamomile has been used since antiquity to treat wounds and urge healing, thanks to its anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties. A small yet more recent study found that chamomile significantly promoted wound healing. Several studies have found that topical chamomile treatments are effective in soothing eczema and mild inflammatory skin conditions.

Reduce acne breakouts and redness

Many people swear by chamomile to reduce acne and the redness that comes with it; which makes sense, considering its prevalence in so many skincare products. Its anti-inflammatory and antiseptic properties can be put to great use by making a strong chamomile tea, letting it cool, and then either rubbing it on clean skin with your fingers, or wetting a washcloth with it and allowing it to stay on affected areas for 15 minutes or so. Leftover tea can be kept in the fridge.

Reduce inflammation

A lot of research has looked into chamomile's efficacy in reducing inflammation, an immune system reaction to fight infection. Inflammation can lead to a whole host of health problems, from depression to cancer. Chamomile has been found to help both when ingested and when used topically. Even more specifically, a 2009 study notes: The German E Commission has approved chamomile for internal use to treat gastrointestinal spasms and inflammatory diseases of the gastrointestinal tract. In addition, the German E Commission has approved external use of chamomile for inflammation of the skin and bacterial skin diseases, and respiratory tract inflammation.

Quell nausea, vomiting, gas, and heartburn

There are studies, there is folk wisdom, there are anecdotal evidence, and it all points to the fact that chamomile tea soothes the things that vex the stomach.

Stymie symptoms of the common cold

There has been plenty of anecdotal evidence showing that drinking chamomile tea can relieve symptoms of the cursed common cold. Meanwhile, one study found that inhaling chamomile steam helped in the same endeavour. Since we already know that fluids, warm drinks, and steam are good cold combatants, why not throw in some chamomile there too?

Minimize menstrual pain and grumpiness



The proof on this one is in a lot of anecdotal evidence with a fair amount of research backing it up. Among other studies, one says that chamomile tea appears to be helpful in relieving menstrual cramps in women, probably by relaxing the uterus. Meanwhile, another study found that drinking chamomile tea for a month is an effective therapy in relieving the pain originated from primary dysmenorrhea (cramps) and its consequent psychosocial problems (grumpiness).'

How to use and side effects

If you are interested in trying chamomile tea, it should be used as a supplement, rather than a replacement, to your normal medication regimen. A regular dose of one or two cups of tea a day should encourage health benefits. As noted above, chamomile is a sleepy-maker, so be warned that it can cause drowsiness. Most experts say that chamomile is safe, though it can trigger allergic reactions in people who have allergies to related plants. And now, I'm off to buy some chamomile seeds so that I can plant a medicine cabinet.

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

ZITS

