HOST INTRODUCTION — FULL VERSION

Major General Sanjay P Vishwasrao (Veteran)

Approximately 1,100 words | 8–9 minutes. For formal seminars, keynote lectures and major workshops. The host may shorten this to suit the event.

Pronunciation: Vish-waas-rao

Ladies and gentlemen, today's speaker is a soldier who has repeatedly taken on problems that seemed entrenched—and asked a different question: what would it take not merely to manage the problem, but to change the system that keeps producing it?

It is my privilege to introduce Major General Sanjay P Vishwasrao, a veteran of the Indian Army who served Bharat for 37 years. He followed his father, the late Lieutenant Colonel Pratapsingh Vishwasrao, into military service. His family title, Vishwasrao, is associated with Shahaji Raje Bhosale and the protection of Jijamata at Shivneri Fort.

General Vishwasrao's career has taken him from the world's highest battlefield to some of India's most complex security, social and civic challenges. Across these very different settings, one thread runs through his work: build a clear vision, win the team's belief, and turn that vision into practical action.

Consider Siachen Glacier. As a young officer with 11 Rajputana Rifles, he helped persuade a team of 800 soldiers to pursue a demanding goal: completing the glacier tenure without a single fatality—whether caused by enemy fire, avalanche, snow or altitude. As a company commander, he spent 144 days on the ice at approximately 19,100 feet, well beyond the usual 90-day tenure. The team became the first in the 15-year conflict to complete its six-month tenure without loss of life. The methods included physical preparation, acclimatisation, discipline, team cooking, yoga, Reiki and meditation. The lesson: a bold vision needs systems and shared hardship.

During Operation Vijay, the Kargil War, he volunteered for the race to the Line of Control near Turtuk in Ladakh. Captain Haneef Uddin and two other soldiers made the supreme sacrifice during that action. About 40 days later, after permission was granted, General Vishwasrao volunteered to lead the team that recovered the mortal remains of Captain Haneef Uddin and Rifleman Pravesh from beneath the Pakistani positions near Point 6,041 and Point 5,590. He was subsequently part of the teams that captured Point

5,590 and Saddle, at heights exceeding 18,000 feet. This was service marked by courage, duty and the resolve to bring fallen comrades' home.

In North Kashmir's remote Lolab Valley, he commanded 18 Rashtriya Rifles. He set a vision that the people of Lolab would vote for India in the 2010 elections. His battalion combined disciplined counter-terrorism operations with people-friendly conduct, education, medical outreach and sustained engagement with local communities. The result was a high number of terrorists neutralised, the highest voter turnout in the area, and a reduction in the Army's footprint as peace improved—allowing the unit to redeploy to the Line of Control and strengthen the counter-infiltration grid. The achievement was not simply tactical; it was a change in the relationship between security forces and the people they served.

In Assam and Manipur, from 2015 to 2016, he applied a strategy of strategic nonviolent political defiance to help bring 13 feuding tribes together under the "All Tribes, One India Tricolour Revolution". He used social media as a tool of strategic communication to support peace-building, culture and a shared national identity. Initiatives included efforts to protect local culture and heritage, the Save Haflong Lake campaign, festivals and India's first Dimasa Tribal Museum. His approach sought to make peace visible—not merely an absence of violence, but a shared future.

As India's Defence and Military Advisor in Islamabad, he studied Pakistan's strategic behaviour from close quarters. He warned that the Pulwama Terrorist Attack of February 2019 could be a trap intended to shape India's response and influence the 2019 general election. The Prime Minister later publicly discussed an assessment along these lines. His work in this appointment combined strategic intelligence, geopolitical analysis and the study of information and cognitive warfare.

From 2020 to 2022, as General Officer Commanding Srinagar Sub Area, he led the Tricolour Revolution for Bloodless Peace in Kashmir. Building on lessons from Assam and Manipur, the strategy used strategic communication and public participation to challenge fear, isolation and the appeal of separatist narratives. The Tricolour rose at Lal Chowk; a 100-foot Tricolour was installed at Hari Parbat; Kashmiri women stitched 16,000 Tricolours; yoga and other public initiatives gained visibility; and Srinagar's first multiplex opened. Jammu and Kashmir recorded 1.88 crore tourist visits. The Prime Minister and other public representatives have referred to achievements associated with the Tricolour, Lal Chowk and, the multiplex. General Vishwasrao's approach was to make peace something people could see, participate in and take pride

in. How many here know what he is the architect of Lal Chowk of Srinagar becoming the most popular selfie point of Bharat on 15 August 2021.

In Delhi, as Additional Director General of the National Cadet Corps Directorate from 2023 to 2025, he led organisational change for 36,000 cadets across 550 schools and colleges. He helped shift the focus from routine parades towards personality development, discipline, skills, national unity and meaningful social service. The Directorate rose from sixth to second among 17 directorates and won the Prime Minister's Runners-Up Trophy in January 2025. He created "Voice of Red Hackle", described as the first podcast in the NCC and across the three services, and championed "Once a Cadet, Always a Cadet". He also planned major NCC events of Prime Minister NCC Rally and Prime Minister's Independence Day Parade at the Red Fort. He major contribution in Delhi was redirecting social service of cadet to seva of Maa Yamuna through the NCC for Yamuna strategy: reconnecting Delhi's people with the river and making cultural belonging a foundation for conservation. This played a part in the Prime Minister taking a pledge to save the Yamuna River after his party won the Delhi Assembly Elections in February 2025.

In his final Army appointment, as Additional Director General Recruitment for Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa, he led outreach and recruitment that filled more than 12,000 vacancies from nearly 2.77 lakh applicants, with no complaints reported in the account of this work. He also expanded the use of social media to keep aspiring candidates informed about recruitment calendars and opportunities.

Since 2025, General Vishwasrao has served as a sevak with the Mahavatar Babaji TadEkam Foundation. In Kangundi village, Andhra Pradesh, he helped develop a heritage-based, homestay-led bouldering and rock-climbing destination—linking adventure tourism with local culture, livelihoods and community participation. His current river mission is equally ambitious: to make the Kumbh and Pushkaralu festivals a force for reviving Maa Godavari and other rivers. Through "Seva Hi Snan" and "We Are All Pushkara", he promotes a simple idea: the holy dip should be accompanied by service that keeps the river clean and free-flowing.

He is also the author of *Lage Raho Leadership*, published in 2015, and has written on leadership, information warfare, social media, Pakistan's strategic narratives, fourth-generation warfare, collateral damage, winning peace, open-source intelligence and pandemic strategy. He has lectured at the Army War College, College of Defence Management, Defence Services Staff College, Rashtriya Raksha University, Delhi University colleges and MIT World Peace University, Pune. He is a National Defence

College graduate with an M.Phil and an Executive MBA. His awards include the Sena Medal for gallantry, the Sena Medal for distinguished service, and two President's Mentions-in-Despatches for gallantry. More than 120 soldiers under his command have received gallantry or distinguished-service awards, including the Ashok Chakra.

What makes his journey distinctive is the range: glacier survival, combat and recovery under fire, counter-terrorism, peace-building across tribal communities, strategic intelligence, youth leadership, river conservation and community-led heritage tourism. And did you know that he has written and composed 11 strategic communication songs to achieve his goals. The common thread is not a single technique, but the determination to turn vision into a system that can endure after the leader has moved on.

Today, he will speak to us on [insert topic]. Please listen for the ideas behind the achievements—and for the questions they raise about leadership, strategy and the kind of change institutions and communities can create.

Ladies and gentlemen, a soldier, a strategist, an information warrior and a sevak. Please join me in welcoming Major General Vishwasrao.

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