

Date with destiny **by Maj-Gen G G Dwivedi (retd)**

GEOGRAPHICALLY, the crow flight distance between South Block and NDMC's concave-spherical building on Sansad Marg, which housed CWG Organising Committee, may have been merely 3 km, yet the two stood poles apart. During my last assignment in the Army, I sat on the second floor of the South Block. Most of the office-bearers in this part of the building were in the Twilight Zone of their careers. The environment was rather officious and bureaucratic. On one occasion, compliments by a budding scribe, comparing our wing to an old age home, had to be swallowed with a pinch of salt.

A few months before the D Day, some senior officers were inducted to fast track the Games preparations and I happened to be one among them. On a bright sunny afternoon, as I entered the colourful building of the CWG, it felt as if one was amidst an annual college fete. There were hundreds of young people, median age under 25. Most were fresh graduates, techno-savvy, bright with a quick uptake. They appeared highly motivated and proud to be part of the great sporting event.

Despite the lack of 'games time experience' coupled with hazy higher direction, these fertile minds innovated and improvised to formulate sound operational plans, which later proved vital for the efficient conduct of the Games. They toiled hard during the test events, learning the tricks of trade, hands on. The greenhorns showed remarkable patience and fortitude when ridiculed and scoffed by self-proclaimed sports pundits.

When the charges of corruption and mismanagement made headlines on the eve of the Games, the Young Brigade was deeply disillusioned. Displaying immense maturity, they insulated themselves to remain focussed on the mission. Closer to the mega event, as cohesive teams along with volunteers, they moved into the venues to finetune last-minute preparations, while defying the constraints of poor logistics backup, including substandard meals.

Come Games time, the Young Turks were off to a flying start, surprising their detractors. The Spartans were at the respective stadiums at the crack of dawn and remained on their toes till late into the night, providing excellent services with a smile. Their spirited motto was "not to ask reason why, but to just do and die". This phenomenon continued through the fortnight and the young pioneers stood their ground with a degree of professionalism and elan, earning appreciation from one and all.

Some 20,000 youth who came from all corners of the country were the true face of the resurging India. These were the unsung heroes of successful CWG 2010 and part of the positive story. 'No nonsense, plain speaking lot', they were impatient to make best of the day. Once the job was done, they went their ways, without seeking any recognition or credit, leaving behind a rich legacy of intense nationalism and patriotism.

Today, the young India has once again pitched in, but for a different mission; to rid the prevailing system of the deadly virus of corruption. Their screams echo the same familiar sentiments: 'Come what may, we will rise to the occasion so that India keeps its date with destiny'.