

Premier – a person of absolute integrity

NATIONS get the prime ministers, presidents they deserve. It is time to scan the prime minister that India needs to conquer the challenges of the 21st century, and delineate the vision, values, principles, qualities he must possess.

A man with no principles or the wrong principles, cannot make a good premier. The premier must be a person of absolute personal and public integrity, devoid of any financial peccadillo. The prime minister must zealously guard standards of conduct in public life.

Freedom encompasses the rights to vote, speak, write, dissent and act according to one's conscience. It requires unhindered access to information. The premier must genuinely believe in and foster the freedom of the citizens and the media. The premier must have genuine concern for human life, irrespective of financial and religious background. He must be secular, so that all religions co-exist harmoniously.

A premier who knows not what he wishes to achieve, will achieve nothing. He must have a clear vision for a new India. His vision must encompass the resolution of domestic problems and also India's global role. The vision has to be laudable, but also achievable, if it is to be credible. Before assuming office, the premier should make a clear mission statement, to indicate the direction in which he will propel the country. He should elaborate his strategy, to translate the mission into reality.

The premier should translate his vision into an agenda. He must be subject to an annual review of these goals. The premier should have a maximum tenure of two terms, i.e. 10 years. Protracted stay can make him a prisoner in the hands of his advisers. An ambitious premier could wilfully smother men of talent, who could pose a threat to him.

But, a limited tenure could compel him to build a second line of leadership.



■ Supporters of India's main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party carry cutouts of prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi as they gather at a Hindu temple in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India

The premier India needs must be able to prioritise sharply. A plethora of challenges confront India viz achieving high growth rates, unemployment, casteism, feudalism, religious bigotry, building urban/rural infrastructure. The premier should set himself 10 vital goals and pursue them relentlessly. He must be single-minded in his pursuit.

Technology, electronics, computerisation and communications, are the pillars of a successful future nation-state. The premier must be a radical thinker, with an open mind.

The premier need not be an expert in nuclear physics or computers. But he must know what these sciences can deliver. He must ask the right questions of experts, and have the discriminating judgment to sift good advice from bad.

The prime minister must have the ability to deal with the unexpected and also create the unexpected. The premier must bridge the psychological rural-urban hiatus, for almost 70 per cent of India yet lives in the rural areas.

History reveres a premier if he shapes events in the manner he wants. The premier must make his mark by proactively moulding events. He must possess extraordinary courage, will and firmness. He should deal sternly with law and order problems, terrorism and demands for secession.

Above all, the premier will have to be a great leader of men. Sad but true, leaders frequently get elected on the basis of caste, creed and family background, rather than merit, ability to govern and economic pragmatism. Now, the premier must have the

technical and managerial skills to govern and lead. He must be both, a thinker and a doer.

He must have a vision of a new India, but his feet must be firmly planted on the ground. He must possess stamina, a cool head, ability to withstand stress and should deliver under pressure. He must be acutely conscious of his limitations, to select his advisers prudently. He must shape events proactively.

India needs a man of outstanding integrity, ability and talent, as premier, if the country is going to face the 21st century. For the right premier, the job offers great challenges; but equally, momentous opportunities. India, anxiously awaits him.

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