

Columnist

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# Things that elected representatives should do



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**EXPECTATIONS:** Make a meaningful and effective difference to individual, family and community lives, and to the nation as a whole

PARLIAMENT and state assemblies have been dissolved. The race for power to rule is on. It is no more about winnable candidates. It is really what those elected representatives of the people would deliver during 1,825 days of their positional powers. While political parties will have their manifestos, the people too have their silent manifestos.

Whether ruling party or opposition, there are ground rules and higher sacred covenants, beyond being merely winnable candidates. True leaders, eccentric human frailties aside, who contribute substantively, have qualities that stand the test of time, and are inspirational across cultures.

After all the talk and hullabaloo, good leaders demonstrate right and good actions for the long-term benefits of the people. So you want to be leaders? So, take note then... here are the things you have to do every day of the 1,825 days of your leadership. Leaders must make a meaningful and effective difference to individual, family and community lives, and to the nation as a whole.

The work is already cut out as articulated in manifestos and personal promises. Good leadership is to see implementation of promises at the grassroots level, while contributing meaningfully at national and global levels.

The first ground rule is, do not take from people. Give to the people.

Among the projects (not including sub projects) that must have priority in every constituency are the following:

**THERE** must be preparation of strategic development plan and action plan for 1,825 days. Confidence and pride cultivation in the constituency, founded on continuous improvements in the people's quality of life, must be inferior to none;

**THE** setting up of a feedback as well as an Ombudsman system to solve problems immediately. (There should be no more giving of hampers, scholarships or other tokens to people, perfunctorily responding to media reports on poverty, neglects, abuses or tragedies);

**SEEK** the best sister city, village, constituency or community elsewhere in the world and model local development after such examples;

**ENSURE** no water, electricity and other amenities and utilities shortage and make

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contingency plans for emergencies;

**ENSURE** the best sanitary environment with proper sewage and good recycling or waste disposal system. Know how to get resources in case of floods or fire or prevalent diseases;

**ENSURE** the constituency is an economic hub, where a large number of people in the constituency are entrepreneurs. Enforce fair pricing of all foods in all trades. Lobby for industries and projects which benefit the people and work to get foreign direct investment while promoting local small and medium enterprises (SMEs);

**ENCULTURATE** the mission to ensure employment for all, with no beggars in the constituency, and create opportunities for continuing contributions of those who are retired;

**ENSURE** that there are enough doctors and nurses in hospitals and clinics with exemplary medical care facilities, pharmaceutical and other services;

**THERE** must be homes and care centres for the elderly, and for those who are handicapped;

**READING** habit must be nurtured and libraries, including mobile libraries and bookshops, as well as science museums, established or expanded;

**ENSURE** presence of the best schools and tertiary institutions in the constituency, promote lifelong learning and cultivate civic society engaged in public talks and volunteerism on such topics as health, safety, and interreligious understanding;

**NURTURE** talents, traditional and digital crafts, arts and theatres, with edutainment which are inspiring;

**ENSURE** a crime-free constituency and act constructively and courageously to weed out small and large corruption habits and activities;

**ENSURE** good playgrounds, recreational parks and spaces for enjoyment of natural beauty and landscaped, imaginative architectural and constructed environments;

**ENSURE** that there are cemeteries with good maintenance and aesthetic system for the dearly departed of all faiths; and,

**EMBED** good succession plan so that there will be continuity of leadership for development for the common good.

The above are the minimal projects as ongoing development that must be initiated with a sense of urgency by the people's representatives in every constituency. All these must be measurable throughout the 1,825 days. Those who want to be leaders must decide whether they possess competencies, will and stamina to commit to the above projects in their constituencies and are really deserving to be leaders of the people.

If would-be parliamentarians or assemblymen cannot unequivocally commit to initiate and sustain such projects, and are not fit for such leadership, they should be honourable and not offer themselves as candidates or should withdraw if nominated, emulating those leaders in the great traditions of religions and high culture societies cherishing personal and community honour.

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