

1. **outshine** (verb) – be superior to, outdo/outrun, surpass.
2. **characteristically** (adverb) – (of a particular person) typically, usually, habitually.
3. **imprimatur** (noun) – authorization, approval, confirmation.
4. **unmistakable** (adjective) – distinctive, distinct, well defined.
5. **composition** (noun) – formation, structure, organization.
6. **throw light on** (phrase) – explain, clarify, elucidate/clear up.
7. **induction** (noun) – inauguration, introduction, swearing in (to a new job or position).
8. **lieutenant** (noun) – subordinate, deputy, second in command.
9. **fortify** (verb) – strengthen, reinforce, support.
10. **precursor** (noun) – sign, signal, indication.
11. **architecture** (noun) – structure, organization, formation.
12. **evidently** (adverb) – seemingly, apparently, on the face of it.
13. **choppy** (adjective) – full of waves; turbulent, heavy/stormy.
14. **rock** (verb) – shake up, disconcert.
15. **sailing** (noun) – journey, quest, crusade.
16. **confidant** (noun) – companion, close friend, best friend.
17. **have one's task cut out** (phrase) – be faced with a tough task/work.
18. **spillover** (noun) – repercussion, consequence, outcome (unexpected one).
19. **objective** (noun) – aim, intention, purpose.
20. **triumvirate** (noun) – a group of three powerful or notable people/things.
21. **pecking order** (noun) – range, scale, gamut.
22. **infuse** (verb) – add, introduce, impart/inculcate.
23. **skew** (verb) – distort, misrepresent, falsify.
24. **heartland** (noun) – the most important part of a field of activity; the central part of something.
25. **disproportionate** (adjective) – inordinate, unreasonable, excessive.
26. **wholeheartedly** (adverb) – committedly, dedicatedly, enthusiastically.
27. **content with** (verb) – satisfy, make happy, appease.
28. **linguistic** (adjective) – relating to language; lingual.
29. **equation** (noun) – association, connection, likening.
30. **representative** (noun) – (of a legislative assembly) consisting of people selected from a wider group.
31. **in terms of** (phrase) – with regard to, regarding/concerning, in connection with.
32. **reflect** (verb) – indicate, show/display, demonstrate.
33. **mosaic** (noun) – diverse, but coherent society.

PM Modi's new Council

There is a clear realignment of power in the second Modi government

His self-assurance boosted by a massive popular mandate, Prime Minister Narendra Modi **constituted a 58-member Council of Ministers**, with more than 20 fresh faces, on Thursday. In a group far outshone by its leader, analysing individual talent is not easy, and may be irrelevant too. Mr. Modi, characteristically, sees to it that his imprimatur on all executive decisions is unmistakable. Still, the composition of the council throws light on

Mr. Modi's thinking. The induction of his long-time lieutenant and BJP president Amit Shah as Home Minister not only fortifies the Prime Minister's authority, it might be the precursor to further changes in the party organisation and the national security architecture. While Mr. Shah's entry into the Cabinet was expected, the surprise induction of former Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar as the External Affairs Minister is evidently meant to deal with the choppy international waters that rock India's sailing. Mr. Jaishankar has been a close confidant of Mr. Modi. He has his task cut out, as India faces challenges with its most important international partner, the U.S. The spillover effects impact the country's interests in multiple ways, including its objectives of economic and technological advancement. By placing the two confidants in critical Ministries, Mr. Modi appears to loosen the grip of his own office on the government; the effects will be felt by National Security Adviser Ajit Doval if he continues into a second term, as is widely expected. The triumvirate of Mr. Modi, Mr. Shah and Mr. Jaishankar will form the centre of power.

Rajnath Singh as Defence Minister and Nirmala Sitharaman as Finance Minister are next in the pecking order. While the top layer of the Council is infused with fresh talent and is expected to generate new momentum, its representative character is skewed. It has only six women, one less than the previous one; the majority community and the Hindi heartland States have disproportionate representation. While Mr. Modi rewarded the upper caste groups that supported him wholeheartedly, the OBCs and Dalits who shifted to his party significantly in 2019 have had to be content with lower representation, at least for now. There is an argument that it is healthy that Mr. Modi does not bargain with caste, linguistic and region-oriented interests groups. Apna Dal leader Anupriya Patel from Uttar Pradesh was dropped; the Janata Dal (United) from Bihar was offered only one berth, which it refused to accept; and the Shiv Sena wanted at least three but has had to be content with one. As equations change, Mr. Modi might have to rethink these positions and there is scope to expand. A Council more representative in nature, in terms of gender, social and linguistic backgrounds and religion, will better reflect the mosaic that is India.