

His 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.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Boost		Uplift, lift, spur, encourage, stimulate, Fillip.
Massive		enormous, vast, immense, large, prodigious
Mandate		order, decree, gigantic, gargantuan
Outshine		out do, out class, surpass, overcome, surmount
Irrelevant		beside the point, impertinent, immaterial
Imprimatur		Approval, granting, authority/license
Induction		Admit to, allow into, introduction

Fortify	strengthen, energize, enliven, vivify, engender.
Precursor	fore runner, predecessor, forefather, forebear
Deal with	a person/problem-this book deals with the problems of/ you have to deal with mr. sharma the (ancient india meeting)
Deal in	trade – mr. sharma deals in Irons craft)
Deal out	distribute, dole out, hand out, mete out, share out, dispense.
Choppy	Rough, turbulent, heavy, stormy, tempestuous, squally.
Waters	sea / oceans.
Confident	friend, best friend, pal, chum, crony, amigo
Spill over	spreading, breaking out.
Effect (Verb)	achieve, accomplish
Triumvirate	A group of three men holding power
Peck	Bite, strike, hit, toy with
Infuse	fill, suffuse, inspire, imbue, permeate
Skewed	not exact, inappropriate, off key
Content	satisfied, pleased, gratified glad, cheerful
Berth	bunk, bed, cot, hammock

A second election:

Israel goes back to voters with six months in a changing political landscape:

When the results of the April elections in Israel were announced, Benjamin Netanyahu, whose Likud party won 35 seats in the 120-member Parliament, was the winner. He was set to form a government with support from right-wing and religious parties to kick off a record term as Prime Minister. But his plans crumbled as the ultra-orthodox Jewish parties and right-wing nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu failed to come on board. When the deadline to form the government expired on May 29, Mr. Netanyahu had the support of 60 lawmakers, one short of majority. For the first time in Israel's history, a Prime Minister-designate failed to form a government, and the country will go to the polls again in September. The issue at stake is a military service bill. The ultra-orthodox Jews, the Haredim, are exempt from mandatory military service. Yisrael Beiteinu leader Avigdor Lieberman, a former Netanyahu aide, has submitted a bill to the Knesset that would enable the government to draft them. Mr. Lieberman, who has five lawmakers, made it a precondition for his support that the bill be passed. On the other side, the orthodox parties, which have 16 legislators, wanted the bill to be amended. Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing religious coalition collapsed before his eyes.

Mr. Netanyahu is a survivor. He will continue to lead the Likud in the September elections and appears better-placed than his rivals to form a coalition government. However, his challenges are rising. The new election will be held around two weeks before his pre-indictment hearing on corruption charges. The allegations have already dented Mr. Netanyahu's image. For decades, he had presented himself as a stronger, better alternative to Israel's old establishment elite. His war rhetoric, strongman policies and appeasement of orthodox Jews all burnished his appeal at a time when the Israeli electorate was steadily moving to the right. But the April election and the subsequent rift within Mr. Netanyahu's coalition suggest that the political landscape may be changing. The Israeli left is no longer Mr.

Netanyahu's main political threat. The Labor party won only 4.43% votes and six seats in the April elections, while the Blue and White, a centrist coalition that is as hawkish on national security as the Likud, won 35 seats. The Blue and White didn't stand a chance to form the government this time because it lacked allies. By refusing to back Mr. Netanyahu over the conscription bill, Mr. Lieberman is further trying to weaken this left-right battle and bring into focus secular-versus-religious issues. Mr. Lieberman says he is fighting to prevent Israel becoming a religious state, and by saying so he is attacking Mr. Netanyahu's ties with religious parties. The challenge before Mr. Netanyahu is to fight growing political and legal odds in an election just months away.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Right wing		conservative, blimpish, die-hard, reactionary
Kick off		start, commence, begin, get going to, get off the ground.
Orthodox		traditional, conventional, conformist
At stake		at risk, in danger of being lost
Exempt		free, not liable, exempted, absolved
Pre condition		pre-requisite, necessity, essential, imperative
Amendment		revision, change, alternation, modification
Coalition		alliance, union, partnership, bloc. Caucus.
Rivals		opponent, challenger, antagonist, enemy
Indictment		accusation, charge, arraignment, summons
Allegation		claim, assertion, accusation, declaration
Dent		diminish, reduce, lessen, sink, weaken, impair
Elite		best, high society, nonpareil
Appeasement		conciliation, pacification, propitiation, peace making
Rhetoric		oratory, eloquence, command of language, turgidity
Burnish		polish, shine, rub up, buff up
Rift		crack, break, split, flaw, fault
Hawkish		aggressive especially in foreign affairs
Conscription		recruitment
Back		support, anchor, advocate, buttress
Tie with		bind
Tie in		agree with
Odds		chances/challenges

Eye in the sky:

RISAT-2B will enhance India's monitoring capabilities for civil and military purposes:

With the successful pre-dawn launch of RISAT-2B satellite on May 22, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has added another feather to its cap. The satellite will enhance India's capability in crop monitoring during the monsoon season, forestry mapping for forest fires and deforestation, and flood mapping as part of the national disaster management programme. Given that overcast skies are a constant during the monsoon season and during times of flood, the ability to penetrate the cloud cover is essential. While optical remote sensing that relies on visible light for imaging gets obstructed by clouds, RISAT-2B will not. Much like the RISAT-1 satellite that was launched by ISRO in April 2012, RISAT-2B will also use microwave radiation. Unlike visible light, microwaves have longer wavelength and so will

not be susceptible to atmospheric scattering. Microwave radiation can thus easily pass through the cloud cover, haze and dust, and image the ground. Hence, RISAT-2B satellite will be able to image under almost all weather and environmental conditions. Since it does not rely on visible light for imaging, it will be able to image the ground during both day and night. The satellite does not have passive microwave sensors that detect the radiation naturally emitted by the atmosphere or reflected by objects on the ground. Instead, RISAT-2B will be transmitting hundreds of microwave pulses each second towards the ground and receiving the signals reflected by the objects using radar. The moisture and texture of the object will determine the strength of the microwave signal that gets reflected. While the strength of the reflected signal will help determine different targets, the time between the transmitted and reflected signals will help determine the distance to the object.

The RISAT-2B satellite uses X-band synthetic aperture radar for the first time; the synthetic aperture radar was developed indigenously. Unlike the C-band that was used by RISAT-1, the shorter wavelength of the X-band allows for higher resolution imagery for target identification and discrimination. Since it has high resolution, the satellite will be able to detect objects with dimensions of as little as a metre. This capacity to study small objects and also movement could be useful for surveillance. As K. Sivan, ISRO Chairman and Secretary, Department of Space, had said last month, the satellite could be used for civil and strategic purposes. RISAT-2B will have an inclined orbit of 37 degrees, which will allow more frequent observations over the Indian subcontinent. With ISRO planning to launch four more such radar imaging satellites in a year, its ability to monitor crops and floods as well as engage in military surveillance will be greatly enhanced.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Enhance		increase, magnify, amplify, augment, boost
Penetrate		pierce, puncture, perforate
Rely on		depend on, hinge on, bank on.
Obstruct		impede, hinder, interfere with, thwart
Susceptible		credulous, gullible, innocent, ingenious
Scatter		Disperse, break up, disband
Haze		Mist, fog, smoke, vapour
Detect		notice, perceive, discern, be aware of
Emit		Discharge, throw out, release, give out off
Aperture		opening, hole, gap, hiatus
Indigenous		Native, original, autochthonous.
Resolution		Proposal, proposition, motion/intention
Discrimination		Prejudice, bias, bigotry, intolerance.
Surveillance		Observation, scrutiny, inspection, supervision, espionage