

1. **second coming** (noun) – figuratively returning; (second coming means the return of Christ to Earth on Judgment Day (at the end of the world))
2. **swearing-in** (noun) – a ceremony at which a person is admitted into office by taking oath.
3. **send out** (phrasal verb) – produce, create, give out.
4. **to begin with** (phrase) – at first, at the outset, at the beginning.
5. **underline** (verb) – underscore, emphasize, highlight.
6. **logjam** (noun) – unsettled situation.
7. **turn the page** (phrase) – to make a fresh start (after a period of difficulties)
8. **bilateral** (adjective) – involving two groups or countries.
9. **hold** (verb) – have, maintain, feel.
10. **optimism** (noun) – hopefulness, confidence, positiveness.
11. **outreach** (noun) – the level of reaching out/activity/effort; involvement.
12. **slate** (verb) – schedule, plan, organize.
13. **affirmation** (noun) – confirmation, ratification, endorsement.
14. **affinity** (noun) – association, harmony, relationship.
15. **unwise** (adjective) – ill-advised, inadvisable, irresponsible.
16. **read into** (phrasal verb) – assume from, attribute to, infer from.
17. **symbolism** (noun) – comparison, metaphor, figurative expression.
18. **promising** (adjective) – hopeful, favourable, positive.
19. **incipient** (adjective) – developing, impending, growing.
20. **deliberation** (noun) – careful consideration, thought/thinking, contemplation.
21. **owing to** (phrase) – because of, as a result of, on account of.
22. **misgivings** (noun) – doubt, suspicion, distrust.
23. **induct** (verb) – admit to, allow into, introduce to.
24. **sanctions** (noun) – action taken, or an order given to force a country to obey international laws by limiting or stopping trade with that country, by not allowing economic aid for that country, etc (Courtesy: VOA Learning English).
25. **intent** (noun) – aim, purpose, objective.
26. **multilateral** (adjective) – involving many different countries or groups.

The second coming: on Narendra Modi's upcoming swearing-in

The invitation list for the swearing-in signals the Modi government's foreign policy focus

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to **invite leaders of the other six BIMSTEC** (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) countries to the swearing-in ceremony of his Council of Ministers sends out several messages on his new government's foreign policy focus. To begin with, as the Foreign Ministry's announcement notes, the invitation to Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand is a continuation of the "neighbourhood first" policy behind

Mr. Modi's invite to leaders of South Asia for his 2014 swearing-in ceremony. Second, by not inviting leaders of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Maldives on this occasion, the government is underlining that its regional preferences have shifted from the SAARC grouping to BIMSTEC, given the logjam at SAARC because of India-Pakistan tensions. Unlike in 2014, when he invited Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif with an element of hope and a desire to turn the page on bitter bilateral ties, Mr. Modi is signalling that he does not hold the same optimism in 2019. Thailand is not just a member of BIMSTEC but also holds the chair of ASEAN this year, and an invitation is as much about India's "Act East" initiative and outreach to East Asia. Finally, the separate invitation to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation chairperson, President Sooronbay Jeenbekov of Kyrgyzstan, indicates India's commitment to the Central Asian grouping led by China and Russia, with Mr. Modi slated to attend the SCO summit in June. The other separate invitation to Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth of Mauritius, who visited India in January this year as chief guest at the Pravasi Bharatiya conference, is an affirmation of the close affinity between the two countries. It would be unwise, however, to read meanings into Mr. Modi's choice of international dignitaries beyond this symbolism.

India's engagement with both BIMSTEC and the SCO, which India joined as an observer in 2005, is at a promising but incipient stage. After its formation in 1997, BIMSTEC made very little progress and didn't even have a fully working secretariat until recently. Its deliberations on subregional connectivity have been delayed owing to concerns in Bhutan, while Nepal and Thailand sent only observers to the military exercises last year due to other misgivings. Even so, India sees BIMSTEC as a possible alternative to SAARC, which has failed to meet for five years. The SCO, which inducted India and Pakistan as full members last year, is yet to demonstrate its utility for India, but is seen as a possible balancer at a time when the U.S. is taking a more aggressive position on trade, sanctions against Iran, Venezuela and Russia, all of which are sources of concern for India. As a result, the attendance at Mr. Modi's swearing-in ceremony on Thursday, and the bilateral meetings that will follow on Friday, may represent little by way of actual outcomes. Rather, it is a statement of intent on new avenues of India's multilateral engagements.