

'India, US to discuss topical issues, regional developments at 2+2 talks'

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India and the United States will discuss various bilateral issues as well as regional developments at the fifth '2+2' ministerial dialogue between the two countries here on Friday, MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said.

At a media briefing, Mr Bagchi said on Thursday that he could not prejudge specific issues that would be taken up by the two sides at the dialogue. However, it is understood that the Israel-Hamas conflict and the war in Ukraine will figure prominently during the dialogue.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will lead the Indian delegation while Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin will head the American side at the dialogue.

The US defence secretary has already arrived for the meeting while Mr Blinken

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will reach the Indian capital tonight.

The 2+2 will enable a high-level review of progress being made in cross-cutting aspects of defence and security cooperation, technology value chain collaborations and people-to-people ties, the MEA spokesperson said. The two sides will utilise the opportunity to progress the futuristic roadmap for the India-US partnership as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Joe Biden, in their discussions in June and September this year.

Both sides will also take stock of contemporary regional issues and exchange views

about shared priorities for augmenting cooperation in multilateral platforms, and through frameworks such as Quad.

Mr Singh and Mr Jaishankar are also scheduled to have bilateral meetings with their respective US counterparts, which will mark a continuity of the ministerial dialogue and reaffirm the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic partnership.

The last '2+2' dialogue between the two countries was held in April 2022. India has a '2+2' format dialogue mechanism on strategic and security issues only with four countries. They are Russia, Australia, the US and Japan.