

INDIA TO HOST QUAD SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will also travel to Tokyo later in the week for an India-Japan “2+2” ministerial meeting. In addition, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal will travel to the U.S. for bilateral trade talks from September 5-10, as well as to attend the third Indo-Pacific Economic Forum ministerial meeting (IPEF) in Los Angeles, which is being held in person for the first time since its launch by U.S. President Joseph Biden in May. The meetings will take place amidst a particularly busy diplomatic calendar, as Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also begins her state visit to India on Monday.

“I think this is a reflection of the close coordination and collaboration that we have with our partners, you know, the Quad partners, but also bilateral partners,” said MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi, when asked about the flurry of meetings, during a weekly media briefing on Thursday, but declined to confirm the dates.

“Japan is one of those few countries with whom we do a 2+2. And the U.S. is obviously the other one, which is the first one we started and I think we would look forward to 2+2 inter-sessional with the U.S. here,” he added, referring to India’s “2+2” ministerial mechanisms that it shares with only the Quad partners, and with Russia.

The U.S. Embassy spokesperson confirmed that Mr. Lu, who oversees U.S. ties with India and the neighbourhood, will be in Delhi for the inter-sessional meeting next week.

The officials will take stock of progress on Quad initiatives, including the six “leader-level” working groups — on COVID-19 Response and Global Health Security, Climate, Critical and Emerging Technologies, Cyber, Space, and Infrastructure. In particular, the Quad Vaccine Initiative that was due to manufacture a billion vaccines at India’s Biological-E plant in Hyderabad with U.S. funding and Japanese and Australian logistics, appears to be running far behind its deadline of end-2022. This will be discussed, said sources.

Significantly, the intensified engagement with India’s Quad partners will come a week ahead of India’s engagement with the Russia-China led SCO as well. Mr. Modi is expected to travel to Samarkand for the SCO summit during September 15-16, where he is expected to come face to face with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and leaders of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. The visit will be watched most closely in the West, and amongst India’s Quad partners for the engagement with Mr. Putin, as the war in Ukraine has completed more than six months.

In India, any contact with Mr. Jinping will be significant, as it would mark the first Modi-Xi engagement since the PLA’s transgressions at the LAC began in April 2020.

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