

India-Brazil relations

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Manifest pedagogy: The recent visit of Brazilian President as chief guest to the Republic Day and also signing of bilateral trade agreements under the new framework of economic and social partnerships promise a step forward in bilateral relations between the two countries.

In news: Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro was the chief guest at India's 71st Republic Day celebrations.

Placing it in syllabus: India- Brazil bilateral relations

Static dimensions: History of bilateral relations

Current dimensions:

- **Recent visit and agreements**
- Concerns

Content:

History of India-Brazil relations:

India and Brazil are two large economies with a **combined GDP of around \$4.5 trillion and having a total population of 1.5 billion.**

They share **close and multifaceted relationship at bilateral level as well as in plurilateral fora** such as BRICS, BASIC, G-20, G-4, IBSA, International Solar Alliance, Biofuture Platform and in multilateral bodies such as the UN, WTO, UNESCO and WIPO.

Political Relations:

Both countries have played a pivotal role as leaders of the

Global South or South-South cooperation. The Brazilian foreign policy of **reciprocal multilateralism** is in **concurrence with India's policy of strategic autonomy.**

Brazil and India (along with Germany and Japan) have jointly pursued **aspirations of permanent seats in the UN Security Council** and have worked towards a multipolar world where large developing countries can frame global rules and democratise international institutions.

Bilateral Mechanism:

A bilateral **Joint Commission Meeting (JCM)** exists between India and Brazil that is **co-chaired by the Foreign Ministers** of the two countries. This mechanism discusses the entire gamut of the bilateral relationship. The **recent one is the 7th JCM held in November 2015** at New Delhi.

Key MOUs /Agreements signed:

- Agreement on Cooperation in the Utilisation of Atomic Energy for Peaceful Purposes in December 1968
- Brazil-India Double Tax Treaty in April 1988
- Agreement on Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in January 2003
- Agreement on Cooperation in Defence related Matters in December 2003
- Air Services Agreement in September 2006
- Establishment of a Consultation Mechanism on Consular and Mobility Issues in July 2014

Commercial Relations:

Brazil is one of the **most important trading partners of India in the entire LAC (Latin America and Caribbean) region.** India-Brazil bilateral trade reached US\$7.6 bn, the highest among the top 10 trading partners of Brazil in 2017.

The volume of bilateral trade in 2018-19 was USD 8.2 billion

which included USD 3.8 billion worth of Indian exports to Brazil and USD 4.4 million as imports by India.

The **main items of export from India to Brazil** are **diesel, organic chemicals and pharmaceutical products**, man-made filaments, nuclear reactors, machinery and mechanical appliances, textile products. Main **items of Brazilian exports to India** were Petroleum products, mainly crude oil, cane sugar, copper ore, soya oil and gold.

Defence Relations:

Brazil and India signed a bilateral '**Defence Cooperation Agreement**' in 2003 that calls for cooperation in defence related matters like R&D, acquisition and logistic support between the two countries.

Under the framework of the agreement, a '**Joint Defence Committee (JDC)**' has been set-up that meets at regular intervals. The meeting of 5th JDC was held in November 2017 in New Delhi.

Cultural Relations:

The first forms of Indian Culture to reach Brazil were related to spirituality, philosophy and religion. The first **classical Indian art form** to come to Brazil was Bharatanatyam; Odissi, Kathak and Kuchipudi followed.

Brazil has a strong community of Yoga and Ayurveda practitioners. The **Brazilian Association of Ayurveda (ABRA)** is a non-profit association with offices in 9 states of Brazil and has members all over Brazil.

The **third International Congress on Ayurveda was held from 12 to 15 March, 2018 in Rio de Janeiro.**

Diaspora: The Indian community of PIOs/NRIs in Brazil is small, numbering around 4700 people, with a majority of them living in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Manaus.

Recent visit and agreements signed: During the Brazilian President's visit, both countries have set a **target of USD 15 billion in bilateral trade by 2022.**

- The two sides inked an **investment cooperation and facilitation treaty** providing for a framework to increase trade and investment in high growth areas.
- A separate pact was inked for **cooperation in the field of oil and natural gas.**
- A pact was also sealed in the **bio-energy sector.**
- Other areas identified for expansion of cooperation included **agriculture, bio-fuels, health and science and technology.**
- The two sides have agreed to further collaboration in **increased ethanol production.**
- Both sides will encourage their companies to **explore ways for promoting joint development activities in oil and gas projects** in India, Brazil and in third countries.
- The two leaders have **welcomed the signing of a social security agreement** to facilitate movement of professionals and business persons between India and Brazil.
- The two sides also agreed to cooperate in the field of animal husbandry. Given the **common genetic heritage in cattle in India and Brazil,** they have agreed to **collaborate in assisted reproductive technology** that is expected to help increase dairy production in India.
- A **Centre of Excellence in Cattle Genomics in India** would be set up with Brazilian assistance.
- It was agreed that the issue of Brazil approaching the WTO against India for extending support to Indian sugarcane growers would be addressed bilaterally.

Significance:

In recent years, Brazil and India have demonstrated an interest in having a more decisive role in international

institutions, one that is proportional to their geographic size and share in world population. Both have intended to **preserve autonomy in their foreign policies** against the whims and fancies of Washington.

Both **face similar challenges** including the daunting task of alleviating poverty, rising income inequalities, tackling corruption, and inefficiency in the government. They both have seen themselves as **leaders of the third world** by raising issues that concern developing countries and demanding a reform of the international institutions such as the United Nations (UN) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Their cooperation is also reflected in their **shared opposition to the violation of Libya's sovereignty** by the West in 2011. They have sought **pragmatic relations with Iran** even in times of growing U.S. pressure against the Islamic government based in Tehran.

Brazil like India was **little receptive to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** and there is discussion in Brazil regarding China's growing economic influence in South America. This shared concern regarding China could be another motivation for India-Brazil relations.

Recently found economic growth alongside their foreign policy activism that offers alternative narratives to those of the West in the form of BRICS and IBSA multilateral groupings, provide a reference to their **"soft balancing" strategy**.

This shared interest in having autonomy and diversity in their foreign engagements also provides some context to the bilateral relationship. Owing to their geographical significance and relative advantages, Brazil in South America and India in South Asia are also considered as **"regional" powers that wield influence in their respective neighborhoods**.

Concerns:

- While the position of Asia in Brazil's international trade has transformed, India's economic relationship with Brazil is largely viewed as a **buyer-seller relationship** rather than one with evident strategic vision.
- Brazil already counts **China as its number one trade partner**. Beijing's prominent place in Brazil's economy and pressure from the business lobby can be disadvantageous for India.
- Brazil has filed a **complaint at the WTO** claiming that Indian subsidies to sugarcane farmers are inconsistent with global trade rules.
- India and Brazil have developed **divergent views on climate change cooperation** as India is committed to combating global warming while Brazil has rejected scientific studies on climate change.