

# INDIA, BRAZIL TO SIGN STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

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Jair Bolsonaro

India and Brazil will upgrade their strategic partnership with an “action plan” and sign a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) when Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro visits as the chief guest of the Republic Day celebrations from January 24 to 27.

According to officials involved in the planning of the visit, the two countries hope to take their partnership to “the next level” and build on the relationship between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Bolsonaro, who met twice in 2019.

“Our bilateral relations are based on a common global vision, shared democratic values, and a commitment to foster economic growth of both countries. Bilateral relations were elevated to a Strategic Partnership in 2006, heralding a new phase in India-Brazil relations,” said an External Affairs Ministry statement announcing Mr. Bolsonaro’s visit.

## First BIT since 2015

According to the officials, the Strategic Partnership action plan will serve as an “umbrella agreement”, for plans between the two countries to increase defence cooperation, technology sharing and a logistics agreement.

The bilateral investment treaty (BIT) will be one of the first that the Modi government will sign since 2015, when it decided to scrap all existing treaties with 83 countries, and brought in a new “Model BIT”. Brazil and India will also exchange a Social Security Agreement (SSA), first signed in March 2017, to allow investments in each other’s pension funds, to help business processes and encourage the flow of investment. In 2018, Indian investments in Brazil were around \$6 billion and Brazilian investments in India are estimated at \$1 billion, the Ministry said, adding that bilateral trade stands at about \$8 billion.

Of particular interest will be any discussion held on climate change cooperation between the leaders, given Mr. Modi’s stated commitment on combating global warming, and the Brazilian President’s stand rejecting scientific studies on climate change. Last year, Mr. Bolsonaro decided not to host the COP-25 UN climate talks.

While Mr. Bolsonaro is known internationally for other controversial “far-right” beliefs on gender and orientation, and rights for indigenous tribes, he could face protests in India over Brazil’s complaint at the World Trade Organisation against New Delhi’s subsidies to sugar cane farmers. Brazil, the largest producer and exporter of sugar, says Indian subsidies are inconsistent with trade rules.

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