



MAINS Impact- 2025

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INDIA-BRAZIL RELATIONS

SYLLABUS:

GS 2 > International Relations >> Bilateral Relations

REFERENCE NEWS:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi received a grand welcome from the Indian diaspora in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, as he began his four-day visit to attend the 17th BRICS Summit and undertake a state visit. The welcome featured cultural dances, folk songs, and a performance themed on Operation Sindoor with the patriotic song "Ye desh nahi mitne dunga." A Brazilian music group also performed devotional music, reflecting India's cultural and spiritual heritage.

India–Brazil Defence Cooperation:

Bilateral Foundations

- Diplomatic ties established in **1948**.
- Defence agreement signed in **2003**.
- Elevated to **Strategic Partnership** in **2006**.
- Joint Defence Committee (JDC) created for regular cooperation; **7 meetings held**, latest in **2021**.

Institutional Mechanisms Established

- **Joint Commission Meeting** (Foreign Ministers)
- **Strategic Dialogue** (National Security Advisors)
- **Foreign Office Consultations (FOC)** – 2nd held in **June 2023**, Brasília
- **2+2 Political-Military Dialogue** launched in **2024**
- Multiple high-level **defence visits from both sides** (e.g., Air Chiefs, Navy Commanders)

Defence Trade & Strategic Interests

- Brazil interested in purchasing from India:
 - **Akash Air Defence System**
 - **Scorpene-class submarine maintenance**
 - **Garuda artillery guns**
 - **Coastal surveillance systems**
 - **Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs)**
 - **Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)**
 - **Indian helicopters and drones (with tech transfer)**

- **BrahMos-NG** (suitable for Brazil's Gripen jets)

Joint Ventures & Industrial Collaboration

- Brazil supports **joint R&D, co-development, and manufacturing partnerships**.
- Brazilian arms manufacturers **CBC and Taurus** already in joint ventures with Indian firms
- **Embraer's** C-390 Millennium transport aircraft offered to India (deal with Mahindra signed).

Defence Budgets & Strategic Capability

- **India's defence budget (2024): \$74 billion; world's 2nd-largest standing army.**
- **Brazil's defence budget (2024): \$25 billion; world's 11th-largest army.**
- India's defence exports reached **\$2.76 billion in 2025**; aim: **\$5.84 billion by 2029**.

Strategic Significance

- Brazil seeks India as a **partner in defence modernization and regional manufacturing hub**.
- India views Brazil as a **gateway to Latin American markets** for joint products.
- Both countries aim to deepen **trust-based defence ties** through **shared democratic values**.

SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIA-BRAZIL RELATIONS:

Political & Strategic Cooperation

- **Diplomatic Legacy:** Established formal relations in **1948**, elevated to **Strategic Partnership** in **2006**.
- **Institutional Engagement:** Multiple strategic dialogue platforms: **Joint Commission Meetings, Strategic Dialogue (NSA), Foreign Office Consultations, Trade & Economic Dialogue, Joint Defence Commission, Science & Technology Committee, IBLF**, etc
- **Multilateral Alignment:** Partners in **BRICS, IBSA, G4, G20, ISA, BASIC, UNSC reform**, and **Global Biofuel Alliance**.

Economic & Trade Relations

- **Robust Bilateral Trade:** Growth from ~\$7 bn (2020) to ~\$15 bn (2022); ~US\$12 bn in 2023.
- **Complementary Trade:** India → Brazil: agro-chemicals, pharmaceuticals, machinery, synthetic yarns. Brazil → India: crude oil (~US\$4.7–5.4 bn), soya & vegetable oils, sugar, gold, cotton, pulses.
- **Investment Ties:** Indian investment in Brazil ~US\$6 bn; Brazilian investment in India ~US\$1 billion.
- **Agriculture & Food Security:** MOU on food standards; cattle genetics collaboration; agrochemical exports >US\$1 bn; Brazil's sugar exports ~\$1.9 billion.

Science, Technology & Digital Cooperation

- **Space Collaboration:** Data exchange and satellite tracking; Brazil's Amazonia-1 launched by ISRO in 2021.

- **Digital & Emerging Tech:** Joint initiatives in AI, 5G/6G, supercomputing, quantum tech, data protection.
- **Agritech & Biofuels:** Partnership under ISA; Brazil's ethanol expertise supports India's energy transition goals

Defence & Security

- **Defence Accord (2003) and JDC established**, with seven meetings to date and the first **2+2 political-military dialogue in 2024**.
- **Defence Delegations & Training:** Reciprocal high-level visits, including services chiefs; ~134 officers participated in joint training; collaboration on AWACS and transport aircraft C-390.

Cultural & Educational Exchanges

- **Cultural Affinity:** Strong presence of **Yoga, Ayurveda, Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kuchipudi**, and Indian spiritual organisations across Brazil.
- **Academic & People-to-People Linkages:** Programs under CEP (2020–24); robust cultural and educational mutual exchanges.

Health & Traditional Systems

- **Health Cooperation MoU (2020);** Joint Health Working Group (2022); Ayurveda & Yoga included in Brazil's health policy.

CHALLENGES TO INDIA-BRAZIL RELATIONS:

- **Geographical Distance & Connectivity Barriers:** The vast geographical distance leads to high transportation and logistical costs, limiting trade potential and people-to-people exchange.
 - Despite strong trade volumes (~\$12.2 billion in 2024–25), there is **no direct flight connectivity** or dedicated maritime shipping route between India and Brazil, affecting travel, tourism, and commercial logistics.
- **Trade Imbalance and Limited Diversification:** Although bilateral trade is growing, it remains **heavily commodity-based** and lacks sectoral depth.
 - Brazil's exports to India are primarily **crude oil, soya oil, sugar, and gold**, while India exports **agro-chemicals, pharma, and petroleum products**. High-value services, technology, and innovation exchanges remain underutilized.
- **Underutilised Investment Potential:** While Indian investment in Brazil exceeds **\$6 billion**, Brazilian investment in India is only around **\$1 billion**.
 - Indian firms (Tata, Mahindra, Infosys) are active in Brazil, but Brazilian firms like **Vale, WEG, and Stefanini** have limited presence in India. Mutual FDI flows remain below potential for two G20 economies.

- **Bureaucratic and Regulatory Barriers:** Complex regulatory environments, tax systems, and compliance procedures in both countries affect ease of doing business.
 - Despite an MoU on trade monitoring and regular meetings (e.g., 6th Trade Monitoring Mechanism in 2023), businesses still face delays in approvals, tariffs, and overlapping regulations.
- **Delayed Implementation of MoUs:** Several agreements (on bioenergy, cyber security, defence, and education) exist on paper but **progress is slow or non-uniform**.
 - MoUs signed during President Bolsonaro's 2020 visit have seen **delayed operationalisation**, including joint R&D on defence platforms, digital cooperation, and biofuel tech transfer.
- **Limited Awareness and Cultural Gaps:** Despite goodwill, **mutual public awareness is low**, particularly in youth and mainstream society.
 - The popularity of shows like *Caminho das Índias* and the success of cultural events like **Yoga Day** highlight potential, but academic exchanges and tourism remain low. Only **two ICCR scholarship slots** are offered annually to Brazil.
- **Defence Cooperation Still Evolving:** While interest in Indian defence platforms exists, no major **deal has materialised** yet.
 - Brazil has expressed intent to procure Akash missiles, Tejas LCA, and coastal systems, but no contracts signed as of mid-2025. Joint production under discussion, but progress depends on industrial compatibility and financing.
- **Limited Engagement in Multilateral Leadership:** Despite alignment in plurilateral forums (e.g., BRICS, IBSA, G-4), coordination on global issues like UNSC reform, WTO negotiations, and climate action is not always synchronised.
 - Joint statements often reaffirm shared goals, but **global leadership actions are pursued independently**, with limited India–Brazil co-sponsored initiatives at the UN or WTO.
- **Language Barrier:** Language remains a **practical barrier** in education, culture, and diplomacy, with **Portuguese** being Brazil's primary language and English/Hindi common in India.
 - Very few Indian students study in Brazil and vice versa. The lack of Portuguese-speaking officials in India and Indian language learners in Brazil slows academic cooperation.

WAY FORWARD:

Institutionalise Strategic Coordination for Global South Leadership

- **Establish an Annual Strategic Dialogue on South-South Cooperation**, focusing on food security, climate justice, digital inclusion, and global governance reform.
- **Leverage BRICS, IBSA, and G20** to coordinate joint resolutions on WTO reform, UNSC expansion, and global health equity.

Deepen Economic & Technological Integration

- Create a **Preferential Trade Agreement** under MERCOSUR-India for better market access.
- Promote **joint R&D and co-production** in sectors like defence, biotech, semiconductors, and green hydrogen.
- Develop **South-South Technology Corridors** to share innovations in fintech, digital governance, and agriculture.

Strengthen Maritime & Energy Partnerships

- Expand cooperation in **biofuels and ethanol blending**, leveraging Brazil's "RenovaBio" and India's "National Biofuel Policy."
- Enhance collaboration in **offshore oil and gas exploration** and clean energy transitions under the **ISA and GBA**.
- Explore **South Atlantic maritime cooperation**, including joint naval exercises and oceanic research.

Cultural Diplomacy & People-to-People Ties

- Open more **ICCR scholarships**, language training centres, and academic fellowships.
- Promote **India-Brazil University collaborations** and joint research in health, indigenous knowledge, and Ayurveda.
- Expand celebration of **Yoga Day, Film Festivals, and Gandhi Dialogues** in Brazil and Latin America.

Enhance Development Cooperation

- Launch a joint **India-Brazil Fund for Global South Development**, supporting capacity-building, climate adaptation, and health systems in Africa and Latin America.
- Align India's ITEC program and Brazil's ABC (Brazilian Cooperation Agency) for **triangular development** in less-developed countries.

Make Defence Ties a Pillar of Strategic Trust

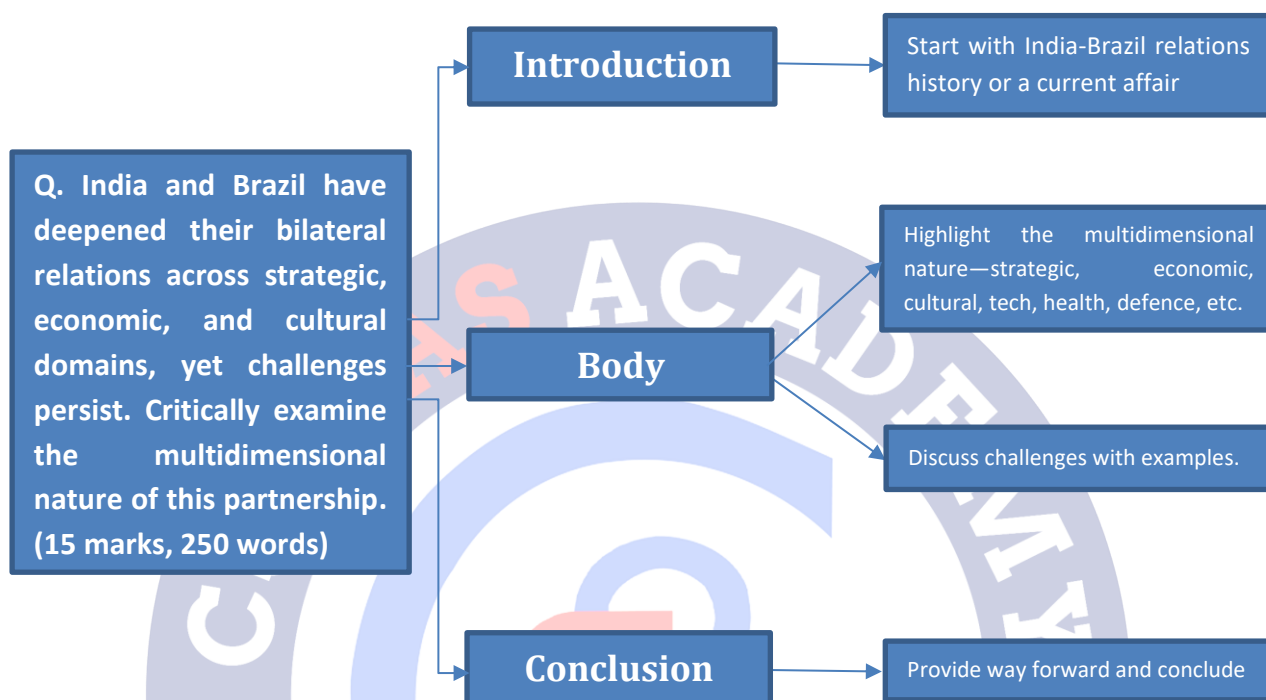
- Fast-track agreements on **Akash missile systems, Tejas aircraft, and Scorpene maintenance**.
- Co-develop equipment for humanitarian missions, coastal security, and disaster relief in the Global South.

India and Brazil, as **rising powers with shared democratic values**, must deepen their bilateral ties to build a **multipolar, inclusive, and equitable world order**. Together, they can serve as **pillars of leadership in the Global South**, offering alternative narratives rooted in **mutual respect, sustainability, and human development**

PRACTICE QUESTION:

Q. India and Brazil have deepened their bilateral relations across strategic, economic, and cultural domains, yet challenges persist. Critically examine the multidimensional nature of this partnership. (15 marks, 250 words)

APPROACH:



MODEL ANSWER:

India and Brazil, both vibrant democracies and emerging economies, share a multifaceted partnership rooted in mutual respect, democratic values, and a vision for a more equitable global order. Their relationship, elevated to a **Strategic Partnership in 2006**, has seen deepening ties across **political, defence, economic, technological, and cultural domains**.

Multidimensional Nature of the Partnership:

- **Political & Strategic Cooperation:** Institutional mechanisms like the **Joint Commission Meeting, 2+2 Dialogue, and BRICS–IBSA cooperation** reflect strategic trust.
- **Economic Relations:** Bilateral trade touched **\$12.2 billion in 2024–25**, with complementary trade in agro-chemicals, crude oil, and pharma. Indian investments exceed \$6 billion.
- **Defence Cooperation:** Brazil has shown interest in Indian platforms like the **Akash missile, Tejas LCA, and BrahMos-NG**; training and technology sharing are ongoing.
- **Technology & Space:** India launched Brazil's Amazonia-1 satellite in 2021; cooperation in **AI, 5G/6G, and biofuel technologies** is advancing.

- **Cultural & People-to-People Ties:** Deep cultural affinity, from **Ayurveda and Yoga** to film and Gandhian philosophy, binds people.
- **Health & Agriculture:** Cooperation in health policy, Ayurveda integration, and food security initiatives enhances social development goals.

Challenges in the Relationship:

- **Geographical & Connectivity Gaps:** No direct flights or dedicated shipping routes hamper trade and mobility.
- **Underutilised Investments & Trade Diversification:** Brazilian investment in India remains limited (~\$1 billion), and trade is commodity-heavy.
- **Regulatory & Bureaucratic Hurdles:** Implementation of signed MoUs, especially in defence and bioenergy, remains slow.
- **Cultural & Language Barriers:** Limited awareness and only 2 ICCR scholarships annually restrict academic exchange.
- **Multilateral Coordination:** Despite alignment in forums like BRICS and G-4, joint global initiatives remain sparse.

Way Forward:

- **Institutionalise South–South Coordination:** Launch an **India–Brazil South-South Cooperation Forum** for joint leadership on global issues.
- **Boost Defence Collaboration:** Fast-track deals on Akash, Tejas, and Scorpene maintenance; promote co-development.
- **Enhance Maritime & Energy Ties:** Expand oil, gas, and ethanol cooperation under ISA and GBA.
- **Strengthen Cultural Diplomacy:** Increase scholarships, promote university tie-ups, and expand language training.
- **Develop a Joint Development Fund:** Use shared platforms to support health, climate, and infrastructure in Africa and Latin America.

India and Brazil, as key voices of the **Global South**, are well-positioned to lead the call for a **multipolar and inclusive world order**. Their enduring partnership must now evolve into a **model of South–South solidarity**, rooted in sustainability, strategic trust, and people-first development.