

# Brazilian President Jair Messias Bolsonaro attends Republic Day Parade at Rajpath in New Delhi as Chief Guest

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Brazilian President Jair Messias Bolsonaro on Sunday joined a select group of world leaders to have graced India's Republic Day celebrations in the past few decades. Bolsonaro, as the chief guest at the 71st Republic Day celebrations, watched the colourful parade at the majestic Rajpath along with President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a host of other leaders.

This is the third time that a Brazilian President was the chief guest at the Republic Day. The last time a Brazilian President was the chief guest was in 2004 when Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva attended the parade. President Bolsonaro held talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, after which India and Brazil inked 15 agreements to ramp up cooperation in a wide range of areas, including oil and gas, and unveiled an action plan to further broaden their strategic ties.

This is the first visit of President Bolsonaro to India after he assumed office on January 1, 2019. Invitation to President Bolsonaro had drawn criticism from certain quarters with questions raised over a "controversial" figure like him being chosen to be the chief guest at the

Republic Day parade. He was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising several ministers, senior officials, chairman of Brazil-India Friendship Group in the Brazilian Parliament, and businessmen.

### **Chief Guest fro Republic Day Celebrations in past years**

2019 - Cyril Ramaphosa, President of South Africa

2018 - Leaders of all 10 ASEAN countries

2017 - Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi

2015 - Barack Obama. Former US President

2014 - Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan

2013 - Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, Bhutanese King

### **Why Bolsonaro's attendance stirring controversy?**

Brazilian President Bolsonaro's attendance as the chief guest for the Republic Day parade does not sit well enough with many dignitaries. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bolsonaro did hold talks at the G-20 and the BRICS Summit, the latter's personal and quite vocal opinions have evoked controversy. Retired from the military, the Brazilian leader has often voiced thoughts that thread along sexism and homophobia.

In 2014, Bolsonaro stirred controversy during a debate after telling Brazil's opposition Maria Do Rosario, "I would not rape you because you're not worthy of it." Although the statement made headlines across the globe, drawing criticism from multiple factions of society, the leader refused to apologize.

**SOURCE:** *The Print, Mumbai Mirror*