

Elon Musk in Brazil to launch plan to survey and connect Amazon

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Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro travelled to Porto Feliz to meet billionaire Elon Musk.

Billionaire Elon Musk arrived in Brazil Friday, announcing a project to bring internet access to schools in the Amazon and improve satellite

monitoring of the rainforest.

The world's richest man touched down in a private jet at an airfield outside Sao Paulo, according to the G1 news portal.

Musk was set to meet Brazil's far-right President Jair Bolsonaro at a luxury hotel in Porto Feliz, some 100 kilometers (60 miles) outside Sao Paulo, according to the O Globo newspaper.

"Super excited to be in Brazil for launch of Starlink for 19,000 unconnected schools in rural areas & environmental monitoring of Amazon!" tweeted Musk, CEO of SpaceX and Tesla.

Communications Minister Fabio Faria, who met Musk in Texas last November, tweeted the businessman was visiting "to discuss Connectivity and Protection of the Amazon with the Brazilian government."

He added: "Since we are going to connect the Amazon, we brought one of the largest entrepreneurs in the world to help us in this mission."

A large security detail kept journalists at a distance from the hotel where the meeting was to take place. An AFP reporter saw two helicopters land nearby.



AFP has learned that Bolsonaro's surprise guest will be billionaire Elon Musk -- seen here in New York on May 2, 2022.

'A very important person'

On Thursday, Bolsonaro announced he would have a meeting "with a very important person who is recognized throughout the world."

"He is coming to offer his help for our Amazon," the president said in his weekly social media broadcast, without naming Musk.

The Amazon is a hot topic in Brazil, with deforestation rising sharply under the government of Bolsonaro—which is accused of promoting

impunity for gold miners, farmers and timber traffickers who illegally clear the rainforest.

The Brazilian government said in November it was negotiating with SpaceX to secure satellite internet in the Amazon rainforest and boost detection of illegal deforestation.

In a bid to provide high-speed internet around the world, especially to areas underserved by fixed and mobile networks, Musk's SpaceX company has placed thousands of Starlink satellites into orbit, with many more launches planned.

The service has more than 100,000 subscribers worldwide.

Musk attracted renewed worldwide attention when he announced last month that he planned to buy Twitter in a deal worth \$44 billion dollars.

His comments on loosening restrictions in the name of free expression were welcomed by many supporters of Bolsonaro, who is accused of using fake news as a political weapon and has had several social media posts deleted.

O Globo said Faria and Defense Minister Paulo Sergio Nogueira would attend the Musk-Bolsonaro meeting, along with 13 business leaders including bosses of the country's main telecommunications companies.

The meeting comes hours after Musk rejected allegations on Twitter that he groped and exposed himself to a flight attendant six years ago.

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