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## FEATURED Q&A

# What Are the Most Important Parts of Brazil's AI Strategy?



Brazil's government last month released its strategy for artificial intelligence. // Image: Maxpixel.net.

**Q** Brazil's Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation on April 6 published a strategy for artificial intelligence. The plan seeks to increase research and innovation in the technology while also considering the ethical use of artificial intelligence. What are the key aspects of Brazil's strategy, and what other areas should the ministry focus on? What ethical considerations must be taken into account when seeking to develop such advanced technologies? What are the biggest changes that Brazil's economy and business sectors will experience through the expanded use of artificial intelligence?

**A** Diogo Brunacci, regional director of government affairs and public policy for Latin America at Oracle: "April brought good news in ICT public policy with the publication of Brazil's artificial intelligence strategy to guide actions around research, innovation and the development of related technologies to tackle the country's greatest challenges, as well as ethics. The National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence (EBIA) aims to guarantee innovation in the work and social environments. Among other things, the strategy mentions specific topics about privacy relating to: 1.) principles that must be incorporated from the moment the system is designed; 2.) promoting international cooperation in norms, technological, regulatory and legal standards in order to facilitate economic integration and the exchange of expertise in AI, always valuing the privacy of users and the protection of personal data; and 3.) themes related to the incorporation of ethical principles

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## TODAY'S NEWS

### POLITICAL

## At Least 23 Killed in Collapse of Mexico City Metro Overpass

A Mexico City Metro train plunged toward a busy street below when an overpass collapsed in the Tláhuac borough in the southeast part of the capital.

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### BUSINESS

## Scotiabank Agrees to Acquire Additional Stake in Chile Unit

Bank of Nova Scotia agreed to pay \$406 million to the Said family for an additional 7 percent stake in its Chile operations. The deal is subject to regulatory approval.

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### ECONOMIC

## Colombian Finance Minister Carrasquilla Quits

Alberto Carrasquilla resigned as Colombia's finance minister, a move that followed the government's withdrawal of a controversial tax reform proposal and deadly protests.

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Carrasquilla // File Photo: Colombian Government.

## POLITICAL NEWS

## Mexico City Metro Overpass Collapses, At Least 23 Killed

At least 23 people, including children, were killed Monday night when a 16-foot-high overpass carrying a Mexico City Metro train collapsed, sending a train car plunging toward a busy street below, the Associated Press reported. Some 70 people were also injured in the incident, which happened on Line 12, the newest of Mexico City's Metro lines, in the borough of Tláhuac in the southeast part of the city. "A support beam gave way," said Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum. "There are unfortunately children among the dead." The collapse occurred at about 10:25 p.m. local time, said Mexican Interior Minister Alfonso Suárez Del Real, CNN reported. One survivor was trapped in a vehicle beneath the rubble but was later freed, according to Sheinbaum. The train ran above a concrete median strip, which appeared to have lessened the number of casualties on the street below. For hours, rescuers searched a train car that was left dangling over

the street but were forced to suspend those efforts early today in order to protect the safety of rescue crews working near the suspended car, the AP reported. A crane was brought in to help support the car. Forty-nine of the injured were hospitalized, with seven in serious condition and undergoing surgery, said Sheinbaum. Mexico's Public Prosecutor's Office will carry out an investigation of the incident, said Sheinbaum, CNN reported.

## ECONOMIC NEWS

## Colombia's Finance Minister Quits Amid Protests Over Tax Bill

Alberto Carrasquilla resigned as Colombia's finance minister on Monday following days of deadly protests that forced the government to withdraw its unpopular tax reform proposal, the Financial Times reported. Carrasquilla said he was leaving his post to allow the government to reach a consensus on a new tax reform package, which the administration says is crucial to maintaining fiscal sustain-

## NEWS BRIEFS

## Brazilian Authorities Subpoena Indigenous Leader Over Criticism

Brazilian federal authorities have subpoenaed Sônia Guajajara, who leads the country's largest Indigenous umbrella organization, known as APIB, to testify on her statements criticizing the government of President Jair Bolsonaro, Reuters reported Monday. The subpoena came at the request of Indigenous affairs agency Funai. Guajajara said it was in connection to her denouncement of Bolsonaro's handling of the pandemic and its impact on native peoples in an online documentary series. "The persecution by this government is unacceptable and absurd! They will not shut us up," she said.

## Polls Show Narrowing Lead for Castillo in Peru Presidential Race

Polls from Peru show presidential candidate Keiko Fujimori edging closer to left-wing front-runner Pedro Castillo ahead of the runoff scheduled for June 6, Reuters reported Monday. In polls prior to the April 11 first-round vote, Castillo had 43 percent support, while Fujimori garnered 34 percent, according to Ipsos Perú. In a more recent Ipsos poll, Fujimori has closed the gap by two percentage points. The poll also showed that around 23 percent of responders are still undecided.

## Venezuela's Oil Exports Stabilize After Recent Declines

Venezuela's oil exports have stabilized in recent months, following sharp declines late last year and early this year, Reuters reported Monday, citing tracking data and documents from state oil company PDVSA. For the third consecutive month, the country's oil exports remained flat at approximately 700,000 barrels per day, with three-quarters of the exports going to Asia and the Middle East.

## FEATURED Q&amp;A / Continued from page 1

regarding transparency, equity and nondiscrimination. Next steps are still to come, with the evaluation of other legislation to regulate AI, especially PL 21/2020, which adds concepts about risk management and risk accountability. The global and local ICT industries, academia and think tanks will seek to clarify and reinforce the key messages on the importance of AI to increase competitiveness, foster economic development and reset work force functions. Brazil's economic and business sectors will have to be engaged in order to keep Brazil from being isolated with unique standards and to avoid onerous certification, localization requirements or heavy-handed regulations. The future lies in the adoption of a flexible and diversified regulatory approach that en-

courages strong public-private collaboration and responsible development of AI. Also, and to promote innovation, it is important to facilitate data sharing, advancement of structured and standardized AI R&D and support for STEM-informed work force development. By creating nonhuman systems capable of making decisions that affect the health, welfare and safety of human beings, AI is challenging many assumptions built into current legal, regulatory and governing frameworks. New questions will be raised about liability and decision-making. How should policymakers balance individual protections against the benefits of innovation and competition? This will be the dilemma present in every discussion of AI in all branches of Brazil's government."

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ability. President Iván Duque said José Manuel Restrepo, who had been leading the commerce ministry, would replace Carrasquilla. Massive demonstrations continued on Monday across Colombia, including in Bogotá, Medellín and Cali, even after Duque announced his withdrawal of the reform proposal a day earlier. Protests have turned violent, with the national human rights ombudsman identifying at least 18 civilians and one police officer who were killed during the five days of unrest, Reuters reported. Protests have continued in part because of what human rights groups have blasted as a heavy-handed state response in trying to quell demonstrators, The New York Times reported. In a statement today, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed deep alarm at the situation in Cali, "where police opened fire on demonstrators protesting against tax reforms, reportedly killing and injuring a number of people." "Our office in Colombia is working to verify the exact number of casualties and establish how this terrible incident came about in Cali," it added. Defense Minister Diego Molano on Monday blamed illegal armed groups for looting and vandalism during the protests. He declined to provide details about killings during the demonstrations.

## BUSINESS NEWS

### Scotiabank Acquiring Additional 7% Stake in Chile Operations

Toronto-based Bank of Nova Scotia, or Scotiabank, has agreed to pay approximately 500 million Canadian dollars (\$406 million) to acquire an additional 7 percent stake in its Chile operations from the Said family, Bloomberg News reported Monday. The purchase puts to work some excess capital that the bank has accumulated during the Covid-19 pandemic. If regulators approve the transaction, the purchase would increase Scotiabank's ownership of the unit to 83 percent, the lender said Monday. The deal also would lower Scotiabank's common equity tier 1 capital ratio by 8 basis points. The ratio is a measure of the bank's

ability to absorb losses. Chile is the bank's third-largest market, after Canada, its home market, and Mexico. Scotiabank's Chile opera-

tion accounted for 6.9 percent of the lender's revenue for the three-month period that ended on Jan. 31.

## CAPITOL HILL WATCH

A Look at U.S. Congressional Activity on Latin America

### Sires, Salazar Introduce Legislation Seeking Fair Elections in Nicaragua

U.S. Representatives Albio Sires (D-N.J.), the chairman of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Civil Security, Migration and International Economic Policy, and María Elvira Salazar (R-Fla.) on April 30 introduced the Reinforcing Nicaragua's Adherence to Conditions for Electoral Reform Act of 2021, or the RENACER Act, according to Sires' office. The legislation aims to ensure free, fair and transparent elections in the Central American nation. "The brutal Ortega regime is harassing, persecuting, and repressing the Nicaraguan people to prevent a free and fair presidential election this November," Salazar said in the statement, in reference to President Daniel Ortega, who has been in office since 2007. "We should implement a results-oriented diplomatic strategy, in coordination with our allies, that aligns sanctions with specific outcomes in order to counter the Ortega regime's efforts to use repression, persecution, and fear to prevent the Nicaraguan people from expressing their will at the ballot box," Sires added. The RENACER Act builds on the Nicaragua Human Rights and Anticorruption Act of 2018, which coordinated targeted sanctions with Canada and the European Union, reinforced humanitarian and human rights exceptions in loans from international financial institutions and expanded oversight mechanisms from international lenders, Sires' office said.

### Rubio, Cruz Seek to Create Fund From Seized Assets Connected to Venezuela

U.S. Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights and Global Women's Issues, and Senator Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) on April 29 introduced the Preserving Accountability for National Assets Act of 2021, or PANA Act, which aims to take assets seized from corrupt individuals connected to the governments of Venezuelan leaders Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro and place them in a "Venezuela Restoration Fund," Rubio's office said in a statement. The U.S. State Department would then use the money to bolster Venezuelan democracy and civil society, support independent media outlets, combat corruption and improve institutional transparency, it added. "Venezuela has a long way towards recovery and these funds can help the interim administration and the democratically elected National Assembly as they work towards a common goal of rebuilding Venezuela's democracy and a prosperous future," Rubio said, in reference to opposition leader Juan Guaidó, whom the United States recognizes as the legitimate interim president of the Andean nation. "This bill will hold bad actors accountable and provide much-needed support to those working to restore freedom in Venezuela," Cruz added. By April 2020, federal authorities in Florida had seized \$450 million in assets connected to Venezuelan corruption cases, and as of February, there were 38 pending cases involving 164 individuals, according to Rubio's office.

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**A** Carolina Costa, head of Latin America government affairs at RELX Group: “The artificial intelligence strategy that Brazil’s Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation presented established a comprehensive framework for nurturing research and development, as well as the creation of public policies and ethical considerations related to the technology. Based on a strong set of

“Public-private efforts can help ensure the responsible use of AI...”

— Carolina Costa

pillars, key objectives include the removal of barriers to AI innovation, skills creation, promotion of investments in R&D projects and the development of ethical principles for the responsible use of AI. Moreover, the Brazilian government sets out channels for collaboration among the private sector, academia and international actors to evolve the country’s AI ecosystem in the years to come. Cutting-edge innovation, driven by AI technology, is an integral part of what we do at RELX. As such, we welcome the opportunity to leverage public-private partnerships to work in tandem with the Brazilian government, research institutions and other civil society actors. Through a collaborative approach, and recognizing that the strategy

is a starting point of an evolving and highly dynamic public policy debate, public-private efforts can help ensure the responsible use of AI, grounded in human rights and ethics. Such partnerships for AI will help Brazilian society leapfrog toward greater levels of innovation, productivity and socioeconomic progress.”

**A** Ashley Friedman, senior director of policy at the Information Technology Industry Council:

“Brazil’s national AI strategy is an important step toward accelerating adoption of AI throughout the Brazilian economy and society. As Brazil has done with many aspects of its digital transformation strategy, it is taking a principles-based approach that promotes and facilitates development and use of emerging technologies. The Brazilian strategy aligns closely with the Global AI Policy Recommendations that ITI released earlier this year. These recommendations urge governments to advance AI policies regarding innovation and investment and also to facilitate public understanding and public trust and ensure security and privacy. We look forward to working with Brazil’s Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation as it implements the national AI strategy, especially regarding standards, data protection and security, and transparency and explainability, to ensure that any potential regulations focus on specific harms while allowing for the advancements in technology and innovation that will make Brazilian businesses more efficient.”

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