



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 24-06-2024

GS-2

1. India-Bangladesh relations

GS-3

2. Claude 3.5 Sonnet
3. Balon protein
4. Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve
5. Bail in Money laundering cases and the 'twin test' under PMLA

India-Bangladesh relations

Syllabus: GS-2: International Relations – India and Bangladesh.

Context:

- *India and Bangladesh agreed to start talks on a **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**.*

Historical Context:

- **Shared Past:** *India and Bangladesh share a deep civilizational, cultural, and social bond. This forms a strong foundation for their relationship.*
- **Bangladesh Liberation War:** *India played a pivotal role in **Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971**, providing military and political support. This act cemented a sense of gratitude and friendship between the two nations.*
- **Diplomatic Ties:** *India was the first country to recognize Bangladesh's independence and established diplomatic relations in 1971.*

Areas of Cooperation:

- **Security:** *Both nations cooperate on counter-terrorism and transnational crimes. Sharing of intelligence and border patrolling are crucial aspects.*
- **Water Sharing:** *Management of shared rivers like the Ganges is crucial. Agreements like the **Ganga Waters Treaty (1996)** and the **Joint River Commission (1972)** address water sharing and dispute resolution.*
- **Economic Cooperation:** *Bilateral trade has grown significantly, with Bangladesh becoming India's largest trade partner in South Asia. Both nations are exploring a **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** for deeper economic integration.*
- **Infrastructure Development:** *India has extended significant assistance for infrastructure projects in Bangladesh, including the **landmark Padma Bridge**.*
- **Connectivity:** *Enhancing regional connectivity is a priority. Initiatives like the **Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN)** corridor aim to improve trade and movement of people.*
- **Cultural Exchange:** *Regular cultural exchange programs strengthen people-to-people ties and celebrate shared heritage.*

Challenges:

- **Teesta River Dispute:** *Sharing of Teesta River water remains a sticking point, impacting trust and cooperation.*
- **Non-Tariff Barriers:** *Non-Tariff Barriers imposed by India affect Bangladeshi exports, creating trade friction.*
- **Security Concerns:** *Bangladesh's growing closeness with China is a concern for India's strategic interests.*

Looking Ahead:

- **Resolving Teesta Dispute:** *Finding a solution to the Teesta water issue is crucial for fostering trust and cooperation.*
- **Boosting Trade:** *Both nations can work towards a balanced and mutually beneficial trade partnership through CEPA or FTA negotiations.*
- **Regional Cooperation:** *Enhancing regional cooperation through initiatives like BBIN can benefit both countries.*
- **Managing China Factor:** *India needs to address Bangladesh's concerns while promoting deeper economic and strategic ties.*

Practice Question

Q. Analyze the evolving dynamics of India-Bangladesh relations since 1971. What are the key factors influencing this relationship, and what challenges and opportunities does it present for both countries? (10 marks, 150 words)

Claude 3.5 Sonnet

Syllabus: GS-3: Science and Technology – Artificial Intelligence

Context:

- Anthropic launched **Claude 3.5 Sonnet**, the first model in the Claude 3.5 AI series.
- Claimed to outperform models like **OpenAI's GPT-4o**, **Google's Gemini-1.5 Pro**, and **Meta's Llama-400b**.

Performance Highlights:

- **Twice as fast as Claude 3 Opus.**

- *Cost-effective and ideal for complex tasks like customer support and multi-step workflows.*

Model Details:

- **Claude 3.5 Sonnet** is a generative **pre-trained transformer (LLM)**.
- Part of a series where smaller and larger models are yet to be released.
- Outperforms previous models by a significant margin.

Capabilities:

- Excels in **coding proficiency, graduate-level reasoning, and undergraduate-level knowledge.**
- Handles nuance, humor, and complex instructions well.
- Writes high-quality, relatable content.

Vision Capabilities:

- Strongest vision model by Anthropic.
- Excels in visual reasoning tasks like **decoding charts** and transcribing text from imperfect images.
- Successfully **identified locations from images** in practical tests.

Balon protein

Syllabus: GS-3: General Science –Microorganisms.

Context:

- Earlier this year, scientists reported discovering a protein that allowed a bacterium, **Psychrobacterurativorans**, to abruptly shut down in unfavourable living conditions and 'restart' just as quickly when they improved.

More about discovery:

- Scientists discovered a protein named **Balon in Psychrobacterurativorans** bacteria.
- Balon helps the **bacterium to quickly shut down in harsh conditions** and resume normal function when conditions improve.
- Previously, scientists knew that **ribosome hibernation** caused bacterial dormancy in extreme cold.
- **Balon works differently from other proteins** by binding to the active centers of bacterial ribosomes, preventing protein synthesis.

- Researchers induced **cold shock in *P. urativorans*** to study Balon's effects on ribosomes.
- **Balon's action is reversible:** it can be ejected when conditions improve, allowing protein synthesis to resume.
- The discovery of Balon could provide insights into how bacteria **survive in extreme environments like Arctic permafrost.**
- **Psychrobacter bacteria** are known for their ability to survive and potentially spoil refrigerated food due to their cold tolerance.

Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve

Syllabus: GS-3; Biodiversity

Context

- A rare four-horned antelope has been sighted for the first time in Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve (Sagar district), which was earlier known as **Nauradehi Sanctuary.**

More to know

- Normally, four-horned antelopes are found in **Pench, Bandhavgarh, Kanha, Sanjay Tiger Reserve**, which are moist areas.
- The region of Nauradehi is dry.
- Before this, four-horned antelope was not reported from this area.
- The sighting of four-horned antelope indicates that it can thrive in Nauradehi too.
- Four-horned antelope are shy and live in wooded areas with lots of grass and close to water sources.

Four-horned antelope

- Found mostly in **India and Nepal**, the four-horned antelope is the only bovid with four horns (only males have horns).
- They are classified as '**Vulnerable**' on the **IUCN Red List** with an estimated population of 10,000 animals, a majority of which are found in India.



About

- *The Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve is a 2,339 square kilometer reserve in the Sagar, Damoh, and Narsinghpur districts of **Madhya Pradesh**, India.*
- *It was established in 1997 and is the seventh tiger reserve in Madhya Pradesh and the 54th in India.*
- *The reserve is named after Queen Durgavati, a heroic figure in Indian history.*
- *The reserve includes parts of the Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary and Durgavati Wildlife Sanctuary, and also contains the Singorgarh Fort.*
- *It's home to a variety of flora and fauna, including the Bengal tiger, Indian leopard, and several species of deer, and is a crucial habitat for endangered species.*
- *The reserve also falls under the **Narmada and Yamuna River** basins and has dry deciduous vegetation.*
- *A green corridor is being developed to link the reserve with the Panna Tiger Reserve, allowing tigers to naturally move between the two areas.*

Bail in Money laundering cases and the 'twin test' under PMLA

Syllabus: GS-3: Internal security – Money Laundering.

Context:

- *Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was granted bail by a trial court. Kejriwal is in jail on charges under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).*
- *The Delhi High Court has **temporarily stopped the bail order.***

Twin Test for Bail under PMLA

Twin Test Definition:

- **Reasonable Grounds of Innocence:** *The court must believe there are reasonable grounds that the accused is not guilty.*
- **Likelihood of Reoffending:** *The court must believe the accused is not likely to commit any offence while on bail.*

Section 45 of PMLA

- **Strict Bail Conditions:** *Bail is not typically granted for PMLA offences.*
- **Mandatory Hearing:** *The public prosecutor must be heard in all bail applications.*
- **Exceptions to Bail:** *The court must apply the twin test if the prosecutor opposes bail.*

Why Bail under PMLA is Contentious

- **Negative Language:** *The provision is framed negatively, meaning bail is an exception rather than the rule.*
- **Serious Offences:** *PMLA deals with serious financial crimes, making the conditions for bail stricter.*
- **Similar Laws:** *Other laws with severe offences, like those related to drugs or terrorism, have similar strict bail conditions.*

Legal Challenges to the Twin Test

Initial Challenge and Ruling

Nikesh Tarachand Shah v Union of India (2017):

- *Ruling: The Supreme Court **struck down the twin test for bail under PMLA as unconstitutional.***

- *Reasoning: The onerous conditions for bail were not a reasonable classification, violating the right to equality.*

Legislative Response

Finance Act, 2018:

- *Action: Parliament reinserted the twin test provisions into PMLA.*
- *Challenge: This re-insertion was **challenged in various High Courts** and eventually the Supreme Court.*

Subsequent Ruling

Vijay Madanlal Choudhary v Union of India (2022):

- *Ruling: A three-judge Bench refused to accept the previous ruling in Nikesh Tarachand Shah.*
- *Reasoning: The court disagreed with the 2017 ruling, emphasizing the seriousness of money laundering and its **threat to national sovereignty and integrity.***

Legal and Expert Opinions

Criticism of Equating Offences:

- **Money Laundering vs. Anti-Terror/Narcotics Laws:** *Legal experts argue that money laundering should not be equated with more severe crimes like terrorism and narcotics, which have harsher penalties.*
- **Maximum Sentence:** *Money laundering typically carries a maximum sentence of seven years, extended to ten years only when involving narcotics.*

Government's Defense

Nature of Money Laundering:

- **Influence and Pre-meditation:** *The government argues that money laundering is committed by influential and resourceful individuals with careful planning.*
- **Use of Technology:** *Advanced technology is often used to conceal transactions, complicating detection and evidence tracing.*

Current Position in Law Regarding Bail Conditions under PMLA

Amendment and Legislative Challenge

Money Bill Route:

- **Controversy:** *There's an ongoing challenge on whether amendments to bail conditions under PMLA were passed **legally via the Money Bill route.***

- **Pending Issue:** *A larger Bench is yet to decide if certain laws, including these amendments, can be passed as Money Bills.*

Supreme Court Ruling and Review

Vijay Madanlal Choudhary Case (2022):

- *Ruling: The Supreme Court **upheld the twin test for bail** under PMLA.*
- *Review: The Court has **agreed to review this ruling**, but it remains valid until further notice.*
- *Application: The twin test must be rigorously applied in **both special courts and constitutional courts** for regular and anticipatory bail.*

Benefit under Section 436A of CrPC

- **Entitlement:** *Accused individuals can seek bail after serving half of the maximum sentence prescribed for their offence under Section 436A of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).*