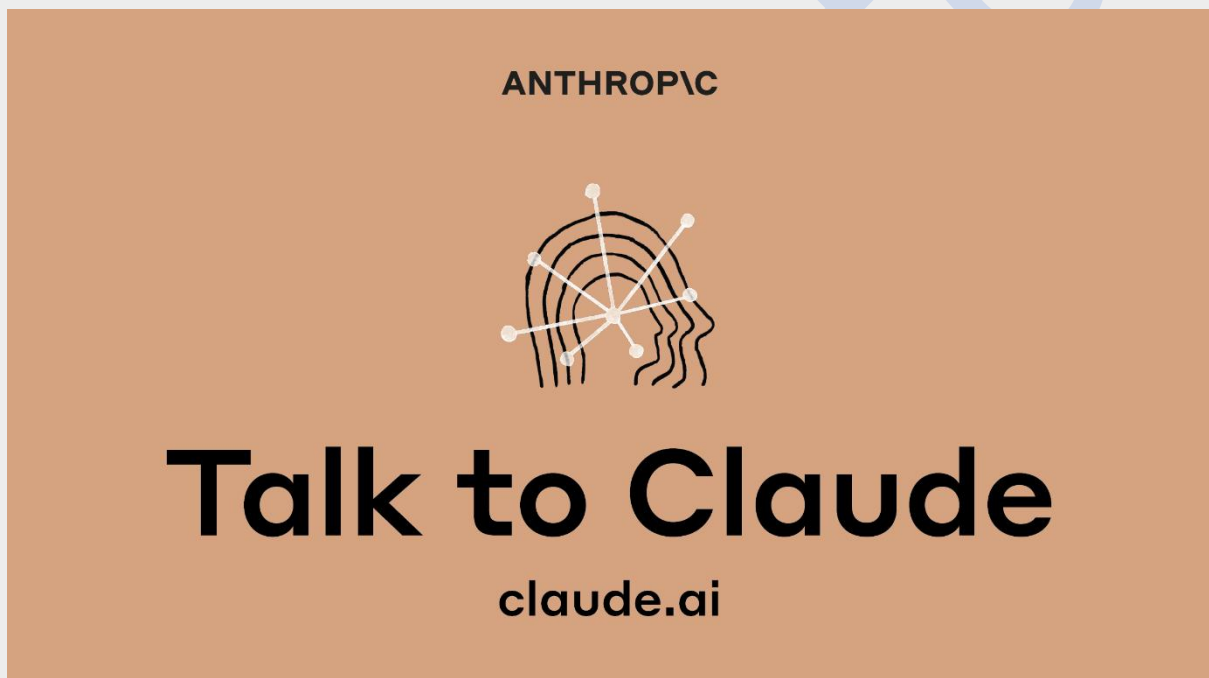


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1. Claude, the AI chatbot from Anthropic

Why in news?

While OpenAI's offering ChatGPT has captured the attention of the world with its human-like responses and plethora of use cases, several other AI-powered chatbots too have been making waves. One such chatbot that has been gaining traction over time for its distinctive features and capabilities is Claude 2.



Who has developed Claude?

Claude is a group of large language models (LLMs) developed by Anthropic, a San Francisco-based artificial intelligence (AI) startup founded by Italian American siblings Dario Amodei and Daniela Amodei, both of whom were formerly with OpenAI.

The chatbot is capable of handling text, voice messages, and documents. Reviews have shown that the chatbot is capable of generating faster, contextual responses compared to its peers.

When was Claude launched?

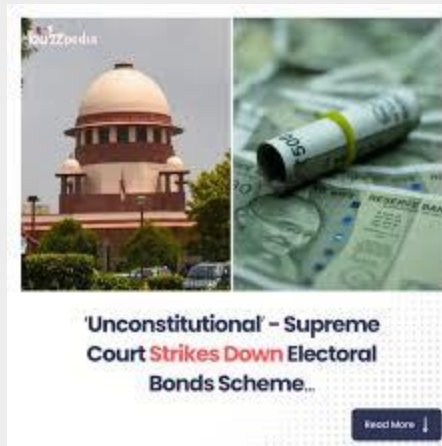
The Amodei siblings set up their company, Anthropic, 2021, along with five other co-founders, all of whom also worked previously at OpenAI.

In March 2023, Anthropic launched Claude V1, showcasing some impressive abilities in terms of maths, reasoning, and coding capabilities. Subsequently, the company launched Claude Instant, Claude V2, and Claude V2.1.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Science & Technology

Source: The Indian Express

2. Electoral Bonds verdict



Why in News?

Underlining that the restrictions on free speech by the electoral bonds scheme are not “proportional” to its goal, a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud, unanimously struck down the scheme.

Essentially, the judicial review of the electoral bonds scheme involved examining whether the extent of the state’s encroachment into the rights of individuals was proportional to achieve its objectives — curbing black money and protecting

donor privacy.

What is the proportionality test?

In the 2018 SC ruling that upheld the Aadhaar Act, Justice Chandrachud in his dissenting opinion said that the proportionality test is “the dominant best practice judicial standard for resolving disputes that involve either a conflict between two rights claims or between a right and a legitimate government interest.” The test is deemed necessary to guard against arbitrary action, so that the state cannot extinguish the right entirely even in pursuance of a legitimate state interest. For example, the right to life cannot be taken away to ensure law and order.

The govt’s argument

In the electoral bonds case, the government had argued that curbing black money and protecting donor anonymity are both legitimate aims for the state. While tackling black money is fairly non-contentious, the government argued that donor anonymity is also a legitimate state interest since it seeks to give effect to a fundamental right — the right to privacy of the donor.

On the extent of interference with the voter’s right to know, the government argued that the right to information only operates against information in the possession or in the knowledge of the state. It cannot operate for seeking information not in the knowledge or possession of the state, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta argued.

Finally, on the issue of safeguards, Mehta said that on a court order, all the details can be furnished for a criminal investigation.

How the test was used

Justice Khanna, applying the proportionality test in his separate opinion, said that donor anonymity cannot be a legitimate state aim. He also held that voters' right to know supersedes anonymity in political party funding.

CJI Chandrachud, however, applied the "double proportionality" test. Since the case involves balancing facets of two competing fundamental rights — the right to information and the right to privacy, the proportionality test would not be enough.

According to him, the proportionality test is for when a right is directly tested against state action, but for a "balancing" of rights, the court needs to go further. Essentially, the court will have to examine the matter from the perspective of both rights and decide if the state has adopted the "least restrictive" methods to realise both rights. Additionally, whether the measure has a disproportionate impact on any one of the two rights also has to be looked at.

The CJI in his opinion pointed out that there are less intrusive methods, such as the electoral trusts scheme, to achieve the objective of curbing black money and protecting donor anonymity.

What is Electoral Trusts Scheme?

Before the controversial Electoral Bonds (EB) Scheme was introduced in 2018, there was something called an Electoral Trusts (ET) Scheme, which was introduced by the UPA government in 2013.

Both schemes were meant to facilitate donations to political parties by corporates and individuals. But while the EB scheme seeks to ensure anonymity for the donor, the electoral trusts under the previous scheme were required to submit to the Election Commission of India a report on contributions from individuals and companies, and their donations to parties every year.

This is how the two schemes have worked so far.

First, what are electoral trusts?

Under the scheme notified by the UPA-2 government on January 31, 2013, any company registered under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956, can form an electoral trust.

Under Section 17CA of the Income-tax Act, 1961, any citizen of India, a company registered in India, or a firm or Hindu Undivided Family or association of persons living in India, can donate to an electoral trust.

ELECTORAL TRUSTS YEARLY DONATION (2013-14 to 2021-22)

Year	Donation (in Rs cr)
2013-14	85.37

2014-15	177.4
2015-16	49.50
2016-17	325.27
2017-18	194.78
2018-19	266.14
2019-20	424.66
2020-21	258.43
2021-22	487.05
Total	2,268.6
<i>Source: Annual contribution reports of ETs to ECI (2013-2014 till 2021-2022)</i>	

The electoral trusts have to apply for renewal every three financial years. They must donate 95% of contributions received in a financial year to political parties registered under the Representation of the People Act, 1951. The contributors' PAN (in case of a resident) or passport number (in case of an NRI) is required at the time of making contributions.

And how does the working of this scheme differ from that of the EB Scheme?

The electoral trusts route is transparent on contributors and beneficiaries. Where there is only one contributor and one beneficiary of a particular trust, the public can know for sure who is funding whom. For instance, in 2018-19, the Janhit Electoral Trust had just one contribution of Rs.2.5 crore from Vedanta, and the entire amount was donated to the BJP, as per the trust's annual contribution report.

However, if there are multiple contributors and recipients of donations, it cannot be specified which company is funding which party. So, Prudent Electoral Trust, which was known as Satya Electoral Trust before 2017, received contributions from a host of companies such as DLF, GMR, and Bharti Airtel, as well as several individuals, and donated to a range of national and regional parties. But it is difficult to pinpoint which donor gave to which party.

Electoral bonds, on the other hand, are exempt from disclosure requirements. Parties inform the ECI of the aggregate donations received through EBs, but give no details of the donors, which they are required to do in case of donations in cash or by cheque or

bank transactions over Rs.20,000 each. The government argues that this lack of transparency in donations through EBs is to maintain the privacy of donors.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: The Indian Express

3. Shehbaz Sharif set to return as Pak PM

Why in News?

Shehbaz Sharif of the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML-N) looks set to take over as the Prime Minister of Pakistan, as his party secured an alliance with other players to achieve the necessary numbers.

The choice of Shehbaz as PM face comes as a surprise, as his older brother Nawaz Sharif was widely expected to take the top post. Shehbaz's elevation has caused some disquiet within the PML-N, and even set off speculations that Nawaz's political career might be over, something his daughter Maryam was quick to quash.



Who is Shehbaz Sharif?

Shehbaz, 72, was the Prime Minister of Pakistan till August 2023, when the National Assembly was dissolved for fresh elections. He had come to power just over a year ago, in April 2022, after the ouster of Imran Khan. Before that, he served as the Chief Minister of Punjab thrice — from 1997-1999, after which he and his family were exiled to Saudi Arabia by Pervez Musharraf; from 2008-2013; and from 2013-2018.

Shehbaz is the second son of industrialist Muhammad Sharif, and is also involved in the family-owned Ittefaq Group of steel industries. The family originally hails from Anantnag in Jammu and Kashmir.

As Chief Minister of Punjab, Shehbaz was known for his efficient working style and for his rapid infrastructure development, including providing Lahore with a modern mode of mass transport, the Lahore Metrobus. He also set in motion several social development schemes.

Why is Shehbaz getting the PM chair and not Nawaz?

Maryam Nawaz, Nawaz Sharif's daughter and political heir, has said this was because her father did not want to head a coalition government. Pakistan's elections threw up a surprise verdict this time, with independents backed by Imran Khan's PTI winning a high number of seats.

Another reason being cited for Shehbaz's elevation is that the powerful military shares a better equation with him than his older brother. While Nawaz has clashed several times with the military, which plays an oversized role in Pakistan's civilian administration, Shehbaz is known to get along better with the generals.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Source: The Indian Express

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