CURRENT AFFAIRS — 20 November 2026

Friday, 20 November 2026 • Asia/Kolkata (IST) • Prelims + Mains GS-wise digest

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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR UPSC CSE

TODAY AT A GLANCE — 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER

- ICJ holds **Myanmar** responsible for **genocide** against the **Rohingya** — case **The Gambia v. Myanmar** (judgment **19 Nov 2026**).
- **4th India–Japan 2+2** in **Tokyo**: Japan's forces to hold **live-fire training in India** for the first time.
- PM inaugurates the **first SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum** at **Purana Qila**, New Delhi (**20–22 Nov**).
- **First indigenous H5N1 (clade 2.3.2.1a) poultry vaccine** dedicated at **ICAR-NIHSAD, Bhopal**.
- Electronics exports up **44%** to **US$ 31.97 bn** in **Apr–Sep FY27**; non-smartphone share **43.2%**.
- EPFO **240th CBT**: **Systematic Withdrawal Plan**; minimum PF balance cut **25% → 10%**.
- New PUC rule: **BS-VI** private vehicles up to 6 yrs get a **3-year** certificate (**Rule 115(7)**, CMVR).
- Draft rules: **antimicrobials** to be treated as **'New Drug'** under **NDCT Rules, 2019**.
- **Cyclone Akvan** (name given by **Iran**) set to hit the **Andhra Pradesh–Yanam** coast.
- **Harimau Shakti-VI** (India–Malaysia) under way at **Ipoh**; IAF HADR drill **Sahayata Setu** at **Jamnagar**.

SECTION A • GS-III: SCIENCE & TECH | ECONOMY | ENVIRONMENT | SECURITY

INDIA IN NEWS — 20 November 2026



Map not to scale; boundaries as per India's official position

1. **New Delhi** — First SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum, Purana Qila (20–22 Nov)
2. **Bhopal** — India's first indigenous H5N1 poultry vaccine (ICAR-NIHSAD)
3. **Jamnagar** — IAF multinational HADR exercise 'Sahayata Setu 2026'
4. **Bengaluru** — NALCO–RUSAL MoU: scandium from red mud (ICSOBA 2026)
5. **AP–Yanam coast** — Very Severe Cyclonic Storm 'Akvan' landfall forecast
6. **Goa (Panaji)** — 57th IFFI, theme 'Stories Without Borders' (20–28 Nov)

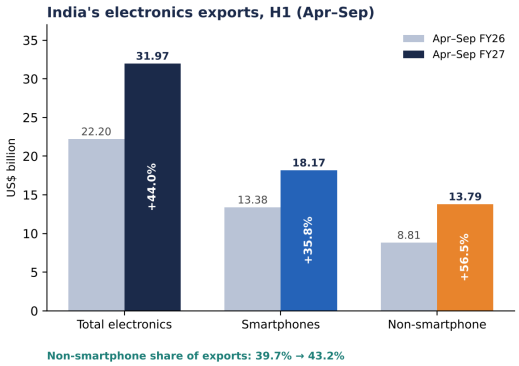
Map linked to: Very Severe Cyclonic Storm 'Akvan' Heads for the Andhra Pradesh Coast — pins mark all of today's India locations

Electronics Exports Jump 44% in H1 FY27; Non-Smartphone Items Grow Faster

[ECONOMY] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3**

Syllabus Linkage	GS3 – Indian Economy: industrial policy, growth, external sector. Prelims: PLI, ECMS, export data.
Context	Official commerce data released on **17 Nov 2026** show India's **electronic goods exports** rose **44.0%** to **US$ 31.97 bn** in **April–September 2026-27**, against **US$ 22.20 bn** a year earlier. Growth is now broader than phone assembly.
Key Facts	■ Smartphones: **US$ 13.38 bn → 18.17 bn (+35.8%)** — still the largest single item. ■ **Non-smartphone electronics**: **US$ 8.81 bn → 13.79 bn (+56.5%)**; share up from **39.7%** to **43.2%**. ■ Fastest risers: **mounted PCBs**, **memory ICs**, **solid-state storage** and **network equipment** (very high % partly due to a low base). ■ Main markets for these items: **Singapore**, **China**, **Hong Kong**, **Malaysia**; **US** and **Netherlands** for network gear.
Way Fwd	Deepen **component and sub-assembly** capacity (ECMS, semiconductor fabs) so that **domestic value addition** rises along with export volume.

Concept	**PLI for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing (2020)** drove phone assembly; the **Electronics Component Manufacturing Scheme (ECMS, 2025)** and **India Semiconductor Mission** target the deeper value chain. **Low-base effect**: a big % jump from a small base can overstate real change.

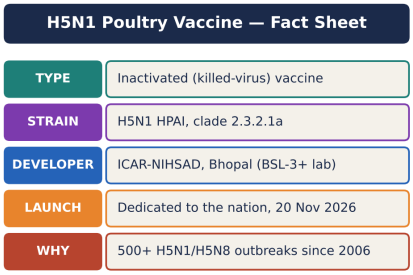


Visual: Electronics Exports Jump 44% in H1 FY27; Non-Smartphone Items Grow Faster

India's First Indigenous H5N1 Bird-Flu Vaccine for Chickens Dedicated to the Nation

[SCI-TECH] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3

Syllabus Linkage	GS3 – Science & Tech (biotechnology), animal husbandry; GS2 – Health (One Health). Prelims: H5N1, HPAI, clade, inactivated vaccine.
Context	Union Agriculture Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** dedicated on **20 Nov 2026** India's first indigenous **inactivated H5N1 (clade 2.3.2.1a) HPAI vaccine** for chickens, developed by **ICAR-NIHSAD, Bhopal**.
Key Facts	■ Targets **clade 2.3.2.1a**, behind most **chicken outbreaks** in India; no specific commercial vaccine existed for it. ■ India has recorded **over 500 outbreaks** of **H5N1 and H5N8** since **2006** (first: **Navapur, Maharashtra**). ■ Outbreaks cause **near-100% bird mortality**, **mass culling** and trade bans — hitting farm incomes and egg/chicken prices. ■ This clade has also **spilled over into mammals**, with a few **human infections** recorded.
Way Fwd	Use vaccination **alongside** surveillance, biosecurity and culling (not instead of them), with a **DIVA** strategy so that trade partners accept vaccinated flocks.
Concept	**HPAI** = Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza. **Inactivated vaccine**: killed virus that cannot replicate — safer, but may need boosters. **DIVA** = Differentiating Infected from Vaccinated Animals. **ICAR-NIHSAD Bhopal** is India's high-security (**BSL-3+**) animal disease lab. **One Health** links human, animal and environmental health.



Visual: India's First Indigenous H5N1 Bird-Flu Vaccine for Chickens Dedicated to the Nation

NALCO–RUSAL MoU to Recover Critical Mineral Scandium from Red Mud

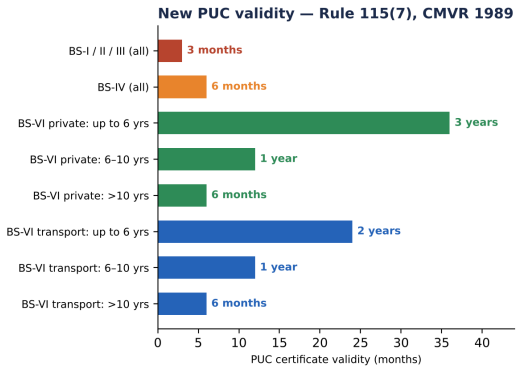
[ECONOMY] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3

Syllabus Linkage	GS3 – Mineral resources, industrial waste, circular economy; GS1 – distribution of resources. Prelims: scandium, red mud, NCMM.
Context	**NALCO** (Navratna CPSE, Ministry of Mines) signed an MoU with Russian aluminium major **RUSAL** on **17 Nov 2026** at **ICSOBA 2026, Bengaluru** to explore recovery of **scandium** from **red mud** (bauxite residue).
Key Facts	■ **Red mud** is the waste left when **bauxite** is refined into **alumina** (Bayer process); India generates **over 5 million tonnes** a year. ■ Indian red mud holds about **45–70 ppm** of scandium. ■ **Scandium** strengthens **aluminium–scandium alloys** for **aerospace and defence**; also used in **solid-oxide fuel cells**. ■ Builds on NALCO's **January 2026** pact with **CSIR-NML** for a **10 tonnes-per-day** red-mud pilot plant.
Way Fwd	Scale pilots to commercial plants and pair them with safe **red-mud storage** norms, turning a pollution liability into a **critical-mineral** source.
Concept	**Scandium** is one of the **17 rare earth elements** (with yttrium and the 15 lanthanides). **National Critical Mineral Mission (2025)**: **₹34,300 crore** over **7 years** (**₹16,300 crore** govt + **₹18,000 crore** PSUs etc.). NALCO's main units are in **Odisha** (**Damanjodi** refinery, **Angul** smelter).

PUC Certificate Validity Now Linked to Emission Norm and Vehicle Age

[ENVIRONMENT] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3

Syllabus Linkage	GS3 – Environmental pollution (air); GS2 – government policies. Prelims: Bharat Stage norms, CMVR 1989, Motor Vehicles Act.
Context	**MoRTH** has amended **sub-rule (7) of Rule 115** of the **Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989** (notified **19 Nov 2026**). Newer, cleaner vehicles get longer **Pollution Under Control (PUC)** validity; older ones face more frequent checks.
Key Facts	■ **BS-I to BS-III**: **3 months**; **BS-IV**: **6 months**. ■ **BS-VI non-transport**: **3 years** (up to 6 yrs old) → **1 year** (6–10 yrs) → **6 months** (over 10 yrs). ■ **BS-VI transport**: **2 years** → **1 year** → **6 months** for the same age bands. ■ Existing certificates shift to the new validity only at **first renewal**; renewal within **10 days before expiry** counts from the old expiry date.
Way Fwd	Back longer validity with **remote sensing** of tailpipe emissions and strict action against fake PUC centres, so that easier compliance does not weaken pollution control.
Concept	**Bharat Stage (BS)** norms are modelled on Euro norms; India leapfrogged from **BS-IV to BS-VI** on **1 April 2020**, skipping BS-V. BS-VI sharply cuts diesel **NOx** and needs **10 ppm sulphur** fuel. PUC is mandated under the **Motor Vehicles Act, 1988**.



Visual: PUC Certificate Validity Now Linked to Emission Norm and Vehicle Age

Draft Rules Bring Antimicrobials Under 'New Drug' Definition to Fight AMR

[HEALTH] COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2/GS3

Syllabus Linkage	GS2 – Health, regulatory bodies; GS3 – biotechnology. Prelims: NDCT Rules 2019, CDSCO, AMR, One Health.
Context	The **Union Health Ministry** issued draft notification **G.S.R. 983(E)** dated **6 Nov 2026** to include **'antimicrobials'** in the definition of **'New Drug'** under **Rule 2(1)(w)(v)** of the **New Drugs and Clinical Trials (NDCT) Rules, 2019**.

Key Facts	■ Concern: State licences were issued without full **bioavailability/bioequivalence** and **stability** studies. ■ Makers must first get permission from the **Central Licensing Authority (CLA)** before applying to a **State Licensing Authority (SLA)**. ■ Aim: stop **substandard antimicrobials**, which fuel **antimicrobial resistance (AMR)**. ■ Public objections and suggestions invited within **30 days**.
Way Fwd	Pair stricter licensing with **prescription audits** and curbs on **over-the-counter** and **farm/veterinary** antibiotic use, under a One Health approach.
Concept	**AMR**: microbes stop responding to medicines. **CDSCO** (headed by the **DCGI**) is the CLA under the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940**. India's **National Action Plan on AMR (2017)**; the **Red Line** campaign marks prescription-only antibiotics. The **G20 New Delhi Declaration (2023)** backed a **One Health** approach to AMR.

Very Severe Cyclonic Storm 'Akvan' Heads for the Andhra Pradesh Coast

[ENVIRONMENT] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS1/GS3 (Disaster Mgmt)**

Syllabus Linkage	GS1 – Physical geography (cyclones); GS3 – Disaster management. Prelims: IMD classification, cyclone naming, Bay of Bengal.
Context	**IMD** forecast that **Cyclone Akvan** over the **Bay of Bengal** would cross the **Andhra Pradesh–Yanam** coast around noon on **20 Nov 2026** as a **Very Severe Cyclonic Storm**, with heavy-rain alerts for **AP, Tamil Nadu and Odisha**.
Key Facts	■ Expected winds of **120–130 km/h**, gusting to **145 km/h**, at landfall. ■ The name **'Akvan'** was contributed by **Iran**. ■ Third cyclone on this coast in about a month, after **Arnab** (near **Kakinada**, **28 Oct**) and **Murasu** (near **Ongole**, **3 Nov**). ■ Later bulletins shifted the likely landfall zone north, towards **north AP and south Odisha**.
Way Fwd	Strengthen **impact-based forecasting**, timely evacuation and cyclone shelters; quickly assess **crop losses** for farmers already hit by two earlier storms.
Concept	**Naming**: the **WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones** (**13 countries**) uses a pre-set list; names are not reused. **IMD scale**: Cyclonic Storm **63–88 km/h**, Severe **89–117**, Very Severe **118–166**, Extremely Severe **167–221**, Super **≥222 km/h**. **Oct–Dec** (post-monsoon) is a peak cyclone season in the Bay of Bengal.

Harimau Shakti-VI Begins in Malaysia; IAF Hosts HADR Drill 'Sahayata Setu 2026'

[DEFENCE] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS3 (Security)**

Syllabus Linkage	GS3 – Security forces, disaster management; GS2 – India–ASEAN ties. Prelims: joint exercises, UN Chapter VII, HADR.
Context	The **6th edition** of the India–Malaysia Army exercise **Harimau Shakti** is under way at **Ipoh, Malaysia** (till **30 Nov 2026**). Separately, the **IAF** ran the multinational HADR exercise **Sahayata Setu 2026** at **Air Force Station Jamnagar** (**17–19 Nov**).
Key Facts	■ Harimau Shakti: **120 personnel** from each side; **counter-terrorism** under a **UN Chapter VII** mandate in **jungle and semi-urban** terrain. ■ Special focus on **drones (UAS)** and **counter-drone (C-UAS)** drills; held annually since **2012**, alternately in each country. ■ 5th edition was held at **Mahajan Field Firing Range, Rajasthan** (**Dec 2025**). ■ Sahayata Setu: seminar, table-top exercise and multi-agency demo; a **QUAD HADR Working Group** meeting was held alongside.
Way Fwd	Use such drills to build **interoperability** with ASEAN partners and to position India as the **first responder** in the Indian Ocean Region under **MAHASAGAR**.
Concept	India–Malaysia exercises: **Harimau Shakti** (army), **Samudra Laksamana** (navy), **Udara Shakti** (air). Ties raised to a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership** in **2024**. **UN Charter Chapter VII** covers enforcement action against threats to peace. **MAHASAGAR** (2025) expands the earlier **SAGAR** (2015) vision.

SECTION B • KEY ECONOMY DATA POINT OF THE DAY

US$ 13.79 bn (+56.5%)

Non-smartphone electronics exports, Apr–Sep FY27

Up from **US$ 8.81 bn**; their share in total electronics exports rose from **39.7%** to **43.2%** — the clearest sign yet of diversification beyond phones.

SECTION C • GS-II: GOVERNANCE | POLITY | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

ICJ Rules Myanmar Committed Genocide Against the Rohingya

[IR] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2 (IR)**

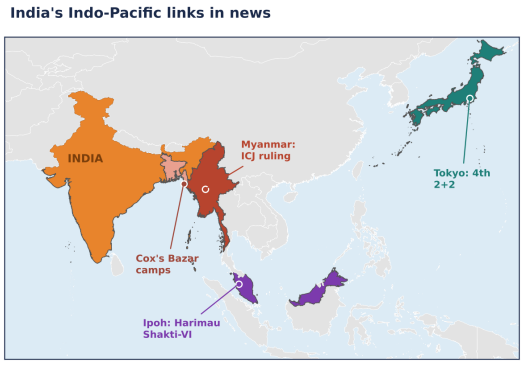
Syllabus Linkage	GS2 – International institutions, India and its neighbourhood, human rights. Prelims: ICJ, Genocide Convention 1948, Rakhine.
Context	On **19 Nov 2026** the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** held that **Myanmar** committed **genocide** against the **Rohingya** in **northern Rakhine State** during the **2017 'clearance operations'**, in the case **The Gambia v. Myanmar**.
Key Facts	■ Case filed by **The Gambia** on **11 Nov 2019**, backed by the **OIC**; **11 States** intervened. ■ Myanmar also breached the Court's **provisional measures order of 23 Jan 2020**; its preliminary objections were rejected on **22 July 2022**. ■ Remedies: **prosecute** perpetrators, guarantee **non-repetition**, allow **safe, voluntary return**, and pay **compensation**; Myanmar to report within **2 years**. ■ The 2017 violence drove **over 7 lakh Rohingya** into **Bangladesh** (Cox's Bazar camps).
Way Fwd	India, which shares a **1,643 km** border with Myanmar and hosts Rohingya refugees, should back **safe repatriation** and regional stability while engaging all stakeholders in Myanmar.

Concept	**ICJ**: principal judicial organ of the UN at **The Hague**; **15 judges**, **9-year** terms. Judgments are **final and binding**, with no appeal; non-compliance can go to the **UNSC (Art. 94)**. Standing rests on **erga omnes partes** duties — any party to the **Genocide Convention (1948)** may sue. India ratified it in **1959**. ICJ judges **States**; the **ICC** tries **individuals**.

4th India–Japan 2+2 in Tokyo: Japanese Forces to Train at Indian Firing Ranges

[IR] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2 (IR)**

Syllabus Linkage	GS2 – Bilateral relations, groupings affecting India's interests; GS3 – defence technology. Prelims: 2+2 format, exercises, UNICORN.
Context	**Rajnath Singh** and **Dr S. Jaishankar** met Japan's Foreign Minister **Motegi Toshimitsu** and Defence Minister **Koizumi Shinjiro** in **Tokyo** on **19 Nov 2026** for the **fourth 2+2**, under the **Special Strategic and Global Partnership**.
Key Facts	■ **Letter of Intent**: Japan's Self-Defense Forces to hold **live-fire training** (incl. surface-to-ship missiles) at **firing ranges in India** — a **first**. ■ Defence industry: early arrangements on **UNICORN** naval mast technology, with India's **AoN** targeted by **Feb 2027**; theme **'Design with Japan, Make in India'**. ■ India to host the **5th Coast Guard Global Summit** in **Feb 2027**; synergy of **IPOI/MAHASAGAR** with Japan's **FOIP**. ■ Ministers noted the first visit of **Japanese fighter jets** to India for exercise **Veer Guardian 26**.
Way Fwd	Turn the partnership into **joint production** of defence platforms and resilient supply chains, while coordinating in the **Quad** for a stable Indo-Pacific.
Concept	**2+2 dialogue**: joint meeting of foreign and defence ministers; India holds it with the **US, Japan, Australia, Russia** and others. Previous India–Japan 2+2: **New Delhi, 20 Aug 2024**. Exercises: **JIMEX** (navy), **Dharma Guardian** (army), **Veer Guardian** (air). Logistics pact (**ACSA**) signed in **2020**.



Visual: 4th India–Japan 2+2 in Tokyo: Japanese Forces to Train at Indian Firing Ranges

PM Inaugurates First SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum at Purana Qila

[IR] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS1/GS2**

Syllabus Linkage	GS2 – Regional groupings; GS1 – Indian art, culture and heritage. Prelims: SCO members, Purana Qila, soft power.
Context	India is hosting the **first SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum** at **Purana Qila, New Delhi** from **20 to 22 Nov 2026**, inaugurated by **PM Narendra Modi** and organised by the **Ministries of Culture and External Affairs**.
Key Facts	■ Idea proposed by PM Modi at the **SCO Summit, Tianjin (2025)**; welcomed in the **Bishkek Declaration (2026)**. ■ Cultural show on **'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'**; exhibition **'ASTITVA'** on Delhi's archaeology from **1200 BCE to 1200 CE**. ■ About **25 countries** (members, observers, dialogue partners) invited, including **Pakistan**. ■ Sessions: performing arts, textiles and cuisine; art and architecture; languages, scripts and manuscripts; monastic trails and philosophy.
Way Fwd	Use **cultural diplomacy** to build trust in a security- and economy-focused grouping, and showcase India's civilisational links with **Central Asia**.
Concept	**SCO**: founded **2001** (Shanghai); **10 members** — India and Pakistan joined in **2017**, Iran **2023**, Belarus **2024**. Secretariat in **Beijing**; **RATS** in **Tashkent**. **Purana Qila** is linked to **Humayun (Dinpanah)** and **Sher Shah Suri**. Trap: it is **not** a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



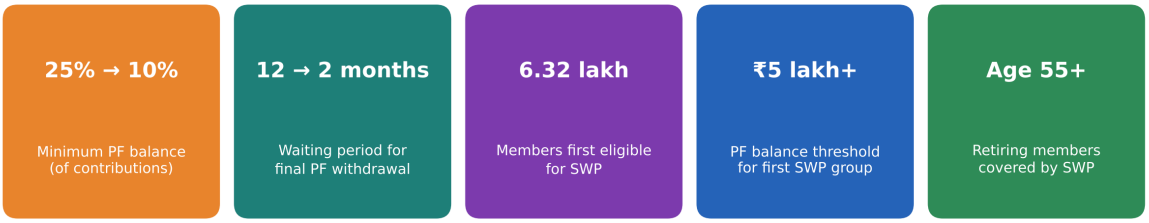
Visual: PM Inaugurates First SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum at Purana Qila

EPFO Board Approves Systematic Withdrawal Plan; Minimum PF Balance Cut to 10%

[SOCIETY] **COMMON: Prelims + Mains GS2/GS3**

Syllabus Linkage	GS2 – Welfare schemes, social security for vulnerable sections; GS3 – inclusive growth. Prelims: EPFO, CBT, EDLI, Code on Social Security.
Context	The **240th meeting** of the **Central Board of Trustees (CBT), EPF**, chaired by Labour Minister **Dr Mansukh Mandaviya** on **19 Nov 2026**, approved a **Systematic Withdrawal Plan (SWP)** for retiring members and eased withdrawal rules.
Key Facts	■ **SWP** (voluntary): retirees can draw PF in **monthly, quarterly or half-yearly** instalments while the rest keeps earning interest. ■ First eligible: about **6.32 lakh** members aged **above 55** with a PF balance **above ₹5 lakh**. ■ **Minimum balance** cut from **25% to 10%** of contributions; **final withdrawal** wait cut from **12 months to 2 months**. ■ New routes: **UAN-linked voluntary contributions** and **third-party micro-contributions**; **EDLI** six-month window for legacy cases.
Way Fwd	Pair flexible withdrawals with **financial-literacy** nudges so that retirement savings are not exhausted early, and extend coverage to **gig and platform workers**.
Concept	**EPFO** (under the **Ministry of Labour & Employment**) runs **EPF**, **EPS (1995)** and **EDLI (1976)**. The **CBT** is **tripartite** (govt, employers, employees) and chaired by the Labour Minister. The **Code on Social Security, 2020** subsumes the **EPF & MP Act, 1952**; the four Labour Codes took effect on **21 Nov 2025**.

EPFO 240th CBT (19 Nov 2026) — decisions in numbers



Visual linked to: EPFO Board Approves Systematic Withdrawal Plan; Minimum PF Balance Cut to 10%

SECTION D • PRELIMS RAPID-FIRE

57th IFFI	Panaji, Goa (**20–28 Nov**): theme '**Stories Without Borders**'; **Spain** is Country of Honour, **Russia** Partner Country.
Indira Gandhi Peace Prize	**2025** prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development → **Graça Machel** (Mozambique), conferred **19 Nov 2026**; award **₹1 crore**.
India–Italy JCEC	**23rd** session in **Rome** (**18 Nov**): bilateral trade target of **€20 bn by 2029** under the **Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025–2029**.
RBI liquidity	**3-day Variable Rate Repo (VRR)** auction of **₹50,000 crore** on **20 Nov** — a **liquidity-injecting** tool (VRRR absorbs liquidity).
Hockey	**Women's Asian Champions Trophy**, **Bhopal**: defending champions **India beat Malaysia 4-1**.
Trap watch	**Purana Qila** is **not** a UNESCO World Heritage Site; nearby **Humayun's Tomb** and the **Red Fort** are.

SECTION E • PRACTICE CORNER

Q1. (Prelims) With reference to the case 'The Gambia v. Myanmar', consider the following statements: 1. It was filed under the Genocide Convention, 1948. 2. A judgment of the International Court of Justice can be appealed before the UN General Assembly. 3. India is a party to the Genocide Convention. Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b) — ICJ judgments are **final and binding** with **no appeal**; non-compliance can be referred to the **UNSC (Art. 94)**. The case was filed under the **Genocide Convention (1948)**, which India ratified in **1959**.

Q2. (Prelims) Consider the following pairs (Exercise – Partner country of India): 1. Harimau Shakti – Malaysia 2. Dharma Guardian – Japan 3. Samudra Laksamana – Indonesia. How many of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None

Answer: (b) — **Harimau Shakti** (army) is with **Malaysia** and **Dharma Guardian** (army) with **Japan**. **Samudra Laksamana** is the India–**Malaysia** naval exercise, not with Indonesia.

Mains Practice (GS3)
India's electronics exports are diversifying beyond smartphones. Examine whether this signals a move up the global value chain, and suggest measures to deepen domestic value addition. (15 marks, 250 words)

Hint: Intro: **44%** growth to **US$ 31.97 bn**; non-smartphone share **43.2%**. Body: PLI → ECMS → semiconductor mission; positives (PCBs, memory, network gear) vs low-base effect and import dependence for chips and displays. Way forward: component clusters, R&D, FTAs, skilling. Conclude with the **Viksit Bharat 2047** link.

ONE-LINE REVISION: Today in one line: ICJ — **Myanmar genocide ruling**; Tokyo — **4th 2+2**; Delhi — **SCO Civilisational Forum**; Bhopal — **H5N1 vaccine**; exports — **electronics +44%**; EPFO — **SWP and 10% minimum balance**.

Compiled & simplified by the StudyForGS.com Research Team | ▶ YouTube: @Study_ForGS | ➤ Telegram: t.me/studyforgeneralstudies