

## Current Affairs of the Day

### Paper 2:

#### ➤ International Relations:

1. Israel in trade talks with India, China
2. Indo-Pacific trilateral dialogue held
3. ADB signs \$500 million loan for Delhi-Meerut RRTS Corridor
4. About Asian Development Bank (ADB):

#### ➤ Education:

1. National Statistical Organisation's (NSO) report on education:
2. Report on Literacy Rate released



## Israel in trade talks with India, China

- Israel hopes that tensions between India and China will ease and it is in talks with both countries on trade agreements, according to an Israeli official.

### Key takeaways:

- While India and Israel were negotiating a limited trade deal for about 200 designated products, Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with South Korea, China and Vietnam were under way.
- Israel also planned to discuss India-United Arab Emirates (UAE)-Israel cooperation in a number of areas such as agriculture, technology and water once the UAE-Israel agreement is formally signed in Washington on September 15.
- Last month, the Israeli Foreign Ministry inaugurated its first “Asia-Pacific Day,” hosting 11 Asian countries, including India, at a special event, with a view to increasing trade and investment with the ‘East’ as a key priority for post COVID-19 economic recovery.
- China, Hong Kong and India are Israel’s biggest trading partners in Asia.
- Since both China and India established full diplomatic ties with Israel in 1992, China’s trade has increased from \$50 million to \$15 billion, while India’s trade has grown from \$200 million to about \$5 billion.
- While India and Israel’s talks were not in an “advanced stage” yet they were discussing lower tariffs on about 200 products that were “of importance to” both countries.

## ‘One in three high schoolers gets private coaching’

### National Statistical Organisation’s (NSO) report on education:

- One in five students in India supplements school education with private coaching, including almost one in three at the secondary school level or Classes 9 and 10.
- Private coaching fees make up almost 20% of the total cost of education for those in secondary and higher secondary school. In some States, such as West Bengal, students actually spend more on private coaching than on their regular



school, according to the National Statistical Organisation's (NSO) latest report on education.

- Like regular schools, such coaching and tuition classes have also been closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, although many have been conducting online coaching classes instead. From September 21, schools will be partially reopened on a voluntary basis for Class 9 to 12 students, with the Health Ministry issuing guidelines on Tuesday. It remains to be seen how many of these students, who have now missed six months of classroom lessons, will continue to depend on coaching classes to bridge the gap.
- In the 75th round of the National Sample Survey, conducted between June 2017 and July 2018, households were surveyed on consumption related to education. The final report, which was published recently, shows that 19.8% of students at all levels — from pre-primary to graduate students — take some form of private coaching. Among Class 9 and 10 students, starting to prepare for the crucial board exams and admission tests, more than 30% do so.
- Among these secondary school students, those from the cities and upper castes are able to access private coaching at far higher levels. More than 52% of urban upper caste boys take coaching, in comparison to just 13.7% of rural boys and girls from scheduled tribe communities.
- Such coaching comes at a cost. The average annual expenditure on education for secondary school students is ₹9,013, of which ₹4,078 goes towards regular school fees. About ₹1,632, or just over 18%, goes towards private coaching. In higher secondary school, students spend more than ₹2,500, also about 18% of the total expenditure, on private coaching.
- Some States in eastern India seem to spend more on private coaching than the rest of the country. In West Bengal, students at all levels spend an average of ₹3,769 on private coaching.

## Indo-Pacific trilateral dialogue held

- With a focus on enhancing cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, India, Australia and France on Wednesday held the first trilateral dialogue where they discussed “economic and geostrategic challenges and cooperation” in the



region, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and domestic responses to it.

- “The three countries also had an exchange on the priorities, challenges and trends in regional and global multilateral institutions, including the best ways to strengthen and reform multilateralism,” the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement here.
- The three sides expressed their shared will “to successfully conclude concrete cooperation projects in the maritime sector and those promoting global commons (climate, environment and biodiversity, health),” France added.
- French Defence Minister Florence Parly is visiting India on Thursday.
- She will join Defence Minister Rajnath Singh for the formal induction ceremony of Rafale fighter jets into the Indian Air Force at Ambala. She is also scheduled to meet National Security Adviser Ajit Doval.

## Report on Literacy Rate released

- Recently, the report on ‘Household Social Consumption: Education in India as part of 75th round of National Sample Survey – from July 2017 to June 2018’ was released.
- It is based on the National Statistical Office (NSO) survey.
- It provides for state-wise detail of literacy rate.
- Age surveyed: 7 years and above.
- The report comes before the International Literacy Day which is celebrated on 8th September every year.
- Literacy Day 2020: It will focus on the changes and challenges in learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- SDG 4: ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.
- As per UNESCO, India will achieve universal literacy by 2060.

### Key takeaways:

- India’s Overall Literacy Rate: 77.7%.



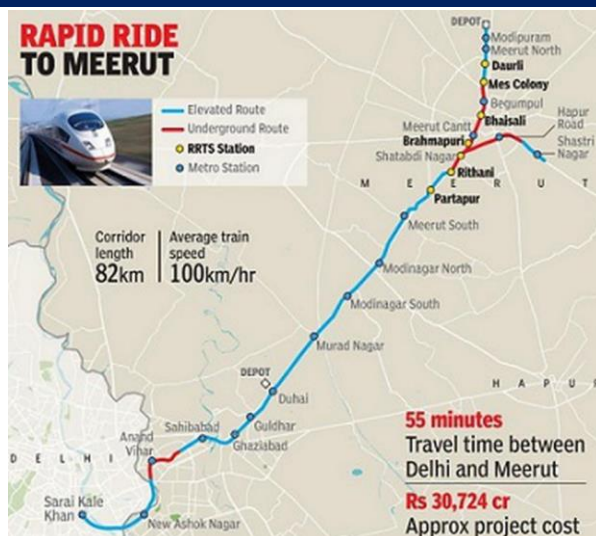
- Urban Areas: 87.7%.
- Rural areas: 73.5%.
- Male Literacy Rate: 84.7%.
- Female Literacy Rate: 70.3%.
- The male literacy rate is higher than the female literacy rate among all states.
- Best Performers: (1) Kerala; (2) Delhi; (3) Uttarakhand; (4) Himachal Pradesh; (5) Assam.
- Worst Performers: (1) Uttar Pradesh; (2) Telangana; (3) Bihar; (4) Rajasthan; (5) Andhra Pradesh

### Digital Literacy:

- Those who possess computers: 23% of urban households and 4% of rural households.
- Those who can operate a computer: Among persons of age 15-29 years, nearly 56% in urban areas and 24% in rural areas.
- Those who use the internet: nearly 25% in rural areas and 58% in urban areas in the same age-group

### ADB signs \$500 million loan for Delhi-Meerut RRTS Corridor

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$500 million loan, to build a modern, high-speed 82-kilometer Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridor.
- It is the first tranche of a total \$1 billion facility.







## Key takeaways:

- It will improve regional connectivity and mobility in India's national capital region (NCR).
- The first tranche loan will support construction of the first of three priority rail corridors planned under the NCR Regional Plan 2021 to connect Delhi to other cities in adjoining states.

## Value Added Information

### About Asian Development Bank (ADB):

- It is a regional development bank established on 19 December 1966, which is headquartered in **Manila, Philippines**.
- ADB aims to promote social and economic development in Asia.
- The bank admits the members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and non-regional developed countries.