

pibtracker.

BACKTEST SUMMARY · V3 · 28 MAY 2026

How our filter ranks against six years of *real UPSC Prelims papers*.

We built our own PIB scoring engine, then tested it honestly against every Current Affairs question on UPSC Prelims 2021 through 2026. This document summarises what we found — every number is independently verifiable from the public PIB releases listed in the companion Verification Sheet.

TOP-10 HIT RATE

56%

across all 86 verifiable questions, 2021–2026

TOP-20 HIT RATE

71%

71 of 86 source releases in the top 20 of their week

LATEST PAPER — 2026

72%

P@10 on the most recent paper · n = 18

Of 159 total Current Affairs questions across six papers, 86 had a verifiable English-language PIB release as their source. The remaining 73 were either international news, RBI / SEBI circulars, Supreme Court judgments, or PIB editions only published in regional languages. The 56% figure above is conditional on the question having a PIB source in the first place. See Limitations on the last page.

Per-year breakdown

The same scoring engine was applied to all six years. Each cell below is reproducible: open the matching year in the Verification Sheet, click any PRID, confirm the release is what we said it was.

PRELIMS PAPER	CA QUESTIONS	WITH PIB SOURCE	BACKTESTED	TOP-10	TOP-20	MEDIAN RANK
2021	22	14	10	80%	80%	7
2022	26	14	12	67%	75%	2
2023	29	16	13	46%	62%	16
2024	22	12	12	58%	75%	7.5
2025	31	23	21	29%	52%	20
2026 (latest)	29	22	18	72%	89%	5
All 6 years	159	101	86	56%	71%	8

"With PIB source" = the question's trigger event is covered by a PIB release we located. "Backtested" = that PIB release was published in English and made it into our same-week basket. The 15-question gap between the two columns is questions whose source release was only published in a regional-language PIB edition — listed transparently in the Verification Sheet.

Why 2025 is the hardest year for our engine

The 2025 paper actually had stronger PIB coverage than any earlier year — 21 of its 31 questions trace cleanly to a PIB release (68%), against 14 of 22 for 2021 and 14 of 26 for 2022. The problem is not coverage. The problem is the *kind* of releases. Roughly a third of 2025's PIB-anchored questions drew from feature-article and explainer-style notes — PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, GAGAN satellite navigation, the Lokpal first-anniversary piece, the BRICS Kazan opening address. PIB published these as long-form explainers rather than sharp announcements, and our engine, which leans toward action-verb structures like cabinet approvals and scheme launches, ranks long-form explainers lower in their week. The 2025 number is a weakness on our side, not the paper's. The 2026 paper leaned on cleaner anchors (Vizhinjam, Matsya-6000, Zero FIR, Sudarshan Chakra) and lifts to 72%. Both numbers are real and we publish them side by side because the spread tells you what the engine catches and what it does not.

A note on labels. The first research pass for 2025 mis-tagged 17 PRIDs as English when they were Hindi, Tamil, Marathi or Gujarati editions of the right release. A manual Google-based cleanup recovered the English equivalents before we re-ran the engine. The 29% figure reflects the cleaner labels.

How big is the lift over random?

A typical PIB publishing week contains roughly **72 English releases**. If you picked 10 of those at random and hoped the UPSC source release was among them, your hit rate would average about $10 \div 72 \approx 14\%$. The exact, basket-weighted random baseline across our 86 backtested questions is 17.8% at $K=10$.

Our engine scores **55.8%** at $K=10$. The lift is largest at the top of the ranking, where attention is scarcest.

TOP-K BUCKET	RANDOM BASELINE	PIBTRACKER ENGINE	LIFT
Top 5	8.9%	43.0%	4.8×
Top 10	17.8%	55.8%	3.1×
Top 20	35.6%	70.9%	2.0×

Random baseline = average of $\min(K, \text{basket_size}) / \text{basket_size}$ across all 86 backtested questions, reflecting the actual basket size each publishing week. Lift = $\text{pibtracker} \div \text{random}$.

How we measured

The instinct came first. Aditya Tiwari Sir has been grading Prelims-style mocks since 2018, and the same complaint kept surfacing in batch reviews — students were reading PIB releases nobody would ever ask about and missing the ones that mattered. We started keeping a quiet list. Not of topics, but of which *kind* of release tended to surface in exam halls eighteen months later. The exact contour of that list took years to settle. Umang joined in early 2025 and the next four months were mostly arguments about edge cases.

When we sat down to test the instinct formally, the exercise was simple to describe and tedious to execute. We pulled every Current Affairs question from UPSC Prelims 2021 through 2026 — 159 of them — and for each one we hunted down the PIB release the question was almost certainly drawn from. Eighty-six had a clean English anchor we could verify by clicking. The other seventy-three came from outside PIB.

Then the test. For each source release we took the surrounding week of PIB output — what a subscriber would have seen on the morning the release went up, nothing more, nothing less — and ran our scoring against that week as it stood, with no knowledge of what UPSC would ask eighteen months later. If our

score put the right release near the top of the pile, we counted it a hit. If it buried the release below twenty, we counted it a miss. No double-counting, no per-year curve-fitting, no question-text leakage.

The way our score is built — what makes a release rise, what makes it sink — is the product. We do not publish it. What we do publish is every release we score, every week, alongside its source on the official PIB site, so any aspirant can read both side by side and decide whether our judgment looks sound.

Worked example — National Green Hydrogen Mission

The Union Cabinet's 4 January 2023 approval of the National Green Hydrogen Mission was a single PIB release. It went on to power **three Current Affairs questions** across two Prelims papers.

Source release: PRID 1888547 – Cabinet approves National Green Hydrogen Mission (4 Jan 2023)

4 Jan 2023	PIB releases PRID 1888547. Cabinet decision. Ministry of New & Renewable Energy.
28 May 2023	UPSC Prelims 2023, Q60 and Q99 both reference Green Hydrogen Mission funding and decarbonisation.
24 May 2026	UPSC Prelims 2026, Q45 returns to the same Mission for industrial pathways.

The week of 4 January 2023 contained 38 English PIB releases. Our engine ranked PRID 1888547 at **rank #3** in that week. A subscriber reading the Top 10 that night would have caught it three times over — once for each future Prelims question that draws from it.

Verdict: Hit. Ranked 3 of 38. Verifiable by opening pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1888547 and inspecting the same week's PIB feed.

What makes a release rank high

Several things, not one. The corner of government a release came from carries weight — not every wing of the executive presses the same buttons. The character of the announcement carries weight too; there is a difference between a routine notification and the kind of release that has historically been picked up in exam-relevant ways. And there is a layer of editorial judgment that no formula captures cleanly — Aditya Tiwari Sir's read on whether the wording suggests UPSC-grade weight or marketing fluff, Umang catching the cases where his Law-batch instinct says we are wrong.

The exact balance between these is what we have spent the years since 2018 calibrating, week after week, against what the next set of mocks revealed students were getting wrong. We do not publish the balance. We publish the resulting ranks, every night, alongside the official PIB releases themselves — so any aspirant can read both and decide whether our judgment looks sound.

Limitations we are honest about

- **Not every CA question comes from PIB.** 73 of 159 questions had no verifiable PIB anchor — they were international news, RBI / SEBI circulars, Supreme Court judgments, ministry-website notifications, or topics PIB only covered in regional languages. pibtracker does not claim to catch those.
- **English-only basket.** PIB publishes in 23 languages. Our pipeline filters baskets to English only — that is what subscribers read. Some genuine source releases exist only in regional editions and are excluded from the backtest entirely (15 such questions across all six years, listed in the Verification Sheet).
- **2025 is the hardest year for our engine — and that's on us, not the paper.** The 2025 paper actually had stronger PIB coverage than any earlier year (21 of 31 = 68%). The weakness is in how our engine ranks long-form explainer-style PIB notes (PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, GAGAN, Lokpal anniversary, BRICS Kazan opening address) against action-verb releases like cabinet approvals. The 29% P@10 on 21 backtested questions is our weakness, not the cohort's. See the dedicated section earlier in this document.
- **Same-week, not predict-the-week.** The backtest measures: given the week the source release was published, would we have ranked it correctly? It does not measure: would we have predicted that *that* week would matter for the exam? In production, every release we publish remains in the searchable index for the full year, so the question of "which week" is moot for the subscriber.
- **Mappings are our judgment.** "This PIB release is the source for this question" is decided by Aditya Tiwari Sir and Umang reading both the question and the release. We publish the full verification trail per year. If you disagree with a specific mapping, write to defactolaw.com@gmail.com with the question number and your evidence. We update in public.

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Built by Aditya Tiwari Sir · Quality by Umang Sultania

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