

Report on UPSC Prelims 2021

The Preliminary Test conducted on 10th October 2021, was a very interesting one. The questions were asked from areas across the Prelim syllabus. Current Affairs based questions dominated the question paper and the questions from subjects like Polity, Economy, History & Geography tested the basic knowledge and conceptual clarity of the candidates. The number of questions based on subjects has more or less remained similar through the previous years except that there were considerable number of questions from the science section and medieval history. Questions in science included everyday science, health, technology and biology.

Polity and Constitution based questions remained similar to the previous years question papers with questions asked from most areas of the syllabus. Questions were largely based on understanding of constitutional provisions which have been in news. The reflection of current affairs can be very well seen in the questions of this section.

The questions on Economics were related mostly to the basics linked with Current Affairs co-relation. In general, the questions could be solved with a basic understanding of economics along with current affairs related developments especially during the pandemic. The importance of studying the Economic survey has been stressed again. There were many questions related to RBI & application with the Monetary Policy, which is again, current affairs based. Other financial news that had been in news were asked in the question paper like U.S Bond Yield, Labour Laws consolidation, Banking Regulation Act amendment etc. A candidate with thorough understanding of the basics of economy along with the current economic & financial context can easily score well in this section.

The surprise this year was 3 questions on sports on Olympics, awards and world test cricket. These questions were unusual as for more than 5 years, the UPSC had not asked sports questions.

In Environment and Geography sections there were around 20 questions, like the previous years. It covered both the static part along with questions from current affairs. Some questions require the basic understanding of the topics covered while some require in depth knowledge. Overall, the level of difficult was above average.

There are a total of 20 questions from all sections of history combined, which is a usual proportion and as usual, questions from modern India appeared significantly. The questions from modern India are a mixed bag of traditional questions and some facts that are normally not found in regular books that students read. For the questions coming from the pre-modern part, there are two important changes this year - firstly, the proportion of medieval questions has increased, and secondly the typical trend of asking questions from religion of ancient India seems to have been discontinued. History section seems to have become more random than the previous years and it will be difficult for the candidates to arrive at a logical strategy of preparation for this part of the syllabus.

The CSAT paper was a challenging paper with a higher level of difficulty this year than the previous years. The Mathematics section did not have direct formula-based questions and was more application based, thereby testing the conceptual clarity of a student. Also, this year there were no questions on Data Interpretation, which are usually easy to answer. The English section carried 30 questions where the syllogism questions were simple, but the reading comprehension passages were not straight forward. The comprehension passages

tested the language skill, in terms of understanding of the passages and tricky answer options. Students who had practiced the CSAT questions regularly with seriousness despite it being a qualifying paper, would make it past the qualifying mark.

Overall, the UPSC has framed a very intriguing Prelims question papers in General Studies and CSAT, paving the path only for serious candidates to take the Main Exam 2021.

