14th February 2026: DSC

1. Govt. Unveils New CPI Series; Retail Inflation in Jan. at 2.75%

Source : The Hindu

1.1 Why in News?

1.1.1 New Base Year and Latest Inflation

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released a revised CPI series with base year 2024, replacing 2012, reporting retail inflation for January 2026 at 2.75%, remaining within the RBI's tolerance band.
As this is the first publication under the revised base year, long-term comparisons with the earlier series are constrained, a transition challenge commonly observed during statistical rebasing exercises worldwide.

1.2 Relevance

GS III (Indian Economy): Inflation measurement, monetary policy, RBI inflation targeting framework, role of statistics in policymaking.

1.3 Practice Question

Discuss the significance of precise inflation measurement for monetary policy formulation and welfare delivery in India. (250 Words)

1.4 Basics and Static Context

1.4.1 What is CPI and Why it Matters?

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) measures variations in retail prices of a fixed basket of goods and services consumed by households; it serves as India's primary indicator of inflation and cost of living.
CPI is employed by the RBI for inflation targeting (4% ±2%) under the Monetary Policy Framework Agreement, guiding repo rate decisions that influence credit, savings, and economic growth.

1.4.2 Who Compiles CPI?

CPI is compiled by MoSPI's National Statistical Office (NSO) through nationwide price collection, following internationally accepted standards used by organisations such as UN, IMF, and ILO for cross-country comparability.
India publishes CPI for Rural, Urban, and Combined categories, but CPI-Combined functions as the principal headline indicator for macroeconomic policy and RBI targeting.

1.5 What Changed in the New CPI?

1.5.1 Updated Consumption Basket

The total number of items increased from 299 to 358, reflecting diversification of household consumption; goods increased to 308 and services to 50, capturing contemporary spending patterns such as telecom and service expenditures.
The basket weights are derived from the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES)

2023–24, ensuring that CPI reflects current consumption trends rather than outdated expenditure patterns.

1.5.2 Wider Data Coverage

Rural price collection expanded to 1,465 markets (from 1,181) and urban to 1,395 (from 1,114), enhancing geographic representation and statistical robustness.
Larger samples reduce volatility and measurement bias, similar to improvements witnessed during periodic revisions of GDP and IIP series.

1.6 Economic Rationale for Rebasing

1.6.1 Reflecting Structural Change

Over a decade, income growth, urbanisation, and digitalisation shift spending patterns toward services, healthcare, education, and communication, necessitating updated CPI weights.
Without rebasing, inflation may be inaccurately captured; for example, excessive weighting of cereals amid dietary diversification could misrepresent cost-of-living changes.

1.6.2 Policy Credibility

A reliable CPI strengthens monetary policy credibility, as RBI decisions rely on accurate inflation signals.
Investors and credit rating agencies depend on credible inflation statistics for macroeconomic assessment.

1.7 Limitations and Cautions

1.7.1 Comparability Issues

The new base year disrupts direct comparability with older series; analysts typically construct back-casted data to maintain continuity.
Short-term variations may reflect methodological changes in addition to actual price movements.

1.7.2 Data Challenges

Informal markets, quality adjustments, and introduction of new products complicate price measurement, a challenge faced globally by statistical agencies.
Rapid technological evolution, such as smartphones, necessitates frequent basket updates to avoid substitution bias.

1.8 Way Forward

1.8.1 Strengthening Price Statistics

Periodic five-year rebasing cycles can ensure CPI remains aligned with evolving consumption patterns.
Greater utilisation of digital price collection and scanner-based data can enhance timeliness and coverage.

1.8.2 Communication and Transparency

Clear explanation of methodological revisions prevents misinterpretation of inflation trends during base transitions.
Publishing concordance tables between old and new series supports researchers and policymakers.

CPI vs WPI

Feature	CPI (Consumer Price Index)	WPI (Wholesale Price Index)
Meaning	Measures change in **retail prices** faced by consumers	Measures change in **wholesale prices** at producer/wholesaler level
Compiled by	NSO (MoSPI)	**Office of Economic Adviser, DPIIT (Ministry of Commerce)**
Base Year (latest)	**2024 (new series)**	**2011–12**
Purpose	Measures **cost of living & inflation for consumers**	Measures **price trends in bulk trade/production**
Coverage	Goods **+ Services**	**Only Goods** (no services)
No. of items	**~358 items** (new series)	**~697 items**
Major weight	Food & beverages have high weight (~45% earlier series)	Manufactured products have highest weight (~64%)
Population scope	CPI-Rural, CPI-Urban, CPI-Combined	Single national index
Policy relevance	**RBI uses CPI for inflation targeting** (4% ±2%)	Used for business decisions, deflator in national accounts
Reflects	**Demand-side inflation** (consumer impact)	**Supply-side/producer inflation**
Volatility	More volatile due to food & fuel	Less volatile than CPI in many cases
Global comparability	Internationally used for inflation targeting	Less used globally for policy targeting

Example use	DA revision, wage indexation	Industrial price trends, contract escalation

2. Dal Lake – Environmental Degradation and Conservation Challenges

Source : The Hindu

2.1 Why in News?

2.1.1 Policy Shift in Conservation

The Government of Jammu & Kashmir withdrew the ₹416.72-crore Dal Lake restoration project approved in 2009 and proposed an in-situ conservation model, permitting residents to continue habitation on the lake.
The earlier proposal envisaged relocation of approximately 9,000 families, yet only 1,808 families were rehabilitated over 17 years, achieving nearly 27% of the targeted conservation objectives.

2.2 Relevance

GS III (Environment): Wetland degradation, eutrophication, urban ecology, conservation policy frameworks.
GS I (Geography): Lakes, catchment influence, land-use transformation.

2.3 Practice Question

What is eutrophication and how does it affect urban lakes such as Dal? (250 Words)

2.4 Basics and Static Context

2.4.1 Location and Physical Features

Dal Lake is an urban freshwater lake situated in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir, fed by springs and channels originating from the Zabarwan range, historically spanning around 22–25 sq km including marshes and floating gardens.
It is divided into basins such as Gagribal, Lokut Dal, Bod Dal, and Nigeen, interconnected by channels; its shallow depth and limited flushing capacity render it inherently vulnerable to pollutant accumulation.

2.4.2 Ecological and Economic Significance

Dal Lake sustains tourism, fisheries, lotus cultivation, and houseboat livelihoods, forming an essential component of Kashmir's economy and cultural identity.
It functions as an ecological buffer within the urban system, moderating microclimate, supporting biodiversity, and storing floodwaters in the Jhelum basin.

2.5 Environmental Pressures

2.5.1 Sewage and Pollution Load

Untreated sewage from households, hotels, and houseboats enters the lake through both point and non-point sources; SKUAST (2022) reported "extreme pollution loads" and declining water quality.
Elevated organic matter increases Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) and nutrient

concentrations, accelerating eutrophication, similar to patterns observed in urban lakes like Bengaluru's Bellandur.

2.5.2 Eutrophication and Weed Growth

Excessive nitrogen and phosphorus from sewage and fertilisers trigger algal blooms and macrophyte proliferation, reducing open water area and lowering dissolved oxygen levels for aquatic life.
Invasive weeds such as Eichhornia (water hyacinth) restrict water spread and impede navigation and tourism activities.

2.5.3 Catchment Degradation

Deforestation, grazing, and agricultural activities in the catchment increase silt and nutrient inflow, diminishing effective water area and altering lake morphology.
Land-use change in the Zabarwan foothills has intensified runoff and sediment deposition, accelerating lake ageing.

2.5.4 Encroachment and Population Pressure

Expansion of settlements, houseboats, and floating gardens (raad) has led to encroachment and waste generation, converting open water areas into marshland.
Urban lakes globally experience similar pressures when shoreline regulation is weak, as seen in cases like Nainital Lake.

2.5.5 Reduced Inflows and Circulation

Obstructed or diminished inflows and internal channels reduce circulation and flushing capacity, concentrating pollutants and increasing stagnation.
Hydrological fragmentation disrupts the lake's natural self-cleansing mechanism.

2.5.6 Invasive Species and Biodiversity Loss

SKUAST identified invasive flora and fauna altering native biodiversity; invasive macrophytes outcompete indigenous species and transform habitat structures.
Biodiversity simplification reduces ecological resilience and fisheries productivity.

3. Substantive Motion in Parliament

Source : The Hindu

3.1 Basics and Concept

3.1.1 What is a Substantive Motion?

A substantive motion is an independent and self-contained proposal submitted for decision of the House, framed to express a definite opinion, will, or order of Parliament.
It differs from subsidiary or procedural motions as it does not rely on another motion and becomes the primary subject of debate and voting.

3.1.2 Source in Parliamentary Practice

Though not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution, it derives from the Rules of Procedure of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and authoritative texts such as Kaul & Shakdher: Practice and

Procedure of Parliament.

It is rooted in Westminster parliamentary tradition, where motions are instruments for articulating collective decisions and ensuring accountability.

3.2 Relevance

GS II (Polity & Governance): Parliamentary procedures, legislative oversight, deliberative democracy.

3.3 Practice Question

What is a substantive motion? How does it differ from other types of motions? (150 Words)

3.4 Types and Scope

3.4.1 Common Examples

Examples include Motion of Thanks to the President's Address, motions for election or removal of Speaker or Deputy Speaker, and motions concerning matters of public importance.

They may address privileges, member conduct, or policy issues, subject to admissibility and parliamentary language requirements.

3.4.2 Who Can Move It?

Any member may move it with prior notice; in certain instances, conventions specify eligibility, especially for motions involving ministers.

Notice period and format are regulated by Rules of Procedure to prevent frivolous use.

3.5 Procedure

3.5.1 Admissibility and Listing

The Speaker or Chairman determines admissibility based on relevance and conformity with rules; matters sub judice or breaching privilege are disallowed.

Once admitted, it is listed for business, and time allocation is decided by the Business Advisory Committee or Chair.

3.5.2 Debate and Voting

Members debate the motion, and the mover retains a right of reply at conclusion of discussion.

Subsequently, the motion is put to vote; if passed, it becomes the formal expression of the House's decision or opinion.

3.6 Constitutional and Governance Relevance

3.6.1 Link with Collective Responsibility

Although distinct from a no-confidence motion, substantive motions reinforce executive accountability to the legislature under Article 75 (collective responsibility).

They provide structured mechanisms for Parliament to record positions on governance and institutional issues.

3.6.2 Instrument of Deliberative Democracy

They facilitate discussion beyond routine legislation, strengthening Parliament's deliberative character.
Formal notice and voting ensure reasoned debate and transparency.

3.7 Distinction from Other Motions

3.7.1 Versus No-Confidence Motion

A no-confidence motion directly tests majority support for the Council of Ministers; if passed, it necessitates resignation.
While all no-confidence motions are substantive, not all substantive motions test government majority.

3.7.2 Versus Adjournment and Calling Attention

Adjournment motions address urgent public matters by interrupting normal business and have stricter admissibility.
Calling Attention motions are informational and do not culminate in a formal House decision.

3.8 Significance

3.8.1 Institutional Accountability

Substantive motions can address conduct of authorities or members, preserving ethical standards and institutional integrity.
They create formal parliamentary records guiding future practice.

3.8.2 Democratic Value

They operationalise parliamentary sovereignty by enabling elected representatives to express the collective will.
Their structured format balances free expression with procedural discipline.

Types of Motions in Indian Parliament

Type of Motion	Meaning / Purpose	Key Features	Example / Use
Substantive Motion	Independent, self-contained proposal for House decision	Needs notice; debated and voted; expresses definite opinion/will of House	Motion of Thanks to President's Address
Substitute Motion	Moved in place of original motion	If adopted, replaces original; must relate to same subject	Alternative version of a policy motion
Subsidiary Motion	Depends on another motion	Cannot stand alone; aids discussion or disposal of main motion	Amendments, procedural motions

Amendment Motion	Seeks to modify a motion	Can add/delete/alter words; voted before main motion	Amending Motion of Thanks
No-Confidence Motion	Tests majority of Council of Ministers	Lok Sabha only; needs **50 members' support** to admit; if passed, govt resigns	Used to remove government
Confidence Motion (Trust Vote)	Govt proves majority	Initiated by govt; simple majority required	During coalition uncertainty
Adjournment Motion	Raises urgent matter of public importance	Interrupts normal business; exceptional device; LS mainly	Major accident/scam issue
Calling Attention Motion	Draws minister's attention to urgent matter	Minister makes statement; no voting; informational	Law & order issue
Privilege Motion	Addresses breach of parliamentary privilege	Against MP/minister for misleading House	False statement in House
Censure Motion	Expresses strong disapproval of govt policy	Must state reasons; LS; political pressure but not removal	Policy failure criticism
Cut Motions	Reduce demands in Budget	Types: Policy, Economy, Token; tool for financial control	Reduce demand for a ministry
Half-Hour Discussion Motion	Clarifies matters needing explanation	Based on starred/unstarred questions; short duration	Clarifying policy detail
Closure Motion	Ends debate	If accepted, House votes on main motion	To avoid prolonged debate

4. Pothole-Related Road Fatalities Increased by 53% in Five Years

Source : Indian Express

4.1 Basics and Static Context

4.1.1 What Constitutes Pothole-Related Accidents?

Pothole-related accidents refer to crashes where road surface defects directly result in loss of vehicle control, documented in police FIRs and consolidated by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) in its annual *Road Accidents in India* reports.

They are categorised under infrastructure-related causes, alongside poor signage and flawed road design; globally, the WHO recognises infrastructure quality as a significant determinant of crash risk, particularly for two-wheelers and pedestrians.

4.1.2 Scale of the Problem in India

India records approximately 1.7 lakh road fatalities annually (2024), the highest globally; even a small proportion attributed to potholes translates into thousands of preventable deaths.

With the second-largest road network globally (around 63 lakh km), including nearly 1.46 lakh km of National Highways, maintenance represents a substantial governance and fiscal challenge.

4.2 Relevance

GS III (Infrastructure): Road safety, infrastructure management.
GS II (Governance): Institutional accountability, urban governance frameworks.

4.3 Practice Question

Road accidents in India represent both a transport and governance challenge. Discuss with reference to pothole-related fatalities. (250 Words)

4.4 Why in News?

4.4.1 Sharp Increase in Fatalities

Data presented in Lok Sabha indicate that pothole-related deaths rose from 1,555 (2020) to 2,385 (2024), marking a 53% rise, suggesting declining maintenance outcomes despite increased infrastructure expenditure.

Total pothole-linked fatalities between 2020–24 reached 9,438, averaging nearly five deaths daily, demonstrating that potholes constitute serious safety hazards rather than minor surface defects.

4.5 Data and Trends

4.5.1 Accident and Injury Patterns

Pothole-related accidents increased from 3,713 (2020) to 5,432 (2024); grievous injuries remained substantial, indicating many survivors endure long-term disability.

Minor injuries exceeded 10,000 cases over five years, reflecting broader healthcare and productivity burdens beyond fatalities.

4.5.2 State-wise Concentration

Uttar Pradesh accounts for the largest share of deaths, consistent with its high overall fatality numbers and extensive road network.

Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Assam collectively account for over 80% of pothole deaths, indicating regional clustering linked to traffic density and maintenance deficiencies.

4.6 Governance and Policy Dimension

4.6.1 Maintenance Versus Construction Bias

India's road strategy has emphasised new highway construction, while maintenance budgets and monitoring mechanisms often remain inadequate, particularly post-monsoon.
Contracts frequently prioritise asset creation rather than lifecycle upkeep; performance-based maintenance enforcement varies across states and urban bodies.

4.6.2 Accountability Issues

Responsibility is distributed among agencies such as NHAI, PWDs, and municipalities, leading to diffused accountability when fatalities occur.
Although courts have occasionally held authorities liable, routine financial or criminal accountability for negligence remains uncommon.

4.7 Economic and Social Implications

4.7.1 Economic Costs

Road accidents cost India an estimated 3–5% of GDP annually; pothole-related crashes add repair expenses, medical costs, and productivity losses.
Poor road quality also increases logistics costs, indirectly affecting inflation and economic competitiveness.

4.7.2 Social Justice Perspective

Two-wheeler riders and lower-income commuters are disproportionately affected, given their greater exposure and limited protection.
Families experience sudden income shocks, linking road safety to poverty and social protection concerns.

4.8 Environmental and Urban Dimension

4.8.1 Urban Flooding and Pothole Formation

Inadequate drainage and waterlogging accelerate pothole development; cities with clogged stormwater systems witness rapid road deterioration after heavy rainfall.
Climate change–induced extreme rainfall may exacerbate this cycle, increasing maintenance demands.

4.9 Challenges and Way Forward

4.9.1 Structural Challenges

Reactive patchwork repairs predominate over scientific resurfacing, leading to recurring potholes within a single season.
Weak integration of police, transport, and road agency data limits targeted blackspot interventions.

4.9.2 Reform Priorities

Adopt performance-based maintenance contracts with penalties for defects, as implemented in select PPP highway models.
Utilise geo-tagging, citizen reporting applications, and third-party audits for road quality monitoring; integrate with the WHO-recommended Safe System Approach.

5. How Tamil, Sanskrit, and Prakrit Names Appeared on Egyptian Tomb Walls

Source : Indian Express

5.1 Why in News?

5.1.1 New Academic Findings

Publication of a corpus of approximately 30 inscriptions strengthens evidence of early India–Egypt connections, moving beyond speculative trade narratives toward concrete epigraphic proof.
The findings contribute to broader discussions on ancient global interconnectedness, paralleling Roman–Indian trade evidence from sites such as Muziris.

5.2 Relevance

GS I (Ancient History & Culture): Indo–Roman trade networks, cultural exchanges.

5.3 Practice Question

What do Indian inscriptions in Egypt reveal about ancient trade networks? (150 Words)

5.4 Basics and Historical Context

5.4.1 Nature of Inscriptions

Graffiti-style inscriptions in Tamil-Brahmi, Prakrit, and Sanskrit discovered in Egypt's Valley of the Kings (c. 300 BCE–200 CE) show visitors inscribed names, origins, and devotional messages, similar to travel records.
Unlike formal hieroglyphs, these resemble pilgrimage graffiti at Indian sites such as Sanchi, where travellers recorded identity and sentiments.

5.4.2 Who Deciphered Them?

A 2024–25 study by Charlotte Schmid (EFEO, Paris) documented 30 Indian-language inscriptions using epigraphic analysis and comparative linguistics.
Letter forms were cross-referenced with Sangam-era Tamil-Brahmi cave inscriptions to establish chronology.

5.4.3 What the Names Indicate

Names such as "Korran," "Kopan," and "Saman" align with Tamil and Prakrit traditions; "Korran" parallels Sangam-era chieftain titles in Chera–Pandya regions.
Some inscriptions contain place identifiers, linking travellers' identities to homeland towns such as Karur or Madurai.

5.5 Trade and Connectivity Dimension

5.5.1 Indian Ocean Networks

Between 1st BCE–2nd CE, Indo–Roman trade thrived; Roman coins in Tamil Nadu and classical texts describe Indian merchants reaching Egyptian ports like Berenike.
The inscriptions suggest onward travel to Nile valley sites, indicating maritime routes connected to inland cultural landmarks.

5.5.2 Cultural Cosmopolitanism

Ancient ports such as Alexandria and Berenike were multicultural hubs; archaeological finds of Indian beads and pepper corroborate textual evidence of exchange.
Multilingual trade communities mirror usage of Prakrit and Tamil as commerce languages, similar to Aramaic or Greek in West Asian trade.

5.6 Social and Cultural Insights

5.6.1 Travel Motivations

Some inscriptions resemble pilgrimage-style declarations, suggesting travel motivated by curiosity, ritual, or status display rather than trade alone.
The Valley of the Kings functioned as an early tourist destination, as indicated by Greek and Latin graffiti.

5.6.2 Identity Expression

Use of native scripts abroad indicates strong cultural identity, comparable to Indian merchant guild inscriptions in Southeast Asia.
Tamil-Brahmi usage abroad implies literacy among sections of early South Indian mercantile groups.

5.7 Historiographical Significance

5.7.1 Rethinking Isolation

The findings challenge notions of regional isolation, supporting models of long-distance Afro–Eurasian interaction.
They complement evidence such as Indian cotton in Egypt and Roman gold in South India.

5.7.2 Limits of Evidence

A limited corpus indicates presence but not scale of migration.
Epigraphy reflects individuals who left inscriptions, not the full extent of communities.

6. Civil Society and Scientists Raise Concerns Over Safety Gaps in WHO Pandemic Pact

Source : Down to Earth

6.1 Why in News?

6.1.1 Ongoing WHO Negotiations

WHO member states are negotiating the PABS annex prior to the 79th World Health Assembly (May 2026), representing the final unresolved operational component of the proposed global pandemic treaty.
Open letters in February 2026 from scientists and civil society organisations highlighted weak biosecurity safeguards and diluted benefit-sharing provisions, cautioning against prioritising speed over safety and equity.

6.2 Relevance

GS II (International Relations): Global health governance, WHO reforms, equity in global commons.
GS III (Science & Technology + Health): Biosecurity, biotechnology risks.

6.3 Practice Question

COVID-19 exposed structural inequities in global health governance. Discuss how new pandemic agreements can address these deficiencies. (250 Words)

6.4 Basics and Static Context

6.4.1 Pathogen Sharing

Pathogen sharing entails countries providing virus samples and genetic sequences for global surveillance, vaccine development, and diagnostics; rapid SARS-CoV-2 sequencing in 2020 enabled mRNA vaccine development.
Systems like WHO's GISRS (since 1952) demonstrate the long-standing public health value of shared influenza strains for seasonal vaccine reformulation.

6.4.2 PABS Under the Pandemic Agreement

Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing (PABS) links rapid pathogen sharing with equitable access to vaccines, medicines, and diagnostics, similar in concept to the WHO Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework.
The 2025 Pandemic Agreement emerged after COVID-19 revealed inequities, as high-income countries secured early vaccine supplies, leaving low-income nations dependent on delayed distributions.

6.5 Global Equity Dimension

6.5.1 COVID-Era Lessons

By mid-2021, over 70% of populations in low-income countries had not received a first dose, while wealthier countries secured surplus contracts.
South Africa's experience after reporting the Omicron variant highlighted mistrust when travel bans preceded equitable vaccine access.

6.6 Biosecurity and Technology Risks

6.6.1 Misuse of Genetic Data

Open genetic sequences enable synthetic reconstruction of viruses; the 2017 recreation of horsepox illustrated feasibility using commercial DNA fragments.
Declining DNA synthesis costs increase dual-use risks when oversight mechanisms are inadequate.

6.6.2 AI and Synthetic Biology

AI tools assist protein design and vaccine optimisation but could hypothetically be misused to enhance transmissibility or immune evasion.
Bio-risk now spans digital and biological domains, requiring cybersecurity standards for genomic databases.

6.7 Governance and Legal Concerns

6.7.1 Accountability Gaps

Civil society groups argue draft PABS provisions make benefit sharing optional; this contrasts with binding commitments under the PIP Framework.
Mandatory reporting of laboratory accidents and cyber breaches remains insufficient in the draft.

6.7.2 Transparency Deficits

Limited circulation of negotiation drafts and restricted civil society participation contrast with more transparent global negotiations in other domains.

6.8 Public Health and Development Implications

6.8.1 Trust and Cooperation

Fear of inequitable returns may discourage rapid sample sharing; Indonesia's 2007 withholding of H5N1 samples demonstrated how equity disputes hinder surveillance.
Reduced sharing delays variant detection and weakens early warning systems.

6.9 Way Forward

6.9.1 Stronger Safeguards

Implement verified access controls and logging mechanisms for genomic databases, similar to regulated human genome repositories.
Mandate reporting of lab incidents aligned with Biosafety Level norms.

6.9.2 Fair Benefit Sharing

Establish binding financial and product commitments with predefined allocations for WHO stockpiles.
Ensure technology transfer and licensing during emergencies, drawing lessons from mRNA transfer hubs supported in countries such as South Africa.

14th February 2026: Daily MCQs

Q1. With reference to inflation measurement in India, examine the following statements:

1. The RBI adopts WPI as the main anchor for inflation targeting.

2. CPI incorporates services, whereas WPI excludes them.

3. CPI is prepared by the NSO under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
   How many of the above statements are correct?
   A) Only one
   B) Only two
   C) All three
   D) None

Answer: B) Only two

Explanation:
• Statement 1 – Incorrect

From 2016 onward, the RBI implemented the Flexible Inflation Targeting (FIT) framework, designating CPI-Combined as the nominal anchor (target 4% ±2%). WPI is not used as the benchmark for monetary policy decisions.

• Statement 2 – Correct
CPI accounts for both goods and services (such as education, healthcare, housing, etc.), thereby serving as a comprehensive cost-of-living indicator.
WPI includes only goods and therefore does not fully capture consumer-level inflation.

• Statement 3 – Correct
CPI is compiled by the National Statistical Office (NSO) under MoSPI.
WPI is compiled by the Office of the Economic Adviser (DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce), which often serves as a common examination trap.

Q2. Which of the following constitute major factors responsible for degradation of Dal Lake?

1. Discharge of untreated sewage

2. Eutrophication caused by nutrient enrichment

3. Deforestation in the catchment

4. Coral bleaching
   A) 1, 2 and 3 only
   B) 2 and 4 only
   C) 1 and 4 only
   D) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: A) 1, 2 and 3 only

Explanation:
• 1 – Correct
Influx of untreated sewage elevates BOD, COD, and nutrient concentrations, resulting in deterioration of water quality.

• 2 – Correct
Excess nitrogen and phosphorus trigger algal blooms and excessive weed growth, a classic manifestation of eutrophication.

• 3 – Correct
Deforestation in the catchment increases sedimentation and runoff, leading to shrinkage of effective lake area.

• 4 – Incorrect (Trap)
Coral bleaching is associated with marine ecosystems and is not relevant to a freshwater body such as Dal Lake.

Q3. Who determines the admissibility of a substantive motion in Parliament?
A) President
B) Prime Minister

C) Speaker/Chairman
D) Business Advisory Committee

Answer: C) Speaker/Chairman

Explanation:
• The Speaker (Lok Sabha) or Chairman (Rajya Sabha) assesses admissibility based on:
o Relevance
o Clarity
o Compliance with the Rules of Procedure
o Restrictions relating to sub judice matters

• The Business Advisory Committee is responsible only for allocation of discussion time and does not decide admissibility.

Q4. With reference to Indian-language inscriptions discovered in Egypt's Valley of the Kings:

1. They are mainly royal inscriptions commissioned by Egyptian authorities.

2. They contain scripts such as Tamil-Brahmi and Prakrit.

3. They are dated approximately between 300 BCE and 200 CE.
   Which of the above statements are correct?
   A) 2 and 3 only
   B) 1 and 2 only
   C) 1 and 3 only
   D) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A) 2 and 3 only

Explanation:
• 1 – Incorrect
These are informal visitor graffiti rather than official royal proclamations.

• 2 – Correct
The inscriptions include Tamil-Brahmi and Prakrit scripts, indicating Indian presence.

• 3 – Correct
Palaeographic analysis aligns them with Sangam-era Tamil-Brahmi, roughly spanning the 3rd century BCE to the early centuries CE.

Q5. Which of the following diseases has been fully eradicated worldwide under the leadership of the WHO?
A) Polio
B) Malaria
C) Smallpox
D) Tuberculosis

Answer: C) Smallpox

Explanation:

• Smallpox was declared eradicated in 1980 and remains the only human disease eliminated globally. It is widely regarded as WHO's most significant public health achievement.

• Polio is close to eradication but continues to exist in limited regions.

• Malaria and Tuberculosis are under control efforts but have not been eradicated.

Mains: Trace the development of urban centres from the Later Vedic period through the Mauryan era. Examine the key forces that stimulated urbanisation and evaluate its social implications. (15 Marks)