



ICRA

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND MACRO TRENDS

India's GDP growth set to halve to 6.5% YoY in Q2 FY2023; external slowdown poses downside risks to H2 FY2023 GDP growth

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Abbreviations

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|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AE: Advance Estimates | FDI: Foreign Direct Investment | LIC: Life Insurance Corporation | PE: Provisional Estimates |
| AIDC: Agricultural Infrastructure and development cess | FII: Foreign Institutional Investor | LPA: Long Period Average | PFCE: Private Final Consumption Expenditure |
| ATF: Aviation Turbine Fuel | FOMC: Federal Open Market Committee | LPG: Liquefied Petroleum Gas | PLI: Production Linked Incentive |
| BE: Budget Estimates | FPI: Foreign Portfolio Investors | MEP: Monthly Expenditure Plan | POL: Petroleum Oil and Lubricants |
| BEML: Bharat Earth Movers Ltd. | FRL: Full Reservoir Level | MGNREGA: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act | PPAC: Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell |
| BPS: Basis Points | FRP: Financial, Real Estate and Professional Services | MICE: Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions | PMGKY: Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana |
| BoP: Balance of Payments | GAIL: Gas Authority of India Limited | MoM: Month-on-Month | PMGKAY: Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Ann Yojana |
| CAD: Current Account Deficit | GDP: Gross Domestic Product | MoRTH: Ministry of Road Transport and Highways | QEP: Quarterly Expenditure Plan |
| CCS: Consumer Confidence Survey | GFCE: Government Final Consumption Expenditure | MPC: Monetary Policy Committee | RBI: Reserve Bank of India |
| CEA: Central Electricity Authority | GFCF: Gross Fixed Capital Formation | MS: Motor Spirit | RDB: Rupee Denominated Bonds |
| CGA: Controller General of Accounts | GoI: Government of India | MSF: Marginal Standing Facility | RMS: Rabi Marketing Season |
| CGST: Central Goods and Services Tax | G-Sec: Government Securities | NBFC: Non-Banking Finance Companies | RE: Revised Estimates |
| CIL: Coal India Limited | GST: Goods and Services Tax | NBS: Nutrient based Subsidy | REER: Real Effective Exchange Rate |
| CMIE: Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy | GTR: Gross Tax Revenue | NINL: Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited | SAED: Special Additional Excise Duty |
| CNY: Chinese Yuan | GVA: Gross Value Added | NR(E)RA: Non-Resident (External) Rupee Account | SDF: Standing Deposit Facility |
| CP: Commercial Paper | HLL: Hindustan Latex Ltd | NRI: Non-Resident Indians | SGB: Sovereign Gold Bonds |
| CPI: Consumer Price Index | HSD: High Speed Diesel | NRO: Non-Resident Ordinary | SGST: States Goods and Services Tax |
| CSI: Current Situation Index | IDBI: Industrial Development Bank of India | NSO: National Statistical Office | SUUTI: Specified Undertaking of Unit Trust of India |
| CTD: Central Tax Devolution | IGST: Integrated Goods and Services Tax | OBICUS: Order Books, Inventories and Capacity Utilisation Survey | THTCS: Trade, Hotels, Transport, Communication and Services related to broadcasting |
| DAM: Day-Ahead-Market | IIP: Index of Industrial Production | OFS: Offer for Sale | VAT: Value Added Tax |
| DBTL: Direct Benefit Transfer for LPG subsidy | IMD: Indian Meteorological Department | OM: Office Memorandum | VRR: Voluntary Retention Route |
| DIPAM: Department of Investment and Public Asset Management | IMF: International Monetary Fund | OMO: Open Market Operation | WMA: Ways and Means Advances |
| EOI: Expression of Interest | IOS: Industrial Outlook Survey | ONGC: Oil and Natural Gas Corporation | WPI: Wholesale Price Index |
| ECB: External Commercial Borrowing | IPCL: Indian Petrochemicals Corporation Ltd | PADOS: Public Administration, Defence and Other Services | YoY: Year-on-Year |
| EM: Emerging Markets | IPO: Initial Public Offering | | YTD: Year to Date |
| FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization | JPC: Joint Plant Committee | | |
| FCNR: Foreign Currency Non-Resident | LAF: Liquidity Adjustment Facility | | |

OVERVIEW

The demand for contact-intensive services is likely to remain upbeat in the near term with the onset of wedding and holiday seasons

Sustenance of demand for goods post the festive season remains unclear

Early sowing has brightened the prospects of rabi crops in FY2023; kharif output may be revised down following the untimely excess rains

ICRA maintains GDP growth forecast at 7.2% in FY2023, with downside risks emanating from a deepening external slowdown

The contact-intensive segment of the services sector displayed a robust recovery in Q2 FY2023, benefitting from the pent-up demand for leisure travel, resumption of corporate travel, and rising confidence levels amongst households. The demand for such services is likely to remain upbeat in the near term with the onset of wedding and holiday seasons, auguring well for associated sectors such as transport/mobility, hotels, and restaurants. We estimate GDP growth to record a base effect-led halving to 6.5% in Q2 FY2023 from 13.0% in Q1 FY2023. Moreover, a healthy demand for goods during the festive season is likely to have aided the manufacturing sector, although the sustenance of the same post the festive season remains to be seen. While kharif output may see a downward revision owing to the excess rainfall during Sep-Oct 2022, the prospects of rabi output are favourable with an early pick-up in sowing. At present, we maintain our FY2023 GDP growth forecast at 7.2%, with downside risks posed by the potential impact of the deepening external slowdown on India's exports. We project the CPI inflation at 6.6% for FY2023, with risks emanating from supply disruptions for perishables owing to excess unseasonal rains and a robust demand for services. Nevertheless, with an easing in the Oct 2022 CPI inflation and expectations of a further dip in Nov 2022, the quantum of the next rate hike is likely to be limited to 35 bps in the MPC's Dec 2022 policy meeting, vis-à-vis 50 bps in the last three reviews. The MPC's decision is likely to be non-unanimous, which may lend itself to a neutral tone regarding the pace and timing of future rate hikes.

| ICRA's Macroeconomic Projections | | FY2022 | FY2023 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | GDP Growth (in real terms) | 8.7% | 7.2% |
|  | GVA Growth (in real terms) | 8.1% | 7.0% |
|  | CPI Inflation (average) | 5.5% | 6.6% |
|  | WPI Inflation (average) | 13.0% | 9.7% |
|  | Current Account Balance | Deficit of US\$38.7 billion; 1.2% of GDP | Deficit of US\$105-110 billion; 3.2% of GDP |
|  | GDP's Fiscal Deficit | Fiscal deficit at Rs. 15.87 trillion (6.7% of GDP) as per prov. estimates, below RE of Rs. 15.91 trillion (6.9% of GDP) | Fiscal deficit to overshoot the budgeted Rs. 16.6 trillion by Rs. 1.0 trillion or less, but print at 6.4% of GDP, in line with the BE |
|  | G-sec Yields | 10-year G-sec yield to trade between 7.2-7.6% in the rest of CY2022, amidst the expectation of another repo hike in Dec 2022 | |
|  | Repo Rate | Rate hike to continue in the Dec 2022 policy, with CPI inflation remaining above MPC's 6% tolerance level in Oct 2022; however, quantum of hike to ease to 35 bps, lower than the 50 bps seen in the last three reviews | |
|  | INR | USD/INR pair to trade between 80.5-83.0/US\$ till end-March 2023 | |



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

YoY GDP growth set to halve to 6.5% in Q2 FY2023 on a normalising base: Economic activity in Q2 FY2023 benefitted from a robust demand for services, healthy capital spending by the GoI and pre-festive season stocking of goods. The downsides arose from the mixed crop output trends revealed by the advance estimates of kharif production, adverse input cost movements for certain sectors with a higher fuel intensity, as well as the impact of flagging external demand on India's non-oil merchandise exports (YoY: -0.3%). On balance, we project the YoY growth of the GDP in Q2 FY2023 at 6.5%, a base effect-led halving from the 13.5% seen in Q1 FY2023, albeit somewhat higher than the MPC's forecast of 6.3% for that quarter. However, the growth in the GDP over the respective pre-Covid levels of 2019 is expected to double to around 8% in Q2 FY2023 relative to the 3.8% seen in Q1 FY2023, with a widening of the economic recovery.

FY2023 GDP growth forecast maintained at 7.2%: With the onset of busy season for travel and availing of leisure services during the holiday period, demand for services, especially the contact-intensive segment, is likely to remain upbeat in the near term, auguring well for the performance of transport/mobility, hotels, and restaurant segments. The output volumes of some industrial sectors such as infra/construction are likely to pick-up sequentially in H2 FY2023 after the end of monsoon season. Manufacturing output is likely to be supported by festive demand for goods in Q3 FY2023, boosting capacity utilisation, although the sustenance of this post the festive season is uncertain. While the excess rainfall during Sep-Oct 2022 may pose downside risks to the kharif output, early sowing has brightened the prospects of the rabi crops. Moreover, state governments have ample fiscal space to push up their capex in H2 FY2023. At present, we have retained our estimate of the real GDP growth for FY2023 at 7.2%, although a deepening of the external slowdown poses a risk. We will review our forecasts once the high frequency data for full month of Nov 2022 is available, as the average trends for Oct-Nov would provide a better gauge to assess the growth momentum given the shift in festive calendar in 2022 vs. 2021.

CPI Inflation to surge to 6.6% in FY2023: ICRA expects the CPI inflation to average at 6.6% in FY2023 (marginally lower than the MPC's projection of 6.7%), as against 5.5% in FY2022, on account of a broad-based uptick in inflation. The near-term outlook is clouded by emerging risks such as supply disruptions for certain perishables owing to excess rains, a robust demand for services and some evidence of a transmission of elevated headline inflation into categories such as housing rentals. Nevertheless, CPI inflation is expected to moderate in H2 FY2023 vis-à-vis H1 FY2023. With the CPI inflation remaining above the MPC's 6% tolerance level in Oct 2022, we believe that another rate hike is certain in the Dec 2022 policy to prevent inflationary expectations from un-anchoring. However, given the easing in CPI inflation in Oct 2022 and the anticipation of a further dip in Nov 2022, we expect the size of the hike to be restricted to 35 bps, lower than the 50 bps seen in the last three policy reviews. Moreover, we anticipate this vote to be non-unanimous, which may lend itself to a neutral tone regarding the pace and timing of future rate hikes.

CAD to touch 3.2% of GDP in FY2023: ICRA expects India's merchandise exports to rise by ~6% in FY2023, with a normalising base and flagging external demand tempering the pace of growth in H2 FY2023 vis-à-vis H1. Merchandise imports, on the other hand, are expected to rise by a relatively higher ~20%, as domestic demand growth is likely to appreciably outpace external demand. Accordingly, the merchandise trade deficit is expected to rise considerably to ~US\$285-290 billion in FY2023, from ~US\$189.5 billion in FY2022, with more than half of the widening stemming from the non-oil trade deficit. Consequently, we project the CAD to widen to an all-time high of US\$105-110 billion (-3.2% of GDP) from US\$38.7 billion (-1.2% of GDP) in FY2022, with an expected moderation in H2 FY2023 relative to the levels expected in H1 FY2023. A moderation in financial flows coupled with the large increase expected in the CAD will result in a substantial drawdown of reserves during H1 FY2023, followed by some respite in H2 FY2023. We expect the USD/INR pair to trade between 80.5-83.0/\$ till end-March 2023.

Overshooting in FY2023 fiscal deficit of the GoI expected to be limited under ~Rs. 1 trillion: While the GoI's spending would sharply exceed the budgeted level for FY2023, driven by fertiliser and food subsidy, and excise revenues will be dampened by the cess reduction on petrol and diesel undertaken in May 2022, we expect the extent of the overshoot in the fiscal deficit to be modest at ~Rs. 1 trillion for FY2023, given the considerable upside seen in non-excise tax revenues (direct taxes and CGST revenues) as well as expected savings under some expenditure heads. As a proportion of GDP, the fiscal deficit in FY2023 is unlikely to exceed the budgeted 6.4%, on a higher nominal GDP (ICRA exp.: +15.0%) vis-à-vis what was indicated in the budget (+9.1% over the FY2022 provisional estimate of GDP). With limited fiscal concerns, we expect yield movements to be dominated by expectations around monetary tightening. We foresee the India's 10-year G-sec yield to trade between 7.2-7.6% in the rest of CY2022, amidst the expectation of another policy rate hike in December 2022.

ABOUT ICRA

ICRA Limited (formerly Investment Information and Credit Rating Agency of India Limited) was set up in 1991 by leading financial/investment institutions, commercial banks and financial services companies as an independent and professional investment Information and Credit Rating Agency.

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