

Budget 2022 preview: Consolidation to continue

Could budget fiscal deficit ~6% of GDP in FY23E

- The Government of India (GoI) will present Union Budget 2022–23 on 1st Feb'22. Considering provisional data for the first eight months (Apr–Nov'21), total receipts of the GoI could exceed Budget Estimates (BEs) by INR2.2t in FY22E. So, in order to keep its fiscal deficit unchanged at INR15.1t, the GoI will have to spend INR16.3t in the last trimester of FY22E, slightly higher than INR16t spent during the corresponding period of last year, which was almost double of that spent during the corresponding period in FY20. If so, the Centre's total spending will grow 5.4% in FY22E, better than the budgeted growth of 1%, but still the lowest in 16 years. Also, because of a higher denominator (nominal GDP), the fiscal deficit will be 6.5% of GDP in FY22E v/s the target of 6.8% of GDP.
- Revenue spending may grow 2.3% YoY to INR31.6t in FY22E (similar to the target, including supplementary grants), while achieving its FY22 capex target (of INR6.2t, including supplementary grants) seems a tall ask. In order to meet its capex target, the GoI has to spend INR3.5t in the last trimester of FY22, which is similar to its total capex in FY20 and double of INR1.8t in the corresponding period of FY21. We do not see it meeting its FY22 capex target.
- Following a robust 30% growth in FY22E, total receipts are expected to grow 13.4% YoY in FY23E, assuming a gross tax buoyancy of 1.1x, similar to that in the pre-COVID period. If total spending rises by 9% in FY23E, the gross fiscal deficit of the Centre would be INR15.4t, or 6% of GDP. This implies gross market borrowings of INR12.5t in FY23E v/s INR10.5t in FY22E, implying net market borrowings of INR8.3t, financing 54% of fiscal deficit.
- Besides these all-important macro numbers, we will closely track the upcoming Budget for any announcements in three areas: 1) some self-liquidating temporary personal job/income supporting measures to boost private consumption in the immediate future, 2) some measures to support the rural economy, amid its weakening and the impending state elections, and 3) any measures to revive the Residential Real Estate sector would be welcome.

The benchmark 10-year bond yield has crossed 6.6% for the first time since Jan'20 (pre-COVID period). This is the context in which Union Budget 2022-23 will be presented in a fortnight on 1st Feb'22. We expect the GoI to keep its FY22E fiscal deficit unchanged at INR15.1t (or 6.5% of GDP because of a higher denominator, nominal GDP), and announce FY23E deficit at INR15.4t, or 6% of GDP. Anything less than 5.8% of GDP for FY23 may help bring down yields and anything over 6.2% could push them higher.

Total GoI receipts could grow 30.2% YoY to INR22t in FY22E and rise to a 11-year high of 9.5% of GDP

What could the FY22 final numbers look like? Before we present our projections for FY23, it is very important to get a handle of FY22 numbers. As of Nov'21, total receipts were 69.8% of BEs, a record high in the past 25 years for which monthly data is available. Tax receipts have been really great in the first eight months of FY22, of which direct taxes – led by corporate income taxes – have performed exceptionally well. Our calculations suggest that gross taxes could exceed BEs by more than INR4t in FY22E, which can more than offset the large shortfall of ~INR1.5t in disinvestments (assuming LIC and BPCL divestment is postponed to FY23). Total receipts of the GoI could grow 30% YoY to INR22t in FY22E and touch an 11-year high of 9.5% of GDP. Total receipts, thus, is expected to exceed BEs by INR2.2t in FY22E (*please refer Exhibit 1*).

Gol will have to spend INR37t in FY22E, of which ~56% has already been spent up to Nov'21

In order to keep its fiscal deficit unchanged at INR15.1t, the Gol will have to spend INR37t in FY22E, of which only ~56% (or INR20.7t) has already been spent up to Nov'21. It implies that INR16.3t will be expended in the last trimester of FY22E, slightly higher than INR16t spent during the corresponding period of last year, which was almost double of that spent during the corresponding period in FY20. If so, the Centre's total spending will grow 5.4% in FY22E, better than the budgeted growth of 1%, but still the lowest in 16 years.

Exhibit 1: What would the fiscal math look like?

	FY20	FY21	FY22BEs	Apr-Nov'21	FY22F		FY23F	
	INR t	INR t	INR t	% of BEs	INR t	YoY (%)	INR t	YoY (%)
Total receipts	17.5	16.9	19.8	69.8	21.9	29.9	24.9	13.4
Revenue receipts	16.8	16.3	17.9	75.9	21.5	31.7	23.5	9.3
Net taxes	13.5	14.2	15.5	73.5	18.4	29.0	20.2	10.0
Gross taxes	20.1	20.2	22.2	69.5	26.3	30.1	29.8	13.2
Direct taxes	10.4	9.3	11.1	63.1	13.5	45.8	15.5	14.5
Corporation taxes	5.6	4.6	5.5	64.6	7.3	60.0	8.4	15.0
Income taxes	4.8	4.7	5.6	61.7	6.2	32.0	7.1	14.0
Indirect taxes	9.7	11.0	11.1	75.9	12.8	16.8	14.3	11.8
Goods & Services Tax	6.0	5.5	6.3	72.1	7.0	27.0	7.9	13.0
Excise duties	2.4	3.9	3.4	72.2	3.9	0.0	4.3	10.0
Customs	1.1	1.3	1.4	92.5	1.7	25.0	2.0	12.0
<u>Less:</u> Devolution to states	6.5	6.0	6.7	60.5	7.9	32.9	9.5	20.7
Non-tax revenue	3.3	2.1	2.4	91.8	3.1	50.5	3.3	5.0
Non-debt capital receipts	0.7	0.6	1.9	11.0	0.5	-21.9	1.4	211.1
Disinvestment	0.5	0.3	1.8	5.4	0.3	-24.0	1.2	380.0
Total expenditure	26.9	35.1	34.8	59.6	37.0	5.4	40.3	8.9
Core expenditure#	18.1	20.9	23.0	65.8	23.8	13.7	27.4	15.4
Revenue expenditure	23.5	30.9	29.3	61.5	31.6	2.3	33.8	7.0
Interest payments	6.1	6.8	8.1	56.9	8.0	18.7	8.9	10.0
Subsidies	2.6	7.4	3.7	68.5	5.2	-30.3	4.0	-22.5
Defense	2.1	2.1	2.1	77.2	2.2	5.5	2.4	10.0
Pensions	1.7	1.9	1.7	66.9	1.7	-10.0	1.9	8.0
Grants to states/UTs	5.3	5.7	6.2	...	6.4	13.9	7.2	12.0
Non-defense pay	2.3	2.0	2.5	...	2.5	20.8	2.8	12.0
Other	3.4	5.0	5.0	...	5.5	10.7	6.6	20.6
Capital expenditure	3.4	4.2	5.5	49.4	5.5	28.3	6.5	20.0
Fiscal deficit (FD)	9.4	18.2	15.1	46.2	15.1	...	15.4	...
Fiscal deficit (as a percentage of GDP)	4.6	9.2	6.8	...	6.5	...	6.0	...
Revenue deficit	6.7	14.5	11.4	38.8	10.1	...	10.3	...
Revenue deficit (as a percentage of GDP)	3.3	7.4	5.1	...	4.4	...	4.0	...
Gross borrowings*	7.1	12.6	12.1	...	10.5	-16.9	12.5	19.4
Net market borrowings*	4.7	10.3	9.2	56.0	7.7	-25.9	8.3	7.9
Net market borrowings (as a percentage of FD)	50.6	56.7	61.4	77.6	50.8	...	53.6	...
Nominal GDP	203.5	197.5	222.9		230.5		255.1	

F = Forecast

#Total spending excluding interest payments and major subsidies

* Excluding INR1.59t borrowed by the center on account of 'Loans to States in lieu of GST Compensation shortfall'

Source: Union Budget documents, Controller General of Accounts (CGA), Central Statistics Office (CSO), RBI, MOFSL

To meet its capex target, Gol has to spend INR3.5t in the last trimester of FY22E, same as total capex in FY20 and double of INR1.8t in the corresponding period of FY21

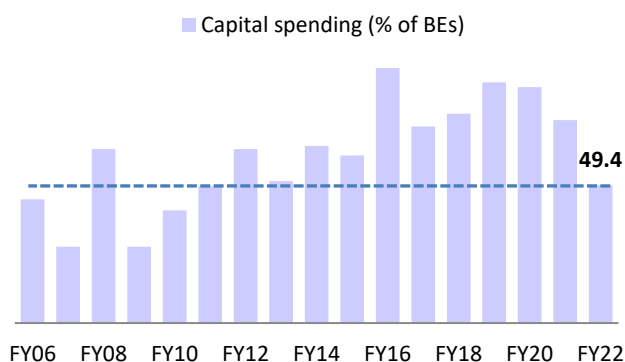
Achieving its FY22 capex target, however, seems a tall ask: Considering buoyant tax collections, lower spending growth in the first eight months of FY22 is puzzling. Within total spending, while revenue spending was 61.5% of BEs, it was less than half for capital spending (*Exhibit 2*) as of Nov'21. The Gol has announced an equity infusion and loans and advances totaling INR647b to Air India and its holding company, implying a capex target of INR6.2t (including supplementary grants). In order to meet its (revised) target, the Gol has to spend INR3.5t (or 56% of target) in the last trimester of FY22E, which is similar to its total capex in FY20 and double of INR1.8t in the corresponding period of FY21. On an average, the Gol has spent ~40% of its annual capital spending in the last trimester for the past many years.

Total capital spending of the Centre has two parts: capital expenditure (capex) and loans and advances (given to states, UTs, and various other agencies for capex purposes). The former counts as the Center's investments and the latter will be counted as the investments (or something else based on its utilization) of the recipient entity. Although the Gol reported a capital spending of INR4.2t in FY21, up 27% YoY to a 13-year high of 2.2% of GDP, capex was up just 6.7% at INR3.1t, or 1.6% of GDP, the same as in previous years. The details were discussed [here](#).

Growth in capex will have to be 172% YoY in the Dec'21-Mar'22 period, which is why meeting the FY22 target is a tall ask, though not impossible

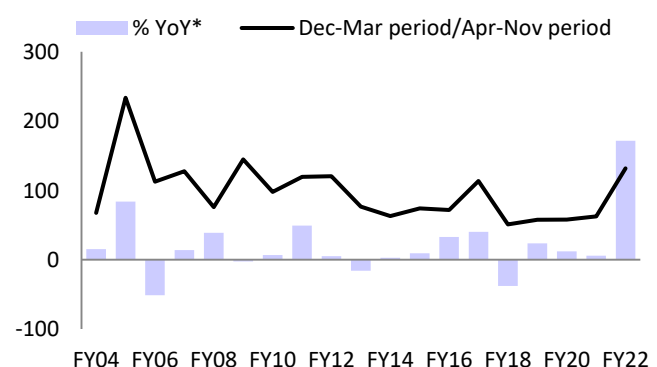
For FY22, the Gol budgeted a growth of 30%/63% in capital spending/capex, but has spent less than 50% each as of Nov'21. If achieved, capex will rise sharply to 2.3% of GDP. However, it implies that growth in capex will have to be 172% YoY in the Dec'21-Mar'22 period as compared to the highest growth of 40% witnessed in the corresponding period of the past decade (*Exhibit 3*). This is why meeting its FY22 capex target seems like a really tall ask. We believe there could be a shortfall of INR800b in its FY22E capex target.

Exhibit 2: The government has spent only 49% of budgeted capital spending in the first eight months of FY22...



Data for the April-November period for all the years

Exhibit 3: ...which makes achieving its FY22 capex (revised) target a really tall ask



*Based on data for the December-March period for all the years
Source: CGA, Union Budget documents, CEIC, MOFSL

What could FY23BEs look like?

Following a robust 30% growth in FY22E, total receipts are expected to grow 13.4% YoY in FY23E, assuming a gross tax buoyancy of 1.1x, similar to that in the pre-COVID period. If total spending rises by 9% in FY23E, the gross fiscal deficit of the Centre would be INR15.4t, or 6% of GDP. This implies gross market borrowings of INR12.5t in FY23E v/s INR10.5t in FY22E. Net borrowings will remain unchanged at INR8.3t, financing 54% of the FY23 fiscal deficit.

If total spending rises by 9% in FY23E, the gross fiscal deficit of the Centre would be INR15.4t, or 6% of GDP, implying gross market borrowings of INR13.5t in FY23E v/s INR12t in FY22E

The capex target for FY23 will be based on how well the same was achieved in FY22. If the FY22 (revised) target is met, the capex growth target for FY23E could be 10%, or 2.6% of GDP. In contrast, if there is a shortfall of INR800b in FY22E, as per our expectations, the FY23E capex growth target could 20%. In any case, as [noted](#) earlier, the Center's capex is ~7% of total investments in the country, reflecting its limited role in reviving the investment cycle in the economy.

Besides these all important macro numbers, we would closely track the upcoming Budget for any announcements in three areas:

1) Some self-liquidating temporary personal job/income supporting measures to boost private consumption in the immediate future:

India's [household sector](#) has suffered immensely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, private consumption growth has been anemic in the past two years. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, private consumption, along with government spending, was the primary driver of GDP growth in the economy. In contrast to most rich nations, due to the strict physical lockdowns and limited fiscal stimulus, there are no [excess household savings](#) in India, just like Indonesia. While cumulative excess household savings amounted to anywhere between 10% and 20% of income, it was largely absent in India and Indonesia for the period ending Sep'21 (*Exhibit 4*). Due to high cumulative excess savings in advanced economies, consumption growth there is very strong, pushing real GDP growth higher, along with inflationary fears. In contrast, the lack of excess savings is critical to understand the weak financial position of the Indian household sector, which raises serious doubts over the consumption-driven growth in the post-COVID era.

Any scheme to support jobs and/or the income prospects of the self-employed and/or the casual workforce would be highly appreciated

With this background, we would welcome some self-liquidating temporary measures to boost household income of the lower section of the pyramid. These measures do not have to be related to tax exemptions/relaxations. Instead, any scheme to support jobs and/or the income prospects of the self-employed and/or the casual workforce would be highly appreciated. According to the most recently available data, ~23% of India's workforce earns a regular wage or has a salaried job, while the remaining is classified as 'vulnerable employment' (*Exhibit 5*).

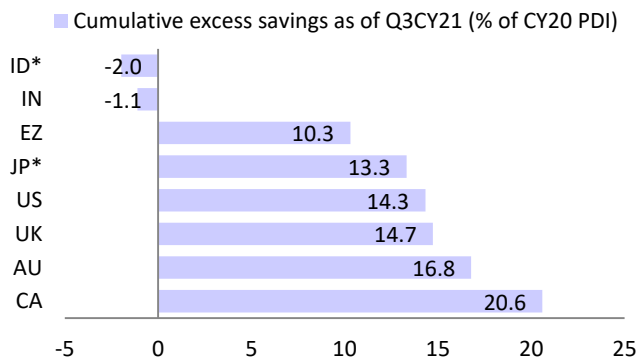
One may argue that it is too late for such schemes. Demand for work under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) remains strong. The share of agricultural activity in India's workforce has increased, as per the recently available Periodic Labor Force Survey (PLFS) for the period ending Jun'20. This confirms that India's labor market was severely hit during the pandemic and remains stressed even now. The absence of any such measures during the past two years raises serious doubts over their relevance from the government's point of view. However, continued weak consumption growth may nudge the leaders to finally do something about it.

We recommend some self-liquidating support for the lower strata of the society

It is widely recognized that just like large, organized, and listed companies have performed much better than the unlisted corporate sector, the household sector has also witnessed a similar K-shaped recovery. The top layer of the consumer

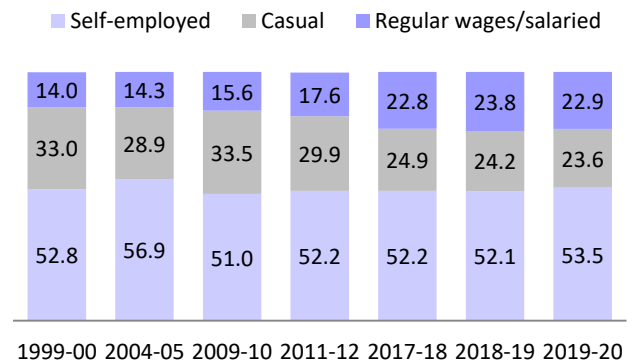
segment has weathered the pandemic much better than the bottom sections. Hence, we recommend some self-liquidating support for the lower strata of the society. We are also cognizant about the likely distortion of such measures if they sustain for long, and so recommend that such measures remain temporary and come with an expiry date.

Exhibit 4: Cumulative excess savings amounted to 10-20% of PDI in rich nations, though it is absent in India



*Data as of 2QCY21

Exhibit 5: Regular wages/salaried workers account for less than a quarter of the total workforce (%)



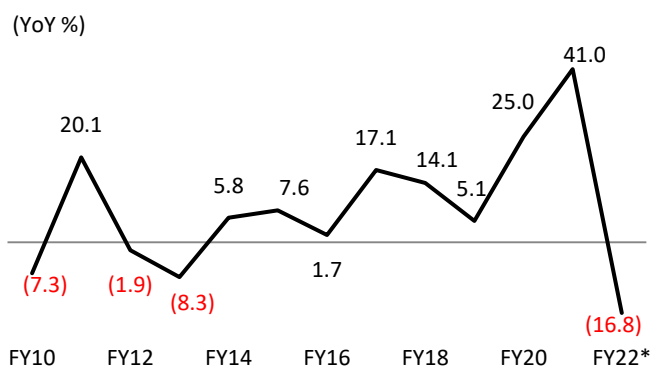
Source: RBI, various national sources, Gol, CEIC, MOFSL

2) Gol may announce some measures to support the rural economy amid its weakening and impending state elections:

The government's spending on the rural sector has declined by 17% YoY in Apr-Nov'21 due to which its share fell to 11.9% during the period

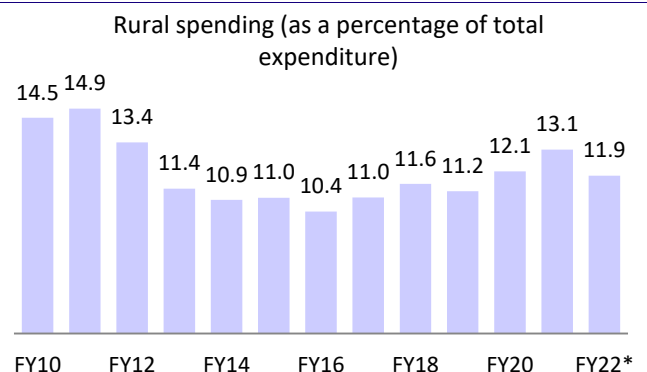
In the last two years, the Centre's spending on the rural sector (comprising the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Department of Fertilizers, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, and Ministry of Rural Development) has increased strongly, taking the share of rural spending to 13.1% of total expenditure in FY21 from 11.2% in FY19. In comparison, the government's spending on the rural sector has declined by 17% YoY in Apr-Nov'21 due to which its share fell to 11.9% during the period (*Exhibits 6 and 7*). The allocation under MGNREGA scheme has been increased twice in FY22 (to INR730b in Jul'21 and then to INR950b in Dec'21) from the BEs of INR615b announced in Feb'21. The Center has released INR796b as of 18th Jan'22.

Exhibit 6: Government's spending on the rural sector weakens in FY22* after two strong years...



*Data for Apr-Nov'21

Exhibit 7: ...due to which its share has fallen to 12% of total expenditure from 13%

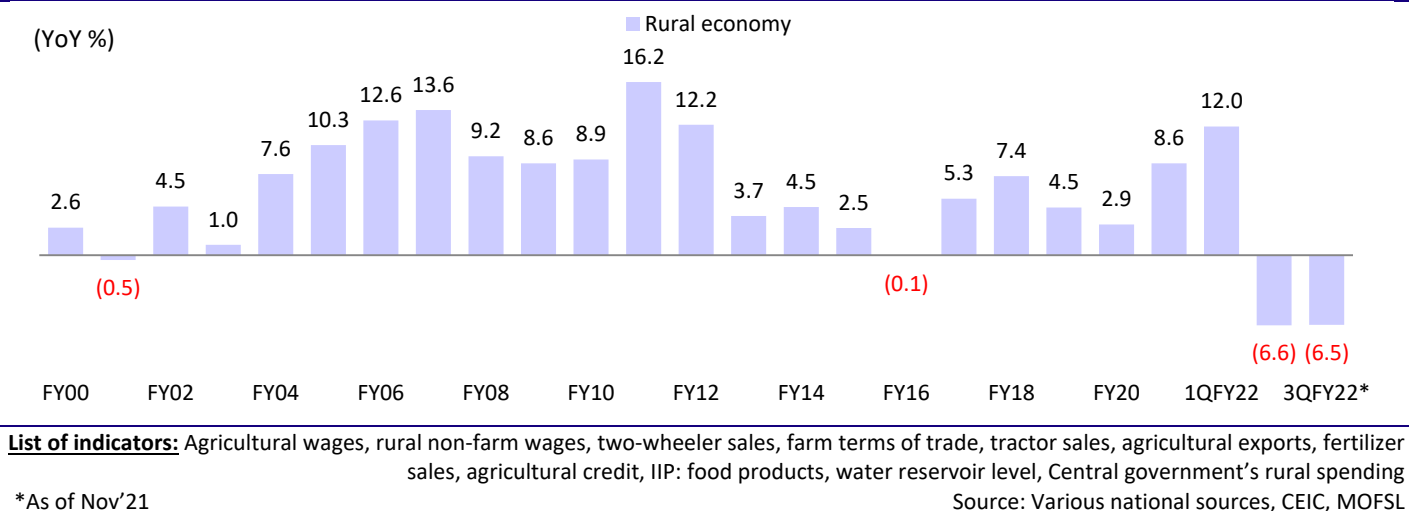


Source: Various national sources, CEIC, MOFSL

Recent data suggest that the deterioration continued in Oct-Nov'21, for which recent data on these indicators are available

Although the government's rural spending has declined, natural factors such as monsoons and water reservoir levels have been comfortable due to which the Rabi sowing has been very good in FY22. Nevertheless, the terms of trade for the agriculture sector has deteriorated to the worst seen since the mid-1990s due to rising input costs and slower price inflation in farm output. It is not surprising then that a compilation of various indicators suggests a sharp decline in the rural economy since mid-CY21 (*Exhibit 8*). We had highlighted rural weakness in our recently released [note](#) in Nov'21. Recent data suggest that the deterioration continued in Oct-Nov'21, for which recent data on these indicators are available.

Exhibit 8: Rural economy weakens significantly since mid-CY21



List of indicators: Agricultural wages, rural non-farm wages, two-wheeler sales, farm terms of trade, tractor sales, agricultural exports, fertilizer sales, agricultural credit, IIP: food products, water reservoir level, Central government's rural spending

*As of Nov'21

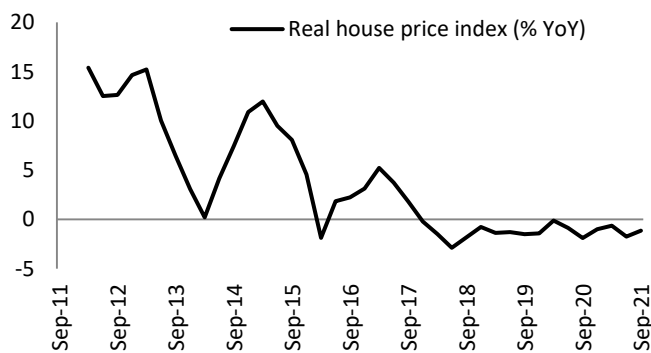
Although a part of this weakness is certainly due to the base effect, the upcoming assembly elections in five states, including Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, suggest that the government may be tempted to support the frail rural economy. Therefore, we would keenly monitor government initiatives toward the rural sector in Union Budget CY22-23.

3) Any measures to revive the Residential Real Estate sector would be welcome:

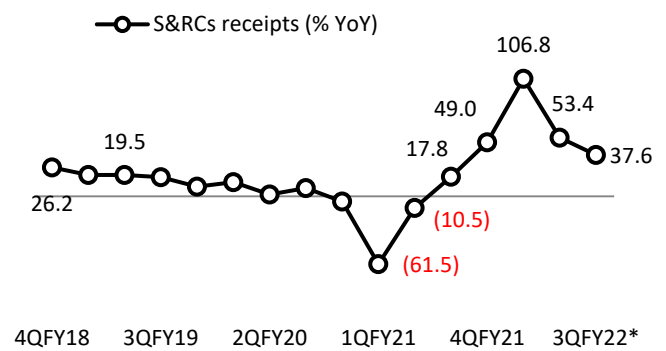
It is well acknowledged that the Residential Construction sector is extremely important for the Indian economy and was at the core of India's economic slowdown. With the outbreak of COVID-19, it was anticipated that the Construction sector would remain one of the laggards. However, recovery in the sector has been much better than anticipated in 2HFY21. The same has continued in FY22 as well.

Stamp duty and registration charges collected by states continued to grow strongly, as suggested by the recent available data up to Nov'21

Several factors have supported such a strong pick-up in the Residential Real Estate sector. In particular, a) a massive reduction in interest rates to a record low of 6.5% by some Banks, b) relatively least adverse effects on regular salaried workers, c) falling real house prices (*Exhibit 9*), and d) the various incentives provided by Centre/state governments. The recovery in the Construction sector has been one of the highlights after the lifting of COVID-related lockdown restrictions. Stamp duty and registration charges collected by states continued to grow strongly, as suggested by the recent available data up to Nov'21 (*Exhibit 10*).

Exhibit 9: Real house prices continue to decline for the past four successive years...

Based on transaction-level data from housing registration authorities in 10 major cities, deflated by CPI-Housing

Exhibit 10: ...which must have helped buoyant stamp and registration charges (S&RCs) collected by the states

*Based on 28 states up to Nov'21

Source: CAG, CEIC, MOFSL

Residential Real Estate construction has been weak for years, and a few months of recovery, especially after a sudden halt in mid-CY20, hardly changes the overall story significantly

Similarly, steel consumption and cement production – the primary raw materials for construction – have also grown strongly in FY22. After declining by 6% in FY21, finished steel consumption grew 16% YoY in Apr-Dec'21, and cement production rose 28% YoY in Apr-Nov'21, following a sharp contraction of 11% YoY in FY21.

Notwithstanding the recent strong trends in stamp duty and registration charges (SD&RCs), it still continues to remain weak as compared to pre-COVID trends. The average monthly SD&RCs collected by 28 states stood at INR124b in the first eight months of FY22, which was still slower than INR128b suggested by the pre-COVID growth trend. Considering the strong forward and backward linkages of the Construction sector and the fact that it is the second largest employer in India, any additional measures to boost the Residential Real Estate sector would be highly welcome. It could be either to grant it 'Infrastructure sector' status or to relax GST on under-construction properties or to reduce the GST on key raw materials or a higher interest exemption for homebuyers from the current limit of INR0.2m.

Fiscal deficit could be 6.5% of GDP in FY22E and may be pegged at 6% of GDP in FY23E

Fiscal deficit is expected to remain unchanged at INR15.1t in FY22E and is likely to be set at INR15.4t for FY23E. Due to higher-than-anticipated denominator (nominal GDP), it implies that fiscal deficit could be 6.5% of GDP in FY22E and may be pegged at 6% of GDP in FY23E. Anything less than 5.8% of GDP may help bring down yields and anything over 6.2% could push them higher.

Besides these all-important macro numbers, we will closely track the upcoming Budget for any announcements in three areas: 1) some self-liquidating temporary personal job/income supporting measures to boost private consumption in the immediate future, 2) some measures to support the rural economy, amid its weakening and the impending state elections, and 3) any measures to revive the Residential Real Estate sector would be welcome.

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