

WHOLESALE PRICE INDEX

WPI inflation expectedly eased to 2.0% in July 2024 amid favourable base; projected to remain unchanged in August 2024 AUGUST 2024



Highlights





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As expected, the WPI inflation cooled to 2.0% in July 2024 from 3.4% in June 2024 owing to a favourable base

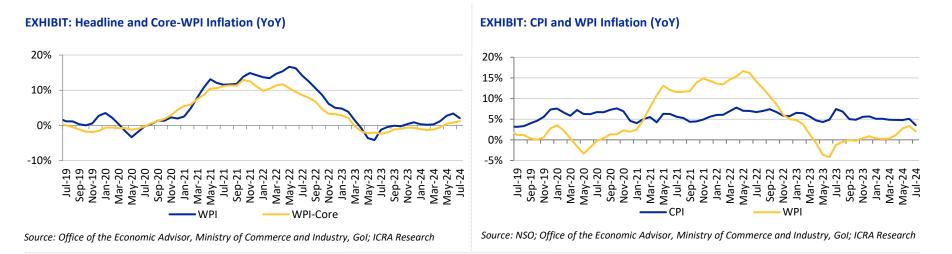
Primary food articles contributed majorly to this moderation, even as core-WPI posted a base-effect led uptick between these months

ICRA expects the WPI inflation to remain stable at 2.0% in August 2024, as softening in global commodity prices may offset base-led rise in primary food inflation Largely in line with our expectations (+2.1%), the year-on-year (YoY) WPI inflation witnessed a base effect-led moderation to 2.0% in July 2024 (-1.2% in July 2023) from 3.4% in June 2024 (-4.2% in June 2023). This was mainly driven by a significant dip in the inflation for primary food articles, even as that for manufactured non-food products (core-WPI) witnessed a mild uptick, compared to June 2024. The data for August 2024 points to a softening in global commodity prices, including crude oil amid growing recessionary concerns in the US, which augurs well for the WPI inflation for the current month. Besides, the sequential fall in most food prices in this month is likely to contain the base effect-led uptick in primary food inflation. ICRA estimates the inflation to remain stable at 2.0% in August 2024.

- WPI inflation expectedly eased to 2.0% in July 2024 amid a favourable base: Largely in line with ICRA's forecast (+2.1%), the WPI inflation moderated to 2.0% to July 2024 (-1.2% in July 2023) from the 16-month high of 3.4% in June 2024 (-4.2% in June 2023), on account of the favourable base effect.
- Primary food articles contributed majorly to this moderation: The primary food articles sub-group witnessed a sharp, albeit base effect-led dip in inflation levels between these months, exerting downward pressure to the extent of 135 bps to the headline inflation. The fuel and power, and non-food manufacturing products (core-WPI) were the only sub-groups to witness an uptick in their inflation prints in July 2024 compared to the prior month.
- Early data for August 2024 points to a stagnation in WPI inflation at ~2.0%: The near-term outlook for the WPI inflation remains benign. As per the data released by the Department of Consumer Affairs, the prices of a majority of food items have dipped on a sequential basis in August 2024 so far, amid a healthy progression in kharif sowing. Moreover, global commodity prices have moderated sharply over the past few weeks (Bloomberg commodity index: -4.1% MoM, -9.7% YoY during August 1-12, 2024), amid rising recessionary fears in the US. Additionally, the price of the Indian basket of crude oil has slumped by ~7.6% MoM during August 1-12, 2024, which augurs well for the WPI inflation print for the month. Overall, ICRA expects the WPI inflation to remain unchanged at 2.0% in August 2024 (-0.5% in August 2023).

WPI inflation saw a base-effect led softening to 2.0% in July 2024 from 3.4% in June 2024





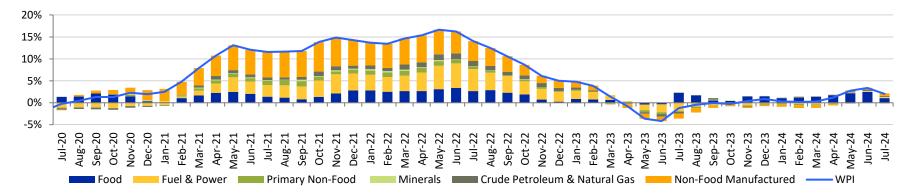
Similar to our forecast (+2.1%), the WPI inflation moderated to 2.0% to July 2024 (-1.2% in July 2023) from the 16-month high of 3.4% in June 2024 (-4.2% in June 2023), on account of a favourable base effect. On the contrary, the core-WPI inflation (with a weight of 55.1% in the WPI) rose modestly to 1.2% in July 2024 (-2.4% in July 2023) from 0.8% in June 2024 (-2.1% in June 2023), albeit on the back of an adverse base.

- Given the contrasting trends in the core-WPI inflation and the headline WPI inflation, the wedge between the two compressed to a nine-month low of (-) 87 bps in July 2024 from (-) 251 bps in June 2024.
- Notably, the moderation in CPI inflation to 3.5% in July 2024 from 5.1% in June 2024 was slightly sharper than that seen in the WPI inflation (to +2.0% from +3.4%), which resulted in the gap between the two shrinking to a 19-month low of 150 bps in July 2024 from 172 bps in June 2024.

Fall in headline WPI print in July 2024 relative to June 2024 mainly stemmed from primary food articles



EXHIBIT: Composition of WPI Inflation (YoY)



Source: Office of the Economic Advisor, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India (GoI); CEIC; ICRA Research

- The moderation in the headline WPI inflation in July 2024 vis-à-vis June 2024 stemmed from softening in the inflation prints for most sub-groups, including primary food articles (to a nine-month low +3.4% from +10.9%), manufactured food products (to +3.8% from +4.3%), crude petroleum and natural gas (to a three-month low +9.1% from +12.6%), minerals (to +6.6% from +9.6%), and primary non-food products (to -2.9% from -2.0%). However, fuel and power (to +1.7% in July 2024 from +1.0% in June 2024) and core-WPI (to +1.2% from +0.8%) witnessed a base-effect led uptick in inflation between these months.
- Overall, the fall of 132 bps in the YoY WPI print in July 2024 relative to June 2024 was mainly on account of primary food articles (-135 bps), followed by crude petroleum and natural gas (-7 bps), primary non-food articles (-4 bps), and minerals (-3 bps), outweighing the modest upticks in core-WPI (+15 bps), and fuel and power (+8 bps).
- On a sequential basis, the WPI rose by a mild 0.8% in July 2024, much shallower than 2.1% surge seen in July 2023, led by primary food articles (+3.9% in July 2024 vs. +11.4% in July 2023), manufactured food items (+0.2% vs. +0.7%), and crude petroleum and natural gas (+1.2% vs. +4.4%).

Share of items in WPI basket that saw MoM uptick in prices rose to ~49% in July 2024, staying above pre-pandemic average level



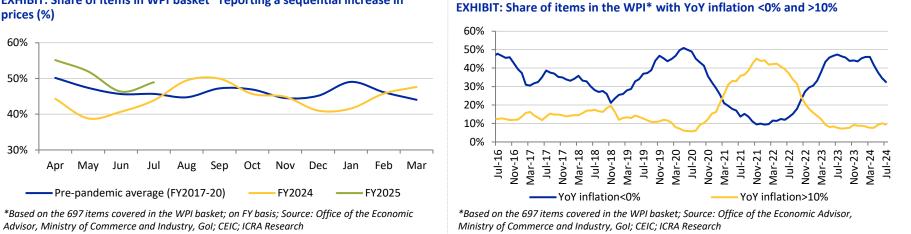
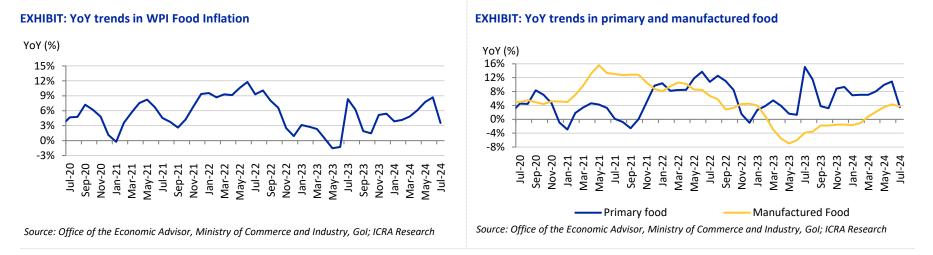


EXHIBIT: Share of items in WPI basket* reporting a sequential increase in prices (%)

- Contrary to the softening in the headline inflation, the share of items in the WPI basket that witnessed a sequential increase in prices rose to 48.9% in July 2024 from 46.3% in June 2024. Moreover, this surpassed the average level seen in July of FY2017-20 (45.7%), thereby exceeding the pre-pandemic average levels for the fifth consecutive month.
- Besides, the share of items reporting a YoY deflation eased to 32.5% in July 2024 to 34.6% in June 2024. However, the share of items in the WPI basket that reported a double-digit YoY inflation rate (>10%) also declined to 9.4% from a 15-month high of 10.1%, respectively.

WPI-food inflation softened to a nine-month low of 3.6% in July 2024, driven by a favourable base





The WPI-Food inflation (primary food articles and manufactured food items) eased to a nine-month low of 3.6% in July 2024 (+8.3% in July 2023) from 8.7% in June 2024 (-1.3% in June 2023), owing to a favourable base. This was led by both primary food articles (to a nine-month low +3.4% from +10.9%) and manufactured food products (to +3.8% from +4.3%, driven by vegetable and animal oils, dairy products, etc.).

- The sharp moderation in the inflation for primary food products in July 2024 relative to June 2024 was led by a YoY deflation of 8.9% in vegetables, after a gap of eight months, entirely driven by an elevated base (+67.6% in July 2023; +38.8% in June 2024, led by tomato, onion, brinjal, okra, cabbage etc.). Additionally, the YoY inflation for cereals (to +9.0% from +9.3%), pulses (to +20.3% from +21.6%), and condiment and spices (to a 41-month low +1.2% from +13.2%) softened in July 2024, vis-à-vis June 2024. In contrast, the remaining sub-categories saw a higher inflation print between these two months, namely, other food articles (to a 39-month high +15.9% from +15.5%), fruits (to a 23-month high +15.6% from +10.1%, led by mango, lemon etc.), eggs, meat and fish (to -1.6% from -3.1%), and milk (to +4.6% from +3.4%).
- In month-on-month (MoM) terms, the WPI-food sub-index rose by 2.7% in July 2024, much lower than the uptick of 7.8% seen in July 2023, led by both primary food articles (+3.9% vs. +11.4%, led by cereals, vegetables, etc.) and manufactured food products (+0.2% vs. +0.7%, led by vegetable and animal oils).

While inflation in crude petroleum and natural gas eased, that for fuel and power rose in July 2024, relative to June 2024



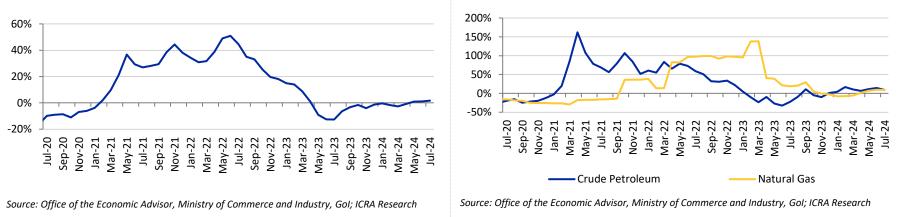


EXHIBIT: YoY trends in Crude Petroleum and Natural Gas Inflation

EXHIBIT: YoY trends in Fuel and Power Inflation

- The YoY inflation in fuel and power sub-index (weight in WPI: 13.2%) rose to a 16-month high of 1.7% in July 2024 (-12.7% in July 2023) from 1.0% in June 2024 (-12.5% in June 2023), amid an unfavorable base. This was entirely driven by an uptick in the inflation for mineral oils (to a 16-month high +3.7% in July 2024 from +1.9% in June 2024), which was partly offset by the YoY deflation in coal (to -1.5% from -1.3%) and electricity (to -1.7% from +0.2%) in July 2024.
- In contrast, the inflation in crude petroleum and natural gas softened to 9.1% in July 2024 (-13.7% in July 2023) from 12.6% in June 2024 (-21.4% in June 2023), on account of the base effect. This was driven by both natural gas (to +9.0% in July 2024 from +9.4% in June 2024) as well as crude petroleum (to +9.2% from +14.0%). Notably, the WPI index for crude petroleum for July 2024 was 3.2% higher than the final level for May 2024 this is higher than the mild uptick of 0.7% (in Rs./bbl terms) in the average monthly international crude oil prices of the Indian basket between these months, suggesting that the crude petroleum index for July 2024 may undergo a downward revision.

Core-WPI inflation inched up to a 17-month high of 1.2% in July 2024



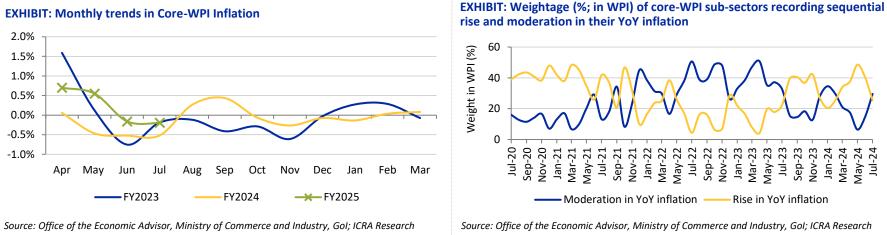


EXHIBIT: Monthly trends in Core-WPI Inflation

- The core-WPI hardened to a 17-month high of 1.2% in July 2024 (-2.4% in July 2023) from 0.8% in June 2024 (-2.1% in June 2023), amid a low base. Surprisingly, only 12 of the 21 sub-groups of the core-WPI (with a weight of 25.5% in the WPI) witnessed a higher print in July 2024 vis-à-vis June 2024, including manufacture of chemicals and chemical products, fabricated metal products, textiles, etc. In contrast, the remaining nine sub-sectors of the core-WPI (albeit with a relatively higher weight of 29.6% in the WPI) saw a moderation in their YoY inflation print between these two months. Additionally, five sub-groups witnessed a YoY deflation in July 2024, as against six in June 2024.
- Nevertheless, in sequential terms, the core-WPI index dipped by 0.2% in July 2024, for the second consecutive month. This was shallower than the MoM dip of 0.5% MoM dip seen in July 2023, amid a higher MoM print in as many as 12 of the 21 sub-sectors (with a weight of 34.1% in the WPI basket), including the manufacture of chemicals and chemical products, machinery and equipment, etc., in July 2024, relative to July 2023.

Inflation in industrial input costs inched up in July 2024, relative to June 2024, while farm input costs remained in deflationary zone



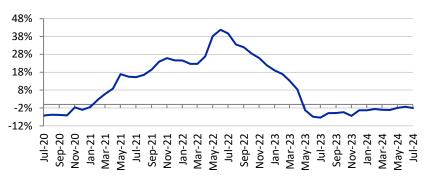
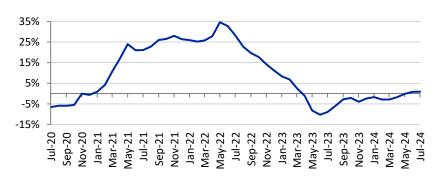


EXHIBIT: Farm inputs WPI (YoY)

Source: Office of the Economic Advisor, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Gol; ICRA Research

EXHIBIT: Industrial raw materials WPI (YoY)



Source: Office of the Economic Advisor, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Gol; ICRA Research

- The WPI inflation for industrial raw materials¹ inched up to touch a 16-month high 0.9% in July 2024 (-8.9% in July 2023) from 0.8% in June 2024 (-10.3% in June 2023), with the index recording a sequential uptick of 0.4% (+0.3% in July 2023) after a gap of seven months. Most fuel items (barring ATF, furnace and lube oil), fibres, cotton yarn, and pulp, paper and paperboard witnessed higher YoY inflation prints in the month.
- On the contrary, the WPI farm inputs² index remained in deflationary zone for the 15th consecutive month, with the pace of the same widening to 2.1% in July 2024 (-7.4% in July 2023) from 1.3% in June 2024 (-6.8% in June 2023), led by fodder, electricity, and agricultural and forestry machinery, even as HSD, fertilisers and nitrogen compounds, and pesticides and other agrochemical products recorded higher prints in the month.

1 Comprises primary non-food articles, minerals, coal, aviation turbine fuel, high speed diesel, naphtha, bitumen, furnace oil, lube oil, petroleum coke, electricity, cotton yarn, and paper and paper pulp from WPI

2 Comprises high speed diesel, fodder, electricity, fertilisers, pesticides and agricultural and forestry machinery from WPI

OUTLOOK: Despite broad-based MoM fall in food prices, YoY WPI-food inflation to inch up in August 2024

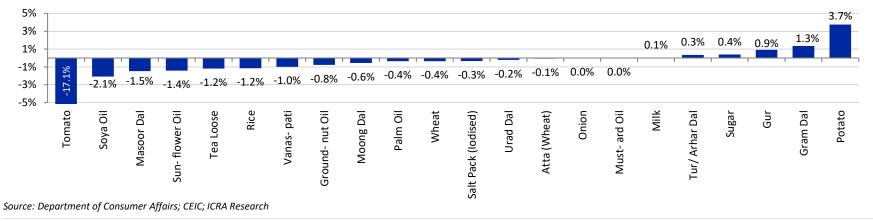


EXHIBIT: MoM trends in wholesale prices in August 2024 (till August 12, 2024)

- The data released by the Department of Consumer Affairs points to a MoM softening in the average wholesale prices of 16 of the 22 commodities in August 2024 (till Aug 12, 2024). Further, as many as 20 of the 22 items witnessed a weaker MoM performance in August 2024 vis-à-vis August 2023, barring palm oil and potato. The price of the latter rose by 3.7% MoM to a 44-month high of Rs 3,029/quintal on the back of demand-supply mismatches. Among other veggies, onion prices remained stable on a MoM basis in August 2024 (with high export duty leading to increased domestic supply) and tomato prices reported a sharp decline of 17.1% aided by the arrival of fresh crop in the market.
- On a YoY basis, all commodities excluding palm oil and potato witnessed an easing in their inflation rates in August 2024 (till Aug 12, 2024) relative to July 2024. The prices of rice, most edible oils, and pulses reported a lower inflation print in August 2024 vis-à-vis July 2024 aided by adequate rainfall and healthy progression of kharif sowing. Notwithstanding these trends, ICRA expects the WPI-food inflation print to inch up in August 2024 from 3.6% in July 2024, amid an unfavourable base in the primary food articles segment (+15.1% in July 2023; +11.4% in August 2023).

ICRA

OUTLOOK: Falling global commodity and crude oil prices in August 2024 augur well for WPI





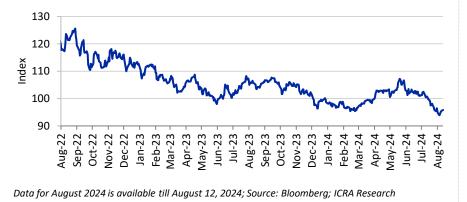
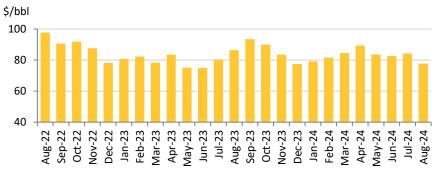


EXHIBIT: Trends in prices of Indian basket of crude oil



Data for August 2024 is available till August 12, 2024; Source: PPAC; ICRA Research

- Global commodity prices have declined continuously since mid-July 2024 amid rising recessionary fears in the USA and a likely slowdown in China. The Bloomberg commodity price index dipped sharply by 4.1% on a sequential basis in August 2024 (during August 1-12, 2024) to touch the lowest levels in three years, after falling by 3.1% in July 2024. On a YoY basis, the contraction in the index was significant at 9.7% in August 2024 (up to August 12, 2024) vs. 5.2% in July 2024. This augurs well for the WPI inflation print in the month.
- The average price of the Indian basket of crude oil averaged at \$77.7/bbl in August 2024 (during August 1-12, 2024), 7.6% lower on a MoM basis, as fears of a recession in the US overtook supply risks owing to the flaring-up of tensions in the Middle east. On a YoY basis, such prices were 10.0% lower in the month as against the 4.7% expansion seen in July 2024. The sharp fall in crude oil prices will exert downward pressure on the WPI inflation print in the ongoing month.

OUTLOOK: WPI inflation to remain stable at ~2.0% in August 2024





EXHIBIT: Trends in INR, DXY

Data for August 2024 is available till August 12, 2024; Source: Bloomberg; RBI; ICRA Research

- The USD/INR pair depreciated significantly to record low levels of 83.97/\$ on August 12, 2024, from 83.74/\$ seen at end-July 2024 in line with depreciation of most Asian currencies even though the DXY inched lower from 104.10 to 103.17 between these dates. The pair averaged at 83.88/\$ during August 1-12, 2024, compared to 83.59/\$ in July 2024, which is likely to exert mild upward pressure on the landed cost of imports in the current month.
- Overall, the headline WPI inflation is expected to remain stable at ~2.0% in August 2024 (-0.5% in August 2023), in line with that seen in July 2024 (-1.2% in July 2023).



Table A.1: Trend in Monthly WPI Inflation

	Weight	YoY Inflation			MoM	
		May-24	May-24	June-24	July-24	July-24
		Initial	Revised	Initial	Initial	Initial
WPI	100.00	2.6%	2.7%	3.4%	2.0%	0.8%
Primary Articles	22.62	7.2%	7.4%	8.8%	3.1%	3.1%
- Food	15.26	9.8%	9.9%	10.9%	3.4%	3.9%
- Non-Food	4.12	-4.0%	-3.9%	-2.0%	-2.9%	0.9%
- Minerals	0.83	4.3%	5.7%	9.6%	6.6%	1.0%
- Crude Petroleum and Natural Gas	2.41	9.8%	9.8%	12.6%	9.1%	1.2%
Fuel and Power	13.15	1.3%	1.0%	1.0%	1.7%	0.1%
- Coal	2.14	1.2%	1.2%	-1.3%	-1.5%	-0.1%
- Minerals Oils	7.95	2.0%	2.0%	1.9%	3.7%	1.1%
- Electricity	3.06	-0.4%	-2.0%	0.2%	-1.7%	-2.7%
Manufactured Products	64.23	0.8%	1.0%	1.4%	1.6%	-0.1%
- Food	9.12	2.7%	3.5%	4.3%	3.8%	0.2%
- Non-Food	55.11	0.4%	0.5%	0.8%	1.2%	-0.2%

Source: Office of the Economic Advisor, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GoI; CEIC; ICRA Research



Table A.2: Trend in Monthly Inflation related to Non-Food Manufactured Products

	Weight	YoY Inflation				MoM
		May-24	May-24	June-24	July-24	July-24
		Initial	Revised	Initial	Initial	Initial
Non-Food Manufactured Products	55.11	0.4%	0.5%	0.8%	1.2%	-0.2%
Beverages	0.91	2.1%	2.0%	2.1%	2.1%	0.1%
Tobacco Products	0.51	2.3%	1.7%	0.7%	2.3%	1.3%
Textiles	4.88	0.0%	-0.1%	1.2%	2.1%	0.2%
Wearing Apparel	0.81	1.7%	1.3%	1.7%	1.3%	-0.1%
Leather and Related Products	0.54	0.3%	0.4%	-0.5%	-1.0%	0.3%
Wood and Products of Wood and Cork	0.77	3.0%	3.1%	3.2%	3.5%	-0.2%
Paper and Paper Products	1.11	-4.9%	-5.4%	-3.7%	-0.6%	0.3%
Printing and Reproduction of Recorded Media	0.68	5.1%	5.1%	2.9%	3.3%	0.6%
Chemicals and Chemical Products	6.47	-2.7%	-2.7%	-1.1%	0.1%	0.3%
Pharmaceuticals, Medicinal Chemical and Botanical Products	1.99	1.2%	0.8%	0.4%	2.0%	0.5%
Rubber and Plastics Products	2.30	0.5%	0.5%	1.3%	1.6%	0.2%
Other Non-Metallic Mineral Products	3.20	-1.9%	-1.8%	-2.4%	-3.0%	-0.8%
Basic Metals	9.65	0.3%	0.8%	1.1%	0.9%	-1.4%
Fabricated Metal Products, except Machinery and Equipment	3.15	-2.4%	-2.4%	-2.6%	-1.5%	0.4%
Computer, Electronic and Optical Products	2.01	3.1%	3.3%	3.1%	2.3%	-0.7%
Electrical Equipment	2.93	2.2%	2.2%	2.3%	1.9%	-0.1%
Machinery and Equipment	4.79	1.9%	1.7%	2.1%	1.4%	-0.2%
Motor Vehicles, Trailers and Semi-Trailers	4.97	1.2%	1.3%	1.6%	0.9%	-0.1%
Other Transport Equipment	1.65	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	1.4%	0.3%
Furniture	0.73	-0.7%	-0.8%	-0.8%	-1.6%	-0.9%
Other Manufacturing	1.06	12.9%	13.0%	12.3%	18.2%	1.0%

Source: Office of the Economic Advisor, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Gol; CEIC; ICRA Research



Table A.3: Sub-sectors with items having major contribution in the WPI Inflation

Sub-Group	Item Description	Weight (%)
	Milk	4.44
Primary Food Articles	Paddy	1.43
	Wheat	1.03
	Industrial Wood	0.89
Primary Non-food Articles	Raw Cotton	0.66
	Fodder	0.53
	Copper Concentrate	0.33
Minerals	Iron Ore	0.21
	Phosphorite	0.11
Crude Petroleum and Natural Gas	Crude Petroleum	1.95
Crude Petroleum and Natural Gas	Natural Gas	0.46
	HSD	3.10
Fuel and Power	Electricity	3.06
	Petrol	1.60
	Vegetable and Animal Oils and Fats	2.64
Manufactured Food Products	Grain Mill Products	2.01
	Dairy Products	1.17
	Basic Metals	9.65
Non-Food Manufactured Products	Chemicals and Chemical Products	6.47
	Motor Vehicles, Trailers and Semi-Trailers	4.97

Source: Office of the Economic Advisor, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Gol; CEIC; ICRA Research





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