RBI Monetary Policy

April 04, 2019



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The tone of the MPC was Neutral from calibrated accommodative.

The MPC member kept the GDP forecast constant at above 7% for FY20

Inflation targets lower for March quarter to 2.9%-3.0% in H1FY20.

The MPC, in its assessment of inflation, said that food prices remain low and fuel inflation has declined further.

First Bi-Monthly Monetary Policy of Fiscal 2020

The MPC (Monetary Policy Committee) of the RBI has decided to reduce the interest rates by 25 bps which reduced the repo rates to 6.00% from earlier 6.25%, the first cut in fiscal 2020. The reverse repo too was slashed by 25 bps to 5.75%. The Statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) was maintained at the same rate of 19.25%. The reduction of the repo rate was on expected lines as market consensus had predicted a rate cut in the new financial year after a rate cut in his maiden policy of the new governor. The tone of the MPC changed from "Calibrated tightening" to "Neutral" stance of monetary policy in consonance and reduced the inflation target for the H2FY19 and H1FY20, while supporting GDP growth target of above 7%.

Maintains GDP Forecast above 7% for FY20.

The MPC member kept the GDP forecast constant at above 7% for FY20 and lowered GDP growth rate to 7.2% from earlier target of 7.4% in FY20. Real GDP growth projected to improve from 7% in FY19 to 7.2% in FY20. The governor feels that multiple factors like fall in crude prices, lower inflation, higher liquidity by way of rise in the MSP prices and increase in the capacity utilization rate will lead to increase in the growth in the economy. The governor urban consumption may get support from election spending, tax exemptions and strong flow of personal loans rural consumption may get support from farm income schemes, loan waivers and thrust on rural infrastructure.

Downtick in Inflation

On inflation, the committee has started to feel the ease on the inflation side stating to be on a benign side and has reduced the inflation target to 2.9-3% in H120 and 3.5-3.8% in H2FY20. Inflation remains within the MPC's mandated range of 4 (+/-2) %. The chief reason for steep decline in the inflation is due to fall in crude prices to \$ 70 per barrel from \$85 per barrel. The MPC, in its assessment of inflation, said that food prices remain low and fuel inflation has declined further. In addition, core inflation in March too was lower than expected.

Outlook

RBI for the first time in FY2020has lowered the repo rate with the change in its stance to Neutral from calibrated accommodative stance followed by softening the inflation targets steeply on account of falling crude prices and stronger rupee. The RBI has also maintained GDP growth rate of above 7% in its current policy and slashing repo rate will definitely boost liquidity into the system. The governor also hinted for adequate liquidity into the system. If crude continues to stay at a current levels of 70\$ / barrel, we feel, we can witness one rate cut in the up-coming bi-monthly policy of the new financial year.



April 04, 2019

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