



Can NDA-II repeat the performance of NDA-I?

Can the next five years deliver on economic growth, along with reforms?

- The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has retained power for the third consecutive term, albeit with a narrower majority (293 seats) than expected. The BJP fell short of a single-party majority (won 240 seats) in the 543-seat lower house of parliament for the first time since its government came to power in 2014, leading to the formation of a coalition government in 2024. The return of BJP-led coalition government (which we call NDA-II in this note) makes NDA-I during FY00 and FY04, under Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a relevant episode. In this note, we compare the performance of NDA-I vs. UPA-decade and BJP-decade in terms of economic growth and reforms. We look at NDA-I (FY00-04), UPA-II (FY05-09), UPA-II (FY10-14), BJP-I (FY15-19) and BJP-II (FY20-24) in this note.
- Interestingly, there was no dearth of economic reforms that were implemented during NDA-I, despite the fact that the BJP's mandate was much weaker (182 seats). The economic performance, however, was much weaker at the turn of the century, a lot of which can be attributed to specific factors, which do not weigh on India's economy today.

Reform agenda during NDA-I was as good as it can get...

- The loss of an absolute majority of the BJP in recent general elections have brought the coalition government in power. While some sections may see it as a constraint, history does not support such skepticism. We must remember that not only India achieved its economic liberalization under the Congress-led coalition government, headed by Mr. P V Narasimha Rao, in the early 1990s, but also the agenda of opening-up and reforming the economy continued during the successive coalition governments between 1999 and 2011. There was certainly an episode of policy paralysis between 2012 and 2014 (marred by high corruption and sharp deterioration in economic performance), which helped BJP gain an absolute majority in the Parliament in 2014 elections.
- Several important reforms were implemented during NDA-I, many of which were carried forward after the change in the government in 2004 (Exhibit 1). From assuring food security to the poorest families by launching Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) in 2000, the Government of India (GoI) heavily subsidized rice and wheat purchases by such families. The scheme was expanded in Jun'03 and Aug'04. AAY was subsumed under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013, which was expanded under the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) during the Covid-19 pandemic. Since the beginning of CY24, beneficiaries are entitled to receive free food grains for the next five years.
- Similarly, while Pokhran nuclear tests were conducted in 1998 under the BJP-led NDA government, the Indo-US nuclear deal was signed by Mr. Manmohan Singh, the then PM heading the Congress-led UPA government. Further, the opening-up of the economy by relaxing foreign direct investment (FDI) limits in various sectors have continued under various governments it was raised to 49% in the telecom sector and 26% in the insurance sector under NDA-I, up to 51% FDI was allowed in multi-brand retail by UPA-II, and then more than 50% foreign investment was allowed in the insurance and defense sectors by the BJP-II government.
- Besides, NDA-I was focused on building infrastructure, just like the previous and successive governments. PM Gram Sadak Yojana, golden quadrilateral, national highways development project, and National Rail Vikas Yojana were all initiated by the NDA-I government. It brought the telecom revolution, introduced Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) Act, established tariff authority of major ports, and enacted Electricity and IT Act. Further, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan was implemented by the NDA-I government to universalize elementary education by making free and compulsory education to children aged 6-14 years a fundamental right.
- Moreover, the disinvestment ministry was set up under the NDA-I government and the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act was also passed by the NDA-I government.
- Overall, like the Congress-led coalition government in 1991, economic reforms continued under the BJP-led NDA government between 1999 and 2004, which continued under the Congress-led UPA government during the next decade (FY05-14) and the BJP-led majority government in the past decade (FY15-24). Barring a couple of short episodes of 1996-98 and 2012-14, the Indian economy has firmly been on the reform agenda, irrespective of the government, since early 1990s and we expect the trend to continue in the future as well.

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...but economic performance was weak, which will likely not be repeated now

- Although the reform agenda was on track during NDA-I, the economic performance was not as strong at the turn of the century (Exhibit 2).
- Though the average real GDP growth during NDA-I (FY00-04) was better than 5.1% during FY92-96, the average real GDP growth was only 4.2% during FY01 and FY03. This was significant because there were only three years (FY09, FY20 and FY21) of less than 5% growth during the next two decades (Exhibit 3). At the same time, however, inflation was the lowest during NDA-I. Retail inflation (measured by CPI for industrial workers) averaged just 3.8% and the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation averaged 4.6% during NDA-I, which was lower than in the subsequent periods (Exhibit 4).
- It is also interesting to know that the Center's capex (excluding loans & advances) grew at an average of 36.7% during NDA-I, much better than during any other five-year periods post that (Exhibit 5). Even the combined capex of the Center and CPSEs (central public sector enterprises) grew at a CAGR of 17% during NDA-I, much higher than in the subsequent five-year periods and compared to 9.4% under BJP-II (Exhibit 6).
- Such high growth in capex during NDA-I was achieved by keeping revenue expenditure contained, which helped keep the average fiscal deficit (as % of GDP) also under control during that period (Exhibits 7 and 8).
- There were a lot of factors that contributed to slower GDP growth at the turn of the century. The global economy was coming out of the East Asian Crisis of 1998 and the dot-com recession, which made it a slow growth period at the turn of the century for the entire world. Further, because of slow growth and contained fiscal deficit, India posted its first-ever three-year episode of current account surpluses between FY02 and FY04, which actually helped the economy to grow much faster in the subsequent UPA-I period (Exhibit 9). Had the economy not had a current account surplus in FY04 (of as much as 2.3% of GDP), a deterioration in the current account balance by as much as 4.5pp of GDP during the next five years could have cut short India's high-growth phase or the correction period post the great financial crisis 2008 would have been more painful. This is because such space on current account helped India's investments to grow rapidly and for a longer period, from 25% of GDP in FY04 to as much as 38% of GDP in FY09 (Exhibit 10).

NDA-II could repeat NDA-I performance on reform agenda, with better economic growth

- The mandate of the BJP in NDA-II (starting FY25) is much stronger than during NDA-I. This was quite visible in the Cabinet allocation, wherein the BJP retained most of the high-profile departments with their ministers (such as home, defence, finance, external affairs, road transport and highways, among others). During the past decade, the BJP has very carefully created an image of a clean government, minimizing wasteful spending and corruption, making the Budget more transparent by reducing off-budget expenditure/borrowings leading to higher center's capex allocation, resisting calls for large rural support, and maintaining fiscal prudence. We strongly believe (and hope) that there will not be substantial changes in its mindset/philosophy, creating policy continuity.
- The coalition parties also seem dedicated and supportive of the BJP government in these early days, helping to retain Mr. Om Birla as speaker of the Lok Sabha as well for the second consecutive term. All this should help the government to continue with the economic reform agenda during the next five years. However, there could be more challenges to pass legislation on the more ambitious parts of the government reform agenda in areas like agriculture, land, labor and judicial, which are usually out of Budgets, as they would require more negotiations and debates. This is not necessarily adverse for the economy, as healthy discussions could delay but also improve the legislations.
- At the same time, we must remember that the global economy has recovered decently from the Covid-19 pandemic, and India's economy has also <u>performed</u> well. Some long-term challenges in terms of higher government deficit and debt, remain and could hinder economic growth. Domestically, we believe that while India's growth could weaken to 6-7% during the next few years compared to an average growth of 8.3% in the past three years (FY22-24), it will remain strong, especially considering the global economy.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as an inflation-targeting Central Bank has witnessed a massive improvement in its credibility during the past decade. This also gives the confidence that CPI-inflation will remain under control, say less than or close to 5% on an average, over the next few years, even if the medium-term stated target of 4% remains elusive.
- Lastly, India's stature and its position in global forums has also strengthened, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic, which can be expected to continue in the future.
- All-in-all, the BJP-led coalition NDA-II government during the next five years could not only repeat the performance of NDA-I on the reform agenda, but it could do so with better economic growth (vs. NDA-I).



Exhibit 1: List of selected reforms implemented during various governments

	Major announcements /reforms
NDA-I1 (FY00-FY04)	 Boost to infrastructure: National Highways Development Project, National Rail Vikas Yojna, Golden Quadrilateral Gram Sadak Yojna Telecom revolution FDI in telecom raised to 49%, FDI of 26% allowed in insurance sector Agriculture: Agricultural Produce Mkt Committee Act, Kisan Credit Card Electricity Act 2003 Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan Food security: Antyodaya Anna Yojana Fiscal reforms: Disinvestment of government loss-making enterprises, Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act
UPA-I (FY05-FY09)	 Pokharan Nuclear Test, 1998 Special Economic Zones (SEZ) Act NREGA: world's largest job guarantee scheme Right to information Act Introduction of Value Added Tax (VAT) India-US nuclear deal Financial reliefs: Income tax exemption limit raised by INR40k to INR100k per annum and INR600b farm loan waiver
UPA-II (FY10-FY14)	 Companies Bill 2013 Aadhar: To provide a unique 12-digit individual identification number issued by UIDAI Government tabled Direct Tax Code (DTC) bill and Constitutional Amendment Bill to introduce a Goods And Services Tax (not passed) Government allows FDI up to 51% in multi-brand retail Pension Funds Regulatory Development Authority Bill, a regulator for the pension sector Food Security Act Land Acquisition Act, 2013
BJP-I (FY15-FY19)	 Insolvency & Bankruptcy code Direct transfer benefits through JAM trinity (Jan dhan + Aadhar + mobile) Swachh Bharat Abhiyan ("Clean India") Digital India, and Skill India Mission Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) Demonetization Goods and services tax (GST) PM Mudra Yojna (PMMY) The Muslim Women Bill (Protection of Rights on Marriage), 2017 (Passed in July, 2019) Ayushman Bharat Yojana Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana (PM-KISAN)
BJP-II (FY20-FY24)	 Abrogation of Article 370; Reorganization of Jammu & Kashmir state The government removed the income-tax surcharge on FPIs and allowed 100% foreign investment in coal mining and contract manufacturing. 10% reservation to economically weaker sections. Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) National Education Policy (NEP) The government consolidated 44 labour laws into four codes, under the Wage Code Bill, Health & Working Conditions Code 2020, Industrial Relations Code 2020, and Occupational Safety and Social Security Code 2020 Reduce the corporate tax rate from 30% to 25% Allowed more than 50% foreign investment in insurance and defense Housing for all (2022) Production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for selected sectors Unified Payment Interface (UPI)

Source: Various national sources compiled by MOFSL



Exhibit 2: A comparison of economic performance during the past 25 years

Economic indicators (Annual Average)						
(% CAGR, unless stated otherwise)	FY97-99	NDA-I (FY00-04)	UPA-I (FY05-09)	UPA-II (FY10-14)	BJP-I (FY15-19)	BJP-II (FY20-24)
Nominal GDP	13.7	9.5	14.6	15.3	11.0	9.6
Real GDP	5.9	5.8	6.9	6.7	7.4	4.6
Wholesale Price index (WPI)	5.0	4.6	6.0	6.9	1.3	4.9
Consumer price index (CPI) - All India*				9.7	4.5	5.7
CPI-IW	9.8	3.8	6.3	10.2	4.9	6.0
Fiscal deficit (% of GDP)	5.8	5.6	4.2	5.4	3.7	6.6
Current account balance (% of GDP)	-1.2	0.5	-1.2	-3.3	-1.4	-0.8
Foreign exchange reserves (USD bn, period-end)	32.8	110.3	252.3	303.7	411.9	645.6
USD/INR (unit)	38.4	46.2	44.2	51.3	65.7	76.7

^{*}CPI - All India data began from 2011-12

CPI for industrial workers (CPI-IW)

Source: CSO, RBI, various national sources, MOFSL

Exhibit 3: Real GDP growth averaged only 5.8% during NDA-I, with 4.2% growth during FY01 and FY03

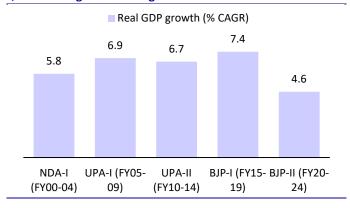
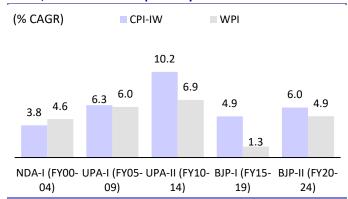


Exhibit 4: Retail inflation, at the same time, was ~4% during NDA-I, the lowest in the past 25 years



Source: Union Budget documents, CGA, MOFSL

Exhibit 5: Center's capex grew at record 37% per annum pace during NDA-I...

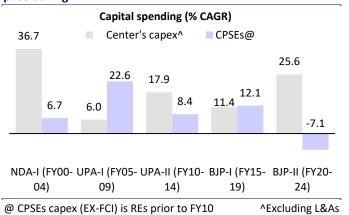
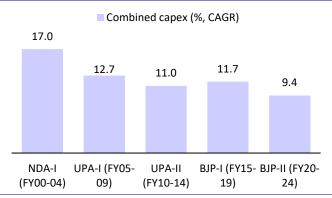


Exhibit 6: ...and the average growth of the combined capex was also robust at 17%



Source: Union Budget documents, MOFSL

ding L&As Source: Officin Budget documents, MOPS



Exhibit 7: Total spending growth was still contained during NDA-I...

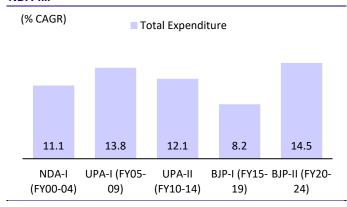
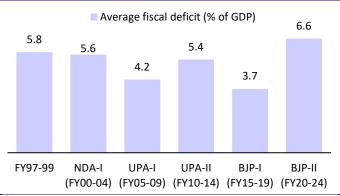


Exhibit 8: ...which helped narrow fiscal deficit vs. the previous years (FY97-99)



Source: CSO, MOFSL

Exhibit 9: India's current account was in surplus for three consecutive years during NDA-I...

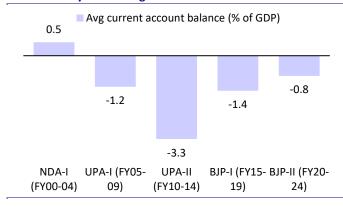
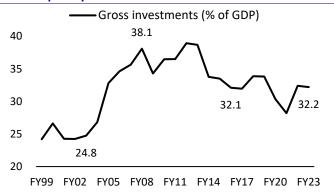


Exhibit 10: ...which allowed investment rate to surge rapidly in subsequent years



Source: CSO, MOFSL

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Grievance Redressal Cell

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Registration details of group entities: Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd. (MOFSL): INZ000158836 (BSE/NSE/MCX/NCDEX): CDSL and NSDL: IN-DP-16-2015: Research Analyst: INH000000412, AMFI: ARN .: 146822. IRDA Corporate Agent - CA0579. Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd. is a distributor of Mutual Funds, PMS, Fixed Deposit, Insurance, Bond, NCDs and IPO products

Customer having any query/feedback/ clarification may write to query@motilaloswal.com. In case of grievances for any of the services rendered by Motilal Oswal Financial Services Limited (MOFSL) write to grievances@motilaloswal.com, for DP to dpgrievances@motilaloswal.com.

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