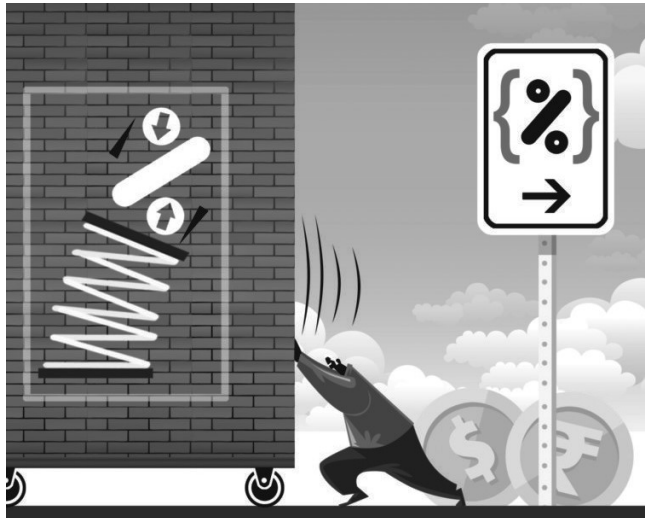


# Why did the RBI peg the exchange rate?



ABHISHEK ANAND, JOSH FELMAN & ARVIND SUBRAMANIAN

In a series of recent articles, we pointed out that in 2022, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) abandoned the flexible exchange rate regime that had been in place for three decades and replaced it with a de facto peg against the dollar. We emphasised how this change cost the economy, resulting in an uncompetitive exchange rate and lost exports, overly tight liquidity at a time of decelerating growth, and heightened risks of speculative attacks. This begs an important question: Why did the RBI change policy?

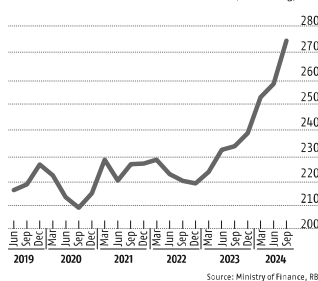
The RBI must come out with an official explanation, but until it does, we can only guess. But there are a few reasonable hypotheses.

One common explanation is that it happened accidentally. That is to say, the RBI never meant to peg the exchange rate. Its real objective was to rebuild reserves after the country's foreign exchange cushion had been eroded in the middle of 2022. So, when capital started to flow into the country again, attracted by India's post-pandemic resurgence, the Central bank decided to buy up the dollars rather than allow the rupee to appreciate.

There is clearly something to this hypothesis, as the RBI has often preferred to build reserves rather than allow appreciation. But the explanation is surely incomplete. For a start, it does not explain why the RBI has since 2022 intervened repeatedly on both sides of the market, not just to prevent appreciation but also to forestall depreciation. Nor does it explain why the RBI fought so hard to preserve the peg when depreciation pressures arose in late 2024, even at the cost of expending sizeable amounts of the country's hard-earned reserves.

A second hypothesis is that the RBI was focused on combating inflation, and worried that a depreciation would undermine their efforts. It is true that inflation remained above the 6 per cent limit for some time after the pandemic. It seems reasonable, then, to think that the RBI wanted an extra instrument in its anti-inflation fight, especially since part of the inflation problem in early 2022 was coming from abroad.

## EXTERNAL COMMERCIAL BORROWINGS



(Outstanding: \$ bn)

But a peg would not have provided this instrument. Instead, the RBI would have needed to allow the exchange rate to appreciate, to reduce the rupee's impact of higher foreign prices. In any case, the whole issue proved moot, as global petroleum and fertiliser prices came down by more than 50 per cent in the second half of 2022 and have not been a problem since. Accordingly, inflation concerns cannot explain why the rate was pegged since late 2022.

Another hypothesis commonly advanced is political, namely that the government prefers a strong rupee. It is true that politicians of all stripes, in all countries, dislike falling currencies. But despite these preferences the RBI had nonetheless maintained the traditional semi-flexible rupee policy for three decades, including for seven years under the current government.

So for this explanation to be valid, we would need to identify a major shift in politics that took place in late 2022. None seems obvious.

Still, we are getting close to the nub of the issue. We need to find an important development in 2022 that would have caused the RBI to shift its exchange rate policy. We have already ruled out a political shift. But perhaps there is an economic one. A clue is provided by the figure which shows that External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs) surged starting in early 2023. But what is the link between

ECBs and exchange rate policy?

To answer this question, recall the economic situation in 2022. At that point, the critical issue facing the authorities was how to translate India's post-pandemic resurgence into a sustained boom. To achieve this, investment needed to revive. And while many firms indeed had ambitious projects on the drawing board, particularly in infrastructure, they needed financing, preferably from foreign markets, which offer lower rates and longer maturities than domestic ones. In the middle of the year, however, these financing plans were suddenly threatened, when the rupee's decline has begun to increase interest rates sharply. Something needed to be done. One potential response was to peg the exchange rate, because that would reduce the risk of depreciation—a key component of the total effective cost of foreign borrowing.

We don't know, of course, whether this consideration was the main reason for the change in policy.

But without doubt, reducing effective foreign borrowing costs was one of its main effects: Indeed, the cost reduction was so pronounced that ECBs took off despite dollar interest rates having risen substantially. By early 2023, the stock of ECB debt had grown to \$273 billion, an increase of one-third in just two years. And looking at ECBs might well under-

state the total foreign currency liability exposure if Indian firms have raised money offshore in other ways.

Even so, overall private investment did not take off. So, it is possible that the major effect of the "subsidy"—the reduction in exchange rate volatility—was that firms merely substituted foreign borrowing for domestic financing.

What is certain is that the surge in ECBs had an unwelcome side-effect, namely that it increased the exposure of private firms to the risk of currency depreciation. And this put the RBI in a bind when the dollar began to rise on global foreign exchanges in October 2024. If it allowed the rupee to depreciate, this would put stress on firms, such as those in infrastructure, that had borrowed in dollars but were earning revenues in rupees. On the other hand, minimising the rupee's depreciation against a rising dollar would cause the rupee to appreciate against third currencies such as the euro, squeezing the profitability of the vital export sector.

In the event, the decision to defend the peg in October 2024 led to a serious erosion of India's competitiveness, as the RBI itself noted in its latest bulletin. Moreover, the more recent attempt to control the pace and extent of the rupee's decline has increased anxiety and accelerated the capital outflows. Reserves have consequently fallen by \$70 billion in the past few months, around \$6 billion just in the past week alone.

The lessons are clear. Short-term solutions sometimes end up creating long-term problems, from which it is difficult to extricate. Everyone knows the oft-quoted lines from Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*: "The chapter on the Fall of the Rupee you may omit. It is somewhat too sensational. Even these metallic problems have their melodramatic side." Ironically, in this episode, it is the rupee not falling and remaining stubbornly stable that may have dramatic consequences.

The authors are, respectively, with the Madras Institute of Development Studies, JI Consulting, and the Pearson Institute for International Economics

### INSILCO LIMITED

(Under Voluntary Liquidation w.e.f. 25.08.2021)  
CIN: L24209UP2019PL101541  
Regd. Office - B-23, Sector-63, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301  
Phone: 9853292693, Email: insilco2@gmail.com, Website: www.insilcoindia.com

#### Statement of Un-audited Financial Results

for the Quarter and Nine months ended 31 December 2024 (Rs. in Lakhs)

Particulars	Quarter ended 31 Dec 2024		Previous 3 months ended 31 Dec 2024		Corresponding 3 months ended in the previous year 31 Dec 2023	
	(Reviewed)	(Audited)	(Reviewed)	(Audited)	(Reviewed)	(Audited)
Total income from operations (net)	66	191	4,196	3,982		
(Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	-24	-112	3,438	3,832		
(Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	-24	-112	3,438	3,832		
(Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	-41	-160	3,136	3,577		
Total Comprehensive (Loss) for the period (Comprising (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	-41	-160	3,136	3,577		
paid up Equity Share Capital	6,272	6,272	6,272	6,272		
Reserves (excluding Reserves) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet of the previous year			-3,307			
Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations):						
(a) Basic	-0.07	-0.26	5.00	5.70		
(b) Diluted	-0.07	-0.26	5.00	5.70		

Note: 1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The Statutory Auditor has issued modified Audit Report on the Standalone Interim Financial Statements as at and for the quarter/nine months ended December 31, 2024. The full format of the Quarterly Annual Financial Results with the Review Report are available on the website of Stock Exchange (www.bseindia.com) and the Company's website (www.insilcoindia.com). 2. The Company does not have any Exceptional and Extraordinary Items to report in above periods.

For and on behalf of Board of Directors of Insilco Limited (Under voluntary liquidation w.e.f. 25.08.2021)

Sd/- Parveen Narganjan Vised Managing Director DIN: 08524466	Sd/- Kishu Gupta Liquidator of Insilco Limited Registration no. IBBI/UPA-061/P-09-2024-001-002/1939
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Dated: January 15, 2025 Place: Mumbai Place: Noida

### Kolhapur Municipal Corporation

(Health/Solid Waste Management Department)

#### Public Tender Notice No. 101 First Extension

This is to inform all organizations/contractors in Kolhapur city and outside the city that for the Kolhapur Municipal Health Solid Waste Project, the solid waste collected daily within the city of Kolhapur will be processed and disposed of in a scientific manner. (Selection of Agency for Development of Solid Waste Management Plant on Design Build Operate Transfer (DBOT) Mode for Kolhapur Municipal Corporation, Kolhapur) Tenders are invited vide Public Tender Notice No. 101 for appointing Institutions/Agencies. Another extension is being granted till date 14/01/2025 to 07/02/2025. However, interested tenders should visit [www.mahatender.gov.in](http://www.mahatender.gov.in) of Government of Maharashtra by 03.30 PM on 07/02/2025 to receive and submit tenders.

Sd/-  
Add. Commissioner  
Kolhapur Municipal Corporation

### Invest Karnataka Forum

(A Government of Karnataka Organisation)

3rd Floor, Khanjari Bhawan (East Wing), No.49  
Race Course Road, Bengaluru - 560001, Ph: 080-22062633 / 22050333  
No. KF/K-2025/Five Star Hotels/2024-25 Date: 13.01.2025

#### SHORT-TERM TENDER FOR SELECTION OF FIVE STAR HOTELS FOR PROVIDING CATERING SERVICES DURING "INVEST KARNATAKA - 2025" (Through E-Procurement only)

Invest Karnataka Forum (IKF), a company registered under Section 8 of Companies Act 2013 is engaged in promotion of investments in industry and service sector in the State of Karnataka. IKF intends to avail the services of Five Star Hotels for providing Catering Services to VIPs/Dignitaries during Global Investors Meet - "Invest Karnataka-2025" to be held at The Bangalore Palace during February 11-14, 2025. IKF invites Proposals for selection of the proposed Five Star Hotels for providing Catering Services. Tender documents containing details of eligibility criteria, scope of services and other terms and conditions may be obtained from the website of e-procurement Department, Government of Karnataka. The last date for submission of Tenders at <http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> is 29.01.2025 at 5.00 pm. IKF reserves the right to reject any or all Proposals without assigning any reason, whatsoever.

Sd/- Chief Executive Officer, IKF

### HDFC Life

Sarvatha ke jayo!

HDFC Life Insurance Company Limited CIN: L6510MH2000PLC128245

Registered Office: 13th Floor, Lotha Excelus, Apollo Mills Compound, N.M. Joshi Marg, Mahaxmi, Mumbai 400 011 (RDAJ Reg. No. 101 dated 12.10.2006)

Ph: 022-67516666, Fax: 022-67516661, Email: investor.service@hdfclife.com, Website: www.hdfclife.com

#### Consolidated Financial Results

(₹ in Lakhs)

Sr. No.	Particulars	Three months ended / As at			Nine months ended / As at			Year ended / As at
		December 31, 2024 (Reviewed)	September 30, 2024 (Reviewed)	December 31, 2023 (Audited)	December 31, 2024 (Reviewed)	December 31, 2023 (Audited)	March 31, 2024 (Audited)	
1.	Premium Income (Gross)	17,28,220	16,93,440	15,72,714	47,03,093	42,14,052	63,08,156	
2.	Net Profit for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	45,237	44,046	36,944	1,39,200	1,19,970	1,56,967	
3.	Net Profit for the period before Tax (After Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	45,237	44,046	36,944	1,39,200	1,19,970	1,56,967	
4.	Net Profit for the period after Tax (After Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	42,131	43,518	36,754	1,33,546	1,16,244	1,57,408	
5.	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising profit for the period (after tax) and other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
6.	Equity Share Capital (Paid up)	2,15,280	2,15,222	2,15,066	2,15,280	2,15,066	2,15,044	
7.	Reserves (excluding Reserves)	10,07,070	12,61,499	11,63,849	10,07,070	11,63,849	12,06,490	
8.	Earnings per share (Face value of ₹10 each)							
a)	Basic (not annualised for three/nine months)(in ₹)	1.98	2.02	1.71	6.31	5.41	7.32	
b)	Diluted (not annualised for three/nine months)(in ₹)	1.98	2.02	1.71	6.20	5.40	7.31	

#### Standalone Financial Results

Key numbers of Standalone Results of the Company are as under: (₹ in lakh)

Sr. No.	Particulars	Three months ended / As at			Nine months ended / As at			Year ended / As at
		December 31, 2024 (Reviewed)	September 30, 2024 (Reviewed)	December 31, 2023 (Audited)	December 31, 2024 (Reviewed)	December 31, 2023 (Audited)	March 31, 2024 (Audited)	
1.	Premium Income (Gross)	17,27,501	16,92,745	15,52,586	47,01,334	42,13,892	63,07,648	
2.	Profit before tax	44,482	43,756	36,684	1,37,987	1,14,142	1,56,384	
3.	Profit after tax	41,494	43,299	36,506	1,32,558	1,15,710	1,55,886	
4.	Total Comprehensive Income*	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	

Additional Information: Profit after Tax = (a) + (b) + (c)

(a) Existing business surplus	1,48,341	1,33,100	1,25,838	4,23,052	3,58,786	5,22,075
(b) New business strain	(1,26,784)	(1,13,631)	(1,14,837)	(3,55,812)	(3,14,188)	(4,54,675)
(c) Shareholders surplus	19,937	23,930	25,505	65,318	71,211	89,488

#### Additional details based on Standalone Results of the Company as per Regulation 52(4) of SEBI LODR are as under:

Sr. No.	Particulars	Three months ended / As at			Nine months ended / As at			Year ended / As at
		December 31, 2024 (Reviewed)	September 30, 2024 (Reviewed)	December 31, 2023 (Audited)	December 31, 2024 (Reviewed)	December 31, 2023 (Audited)	March 31, 2024 (Audited)	
1.	Solvency Margin	188%	181%	190%	188%	190%	187%	
2.	Debt Equity Ratio (no. of times)	0.12	0.08	0.07	0.12	0.07	0.08	
3.	Debt service coverage ratio (no. of times) (not annualised for three/nine months)	9.50	22.14	11.87	25.31	31.12	28.43	
4.	Interest service coverage ratio (no. of times) (not annualised for three/nine months)	9.50	22.14	11.87	25.31	31.12	28.43	
5.	Total Borrowings (₹ in Lakh)	1,95,000	95,000	95,000	1,95,000	95,000	95,000	
6.	Outstanding redeemable preference shares (quantity and value)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
7.	Capital redemption / debenture redemption reserve	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
8.	Net Worth (₹ in Lakh)*	16,77,944	16,56,514	14,16,890	17,77,444	14,16,890	14,65,874	
9.	Net profit/loss after tax (₹ in Lakh)	41,494	43,299	36,506	1,32,558	1,15,710	1,55,886	
10.	Earnings per share							
a)	Basic EPS before and after extraordinary items (net of tax expense) for the period (not annualised for three/nine months)	1.93	2.01	1.70	6.16	5.38	7.30	
b)	Diluted EPS before and after extraordinary items (net of tax expense) for the period (not annualised for three/nine months)	1.93	2.01	1.70	6.15	5.38	7.29	
11.	Current ratio	0.89	1.02	0.84	0.89	0.84	0.91	
12.	Long term debt to working capital	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
13.	Bad debts to Account receivable ratio	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
14.	Current liability ratio	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	
15.	Total debts to total assets	0.006	0.003	0.003	0.006	0.003	0.003	
16.	Debtors turnover	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
17.	Inventory turnover	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
18.	Operating margin (%)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
19.	Net profit margin (%)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	

1. Premium Income is gross of reinsurance and net of Goods & Service Tax.  
2. The new Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS) are currently not applicable to insurance companies in India.  
3. Net worth represents shareholders' funds including redeemable preference shares, if any.  
4. Existing business surplus representing profits emerging during current period from business written in prior years and  
5. New business strain - Insurance contracts being long term in nature revenue is recognised over the period of the contract as against costs being recognised in the period in which they are incurred. According to New business strain  
6. Shareholders' surplus represents investment and other income arising on shareholders' funds, net of expenses.  
7. Net worth represents shareholders' funds including redeemable preference shares, if any.  
Note: The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly/nine months Standalone Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 and 52(4) of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the quarterly/nine months Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange website (www.bseindia.com) and the Company's website (www.hdfclife.com)

Scan the QR code to view the complete financial results

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors

Sd/-  
Vishu Potluri  
Director & CEO  
(DIN: 08528280)

