

Greater China Insight

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China's GDP upgrade

We have revised up our GDP forecast to 4.8% from 4.3% for 2025 and to 4.5% from 4.0% for 2026.

- Based on the economic data of the first two months, the positive momentum of Q4 2024 continues. Despite two fewer workdays in January and February, industrial production (5.9% y/y ytd) well exceeded our forecast (5.2%). Both retail sales (4.0%) and fixed asset investment (4.1%) are much higher than the 2024 average figures (3.5% and 3.2%, respectively). Both these figures are nominal growth. Since producer price index remains negative, we estimate the real growth of both indicators is higher than the headline growth rates.
- The services sector continues to be the weakest link, weighing on employment data. The urban jobless rate rose to 5.4% in February from 5.1% in December 2024. This will prompt the government's focus on employment-supportive policy in 2025. Since the services sector is more labour intensive than the technology-driven manufacturing sector, the fiscal resources will be allocated on priority to policy areas that will generate more jobs, including support to the private sector.
- We welcome the plan of 30 consumption-boosting measures announced yesterday. The authorities explicitly stated their support for the stock market. They appreciate the critical role of asset price reflation to combat the balance sheet recession. This differs from the announcements in previous years, which were only a collection of sector subsidies or just verbal guidance. We estimate that CNY300bn trade-in program announced at the National People's Congress will likely add another CNY1trn to retail sales.
- We notice a slight improvement in sentiment for the property market. More cities reported an increase in home prices since September 2024. New home sales during the Lunar New Year holiday increased 8% y/y. Property investment was down 9.8% ytd. The contraction was larger than expected -8.5%. Broadly, this figure is negative for the sector outlook. But with smaller supply in the pipeline, policymakers will aim for a quicker restoration of the supply-demand balance. We still do not see a full-fledged recovery in property, but the performance for 2025 will likely be better than last year.
- Pending the economic performance in March and the rest of H1, we project that China's GDP will stay above 5% in H1, extending the solid momentum in Q4 2024. However, we are still wary of the impact of the US tariffs and the US economic outlook. The latter will likely affect the demand for China's exports to not only the US but other key markets such as ASEAN. We pencil in a lower growth profile in H2 at 4.5%.

Figure 1. Economic data in Jan-Feb 2025

February's headline data	Current	Previous	ANZ	Market
Retail Sales, ytd y/y	4.0%		3.8%	3.8%
Industrial Production, ytd y/y	5.9%		5.2%	5.3%
Fixed Assets Ex-Rural ytd, y/y	4.1%		4.0%	3.2%
Property Investment ytd, y/y	-9.8%		-8.5%	-8.5%
Surveyed Jobless Rate	5.4%	5.2%	5.2%	5.1%
Aggregate Financing, CNY bn	9,290b	7,060b	9,490b	9,756b
Money Supply M1, y/y	0.1%	0.4%	1.2%	1.0%
Money Supply M2, y/y	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%
CPI, y/y	-0.7%	0.5%	-0.4%	-0.4%
PPI, y/y	-2.2%	-2.3%	-2.2%	-2.1%
Exports, ytd y/y USD	2.3%		3.7%	5.9%
Imports, ytd y/y USD	-8.4%		1.0%	1.0%

Source: NBS, Bloomberg, ANZ Research

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