Insurance

India

Sector View: Attractive NIFTY-50: 25,574 November 10, 2025

Protection takes off

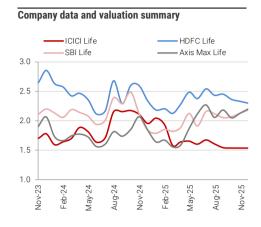
GST exemption and spillovers from previous months have driven a strong month for life companies. LIC, SBI Life and Axis Max Life reported strong APE growth of 18-20% yoy, while HDFC and ICICI Prudential Life reported muted APE growth of 4-7% yoy; LIC was up 20%, with 61% growth in sum assured. Most importantly, sum assured growth was strong at 35% for private players; SA growth momentum has doubled for the top four private players, i.e., about 4.5X APE growth for the month.

Growth in premium picks up in October 2025

Overall APE growth picked up to 17% for industry and 15% for the private sector in October 2025. The pickup was broad-based, with private players (ex-Top 4) reporting 17% yoy APE growth. Surprisingly, Aditya Birla Sun Life, Bajaj Life, HDFC Life and ICICI Prudential Life reported APE growth of <10% yoy during the month.

Mixed trends for listed players

- ▶ Axis Max Life reports strong growth. Axis Max Life reported strong 18% APE growth in October 2025 and 18% in YTD2026. Sum assured growth was elevated at 79% during the month, up from 16-38% reported in the previous six months. NoP growth was also strong at 58% yoy in October 2025.
- ▶ Bajaj Life reports muted growth. Bajaj Life reported APE growth of 7% in October 2025, similar to 4-9% growth reported in the previous two months. Sum assured growth was also muted at 8%. Growth was largely driven by value (ATS up 6% yoy); NoP was largely flat yoy. The reason for weakness in Bajaj is not clear and will be discussed in the forthcoming earnings call.
- ▶ HDFC Life reports muted growth. The company reported muted 7% APE growth in October 2025; individual APE growth was a tad better at 9.4% yoy. Growth was driven by both volume (NoP up 3.5% yoy) and value (ATS up 5.5% yoy) growth. Sum assured growth was strong at 52% yoy, up from 13-34% reported in the previous six months.
- ▶ ICICI Prudential's growth remains muted despite pickup. ICICI Prudential Life reported muted 3% yoy APE growth in October 2025 (down 3.3% in 2QFY26 and 5% in 1QFY26). Sum assured growth also picked up to 23% (3.7% in 2QFY26).
- ▶ Sharp uptick in growth for LIC. Individual APE growth picked up to 28% yoy for LIC in October 2025, driven by NoP growth of 126%. Average ticket size was down 43% yoy to Rs21,283 in October 2025. Sum assured growth was also strong at 61% yoy.
- ▶ SBI Life sustains momentum. SBI Life reported 20% APE growth in October 2025 and 19% in September 2025, up from 0-12% reported in the previous five months. Growth was largely driven by a pickup in ticket sizes (up 14% yoy); NoP growth was moderate at 5% yoy. Sum assured growth was also strong at 45% yoy.



Source: Bloomberg, Company data, Kotak Institutional Equities estimates

Prices in this report are based on the market close of November 10, 2025

Quick Numbers

APE growth picked up to 15% yoy for private players in October 2025

LIC and SBI Life fared better than peers with 20% APE growth in October 2025

SA growth picked up to 38% yoy for the entire industry in October 2025

Full sector coverage on KINSITE



SA growth picked up for the entire industry in October 2025

Exhibit 1: Individual sum assured growth yoy, October 2024-October 2025 (%)

	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25
Aditya Birla Sun Life	162	109	80	105	70	50	20	44	33	43	(4)	_	_
Axis Max Life	12	40	21	19	19	35	13	32	31	16	21	38	79
Bajaj Life	111	57	93	66	54	62	43	30	6	5	(2)	9	8
Canara HSBC Life	(33)	145	(59)	(25)	(34)	(9)	18	(0)	49	37	64	50	135
HDFC Life	15	10	8	11	6	11	14	14	20	34	13	33	52
ICICI Prudential Life	39	52	76	57	30	19	38	19	40	21	(5)	8	59
India First	291	86	232	596	411	121	86	111	104	67	(51)	(39)	(60)
Reliance Life	(10)	(1)	(20)	3	(13)	(34)	19	8	3	10	4	(3)	45
SBI Life	70	56	37	60	55	81	54	68	90	100	73	64	45
Star Union Daichi	4	25	2	194	(31)	(9)	(4)	(19)	(18)	16	(7)	54	96
Tata AIA	19	36	37	23	28	(33)	(42)	32	21	24	3	_	9
Private sector	35	39	37	35	32	10	3	29	28	29	11	18	35
Top-4 players	29	35	29	31	22	29	25	28	39	36	20	34	59
Top-6 players	43	41	39	38	28	35	27	29	32	30	15	27	46
LIC	(37)	(33)	(26)	(9)	(22)	(11)	(6)	(4)	2	4	(2)	(43)	61
Total	19	23	24	25	20	5	2	23	23	25	9	4	38

Source: IRDA, Kotak Institutional Equities

APE growth picked up to 15% yoy for private players in October 2025

Exhibit 2: APE, October 2025 (Rs mn)

Oct-25

	Individual	yoy growth (%)	Group	yoy growth (%)	Total	yoy growth (%)
Aditya Birla Sun Life	2,807	5.0	808	29.1	3,615	9.6
Aviva Life	91	(21.5)	17	347.2	107	(10.0)
Axis Max Life	6,364	17.5	180	23.2	6,544	17.6
Bajaj Life	5,230	7.2	550	6.3	5,780	7.1
Bharti Axa Life	474	22.6	17	69.5	490	23.8
Canara HSBC	1,752	27.0	135	271.2	1,887	33.3
Pramerica Life	238	21.1	84	9.1	322	17.7
Future Generali Life	548	67.1	17	119.9	565	68.3
HDFC Life	9,202	9.4	1,638	(4.9)	10,840	6.9
ICICI Prudential Life	6,010	2.7	1,035	8.1	7,045	3.5
Aegas Federal Life	643	12.3	36	32.3	679	13.2
India First Life	1,052	(9.6)	77	(40.3)	1,129	(12.7)
Reliance Life	808	46.0	2	(53.4)	810	45.2
SBI Life	16,959	18.9	882	35.4	17,841	19.6
Shriram Life	1,020	31.5	54	(29.1)	1,074	26.1
Star Union Dai-chi Life	1,352	92.5	295	90.4	1,647	92.1
Tata AIA Life	6,170	17.5	69	(24.6)	6,239	16.7
Private players	64,959	15.2	6,553	9.7	71,513	14.7
Private (ex-Top 4)	26,424	17.7	2,819	13.0	29,243	17.2
LIC	27,545	28.1	14,471	7.8	42,016	20.3
Total Premium	92,505	18.7	21,024	8.4	113,528	16.7

Notes:

(a) Top-4 players are HDFC Life, ICICI Prudential Life, SBI Life and Max Life.

Source: LI Council, Kotak Institutional Equities

Private sector reported 9% yoy APE growth in YTD2026

Exhibit 3: APE, March fiscal year-end, 2026 (Rs mn)

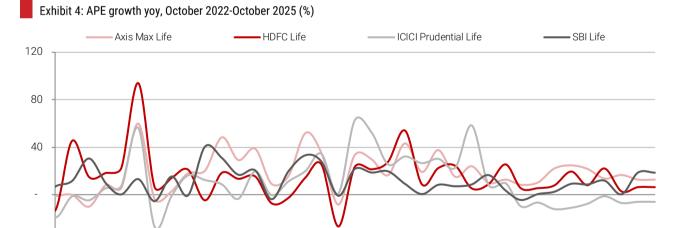
			Y	TD2026		
	Individual	yoy growth (%)	Group	yoy growth (%)	Total	yoy growth (%)
Aditya Birla Sun Life	21,615	17.1	3,030	(12.4)	24,645	12.5
Aviva Life	694	(10.2)	111	48.2	805	(5.1)
Axis Max Life	45,279	17.6	1,140	27.1	46,418	17.8
Bajaj Life	36,263	(1.3)	3,451	26.2	39,714	0.6
Bharti Axa Life	3,142	(0.2)	90	90.5	3,232	1.1
Canara HSBC	11,499	15.6	847	45.4	12,346	17.3
Pramerica Life	1,738	31.9	600	12.7	2,339	26.4
Future Generali Life	3,006	84.5	149	129.1	3,155	86.2
HDFC Life	73,150	10.3	9,870	10.0	83,020	10.3
ICICI Prudential Life	38,851	(8.6)	6,287	20.7	45,138	(5.4)
Aegas Federal Life	4,943	13.0	212	14.9	5,155	13.1
India First Life	7,772	21.1	935	3.2	8,708	18.9
Reliance Life	5,729	5.0	115	94.8	5,844	6.0
SBI Life	103,678	8.9	7,056	44.4	110,734	10.6
Shriram Life	6,457	10.8	349	(22.3)	6,806	8.4
Star Union Dai-chi Life	8,185	1.9	1,873	20.2	10,058	4.9
Tata AIA Life	47,763	14.9	594	12.7	48,357	14.8
Private players	448,790	8.8	40,194	16.8	488,984	9.5
Private (ex-Top 4)	187,832	10.6	15,841	9.7	203,674	10.5
LIC	182,057	(5.4)	107,057	7.6	289,114	(0.9)
Total Premium	630,848	4.3	147,251	10.0	778,099	5.3

Source: LI Council, Kotak Institutional Equities

Jul-23

Oct-23

SBI Life outperforms peers



Source: IRDA, LI Council, Kotak Institutional Equities

Jan-23

(40)

Oct-22

Oct-25

LIC, SBI Life and smaller players fared better in October 2025

Exhibit 5: Overall APE yoy growth, October 2024-October 2025 (%)

	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25
Aditya Birla Sun Life	34	25	24	46	26	32	(4)	26	4	23	1	21	10
Axis Max Life	15	24	10	13	9	11	22	25	22	14	17	13	18
Bajaj Life	12	(12)	3	6	1	(5)	(1)	_	(9)	(6)	4	9	7
Canara HSBC Life	14	260	(43)	(8)	(17)	(9)	13	(2)	28	9	28	10	33
HDFC Life	24	5	9	25	5	5	8	19	8	22	3	6	7
ICICI Prudential Life	23	58	8	10	(10)	(7)	(12)	(11)	(8)	(1)	(7)	(6)	3
India First	5	(14)	25	59	111	72	19	39	47	30	33	(1)	(13)
Reliance Life	(23)	1	(15)	4	(7)	(13)	_	(12)	(6)	8	7	9	45
SBI Life	7	9	16	3	(5)	_	2	9	9	12	_	19	20
Star Union Daichi	(18)	(4)	(24)	118	(37)	1	1	(13)	3	35	(49)	18	92
Tata AIA	6	6	16	13	7	2	(1)	12	32	36	13	(1)	17
Private sector	13	18	11	16	2	3	3	9	10	15	3	9	15
Top 4	15	17	13	12	(0)	2	4	10	7	13	2	10	13
Private (ex-Top 4)	10	19	7	22	6	4	1	7	13	19	5	9	17
Select tier-II players	9	(3)	10	10	4	(1)	(1)	6	12	14	8	3	12
LIC	(5)	(20)	(27)	(11)	(21)	(1)	2	_	(2)	9	(11)	(16)	20
Total	6	3	(2)	5	(7)	2	2	5	5	13	(2)	(1)	17

Notes:

(a) Top-4 players are HDFC Life, ICICI Prudential Life, SBI Life and Max Life.

(b) Tier-II players include Bajaj Allianz and Tata AIA.

Source: LI Council, Kotak Institutional Equities

Current market prices imply growth rates of 1-8% over the next 20 years

Exhibit 6: CMP implied multiples and long-term estimates, March fiscal year-end, 2027E

	FV (Rs)	AV/EV (X)	EV/share (Rs)	NBM (X)	VNB/share (Rs)	Long term growth (%)	Cost of equity (%)
Axis Max Life							
Kotak estimates	1,700	2.2	767	14.6	64	8.7	13.0
CMP implied	1,623	2.1	767	13.4	64	8.0	13.0
HDFC Life							
Kotak estimates	900	2.4	368	19.7	27	10.0	13.0
CMP implied	753	2.0	368	14.3	27	6.8	13.0
ICICI Pru Life							
Kotak estimates	765	1.7	451	13.9	23	9.3	13.5
CMP implied	615	1.4	451	7.3	23	2.5	13.5
SBI Life							
Kotak estimates	2,300	2.2	1,036	15.5	81	9.2	13.0
CMP implied	1,988	1.9	1,036	11.7	81	7.4	13.0

Source: Company, Bloomberg, Kotak Institutional Equities estimates

LIC gained market share

Exhibit 7: Trends in individual APE market share, October 2204-October 2025 (%)

	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25
Aditya Birla Sunlife	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.8	4.2	2.7	3.9	3.8	3.3	3.2	3.8	3.0
Axis Max Life	7.0	7.2	6.9	6.2	7.7	8.7	6.4	7.0	7.2	6.7	7.8	7.9	6.9
Bajaj Life	6.3	4.8	5.0	5.3	6.6	6.3	5.9	5.7	5.3	5.6	5.9	6.2	5.7
Canara HSBC Life	1.8	5.8	0.8	1.4	1.4	1.7	1.8	1.6	1.9	1.6	1.9	2.0	1.9
HDFC Life	10.8	10.5	10.2	12.3	12.8	10.9	11.5	12.5	12.2	12.6	11.6	11.0	9.9
ICICI Prudential Life	7.5	6.7	5.5	6.5	7.8	7.3	6.1	6.3	5.8	6.2	6.2	6.1	6.5
PNB Met Life	1.6	2.3	2.0	1.9	2.3	1.9	2.1	1.7	1.7	2.0	2.1	1.8	1.7
Reliance Life	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.5	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.9
SBI Life	18.3	17.9	27.1	17.5	12.6	9.4	15.3	15.9	15.2	17.0	16.0	16.6	18.3
Tata AIA	6.7	6.1	7.9	6.6	7.0	7.9	7.0	7.6	8.3	7.6	7.3	8.2	6.7
Private sector	72.4	74.0	77.7	72.0	73.4	69.8	66.5	69.6	70.4	71.7	71.9	74.7	70.2
Top 4 players	43.6	42.3	49.7	42.5	41.0	36.3	39.3	41.6	40.4	42.5	41.6	41.6	41.7
Private (ex-top 4)	28.8	31.6	28.0	29.5	32.4	33.5	27.2	28.0	30.0	29.2	30.3	33.1	28.6
Select tier-II players	13.0	10.9	12.9	11.9	13.6	14.2	12.9	13.2	13.6	13.1	13.2	14.4	12.3
LIC	27.6	26.0	22.3	28.0	26.6	30.2	33.5	30.4	29.6	28.3	28.1	25.3	29.8

Motae:

- (a) Top-4 players are HDFC Life, ICICI Prudential Life, SBI Life and Max Life.
- (b) Tier-II players include Bajaj Allianz and Tata AIA.

Source: LI Council, Kotak Institutional Equities

Group business market share of private players at 31% in October 2025

Exhibit 8: Trends in group business market share, October 2024-October 2025 (%)

	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25
Aditya Birla Sun Life	3.2	1.3	3.1	1.2	3.9	2.0	0.9	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	3.9	3.8
Axis Max Life	0.8	0.9	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.6	1.2	0.7	0.9
Bajaj Life	2.7	1.6	2.8	1.6	2.5	1.7	2.5	1.4	1.1	2.2	4.9	2.5	2.6
HDFC Life	8.9	9.8	8.3	8.3	10.1	6.4	7.8	9.2	3.7	5.8	9.4	5.4	7.8
ICICI Prudential Life	4.9	18.9	5.4	5.7	5.6	6.2	3.9	3.9	3.2	4.8	6.0	3.7	4.9
Reliance Life	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0
SBI Life	3.4	3.9	7.6	4.5	3.0	4.4	3.3	6.5	2.2	5.5	6.8	5.7	4.2
Private sector	30.8	42.3	35.7	30.0	36.0	26.5	24.9	27.2	19.1	27.9	36.3	27.6	31.2
LIC	69.2	57.7	64.3	70.0	64.0	73.5	75.1	72.8	80.9	72.1	63.7	72.4	68.8

Source: LI Council, Kotak Institutional Equities



NoP growth was also strong at 9% for private players in 2QFY26

Exhibit 9: NoP growth, October 2024-October 2025 (%)

	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25
Aditya Birla Sunlife	76	21	10	23	16	14	3	22	(16)	10	5	13	(29)
Axis Max Life	(7)	40	1	(3)	(7)	4	8	(7)	26	13	33	(12)	58
Bajaj Life	1	(29)	18	(9)	3	(23)	(12)	(9)	(20)	(19)	(18)	(16)	1
Canara HSBC Life	(25)	70	(45)	(7)	(14)	(2)	(9)	(40)	7	(9)	9	(8)	100
HDFC Life	3	1	4	10	(10)	(5)	(12)	(4)	7	3	(15)	4	3
ICICI Prudential Life	(1)	13	34	18	(19)	(8)	(1)	(0)	7	3	(13)	7	12
Reliance Life	(37)	(6)	(19)	(3)	(14)	(25)	1	(14)	(30)	(32)	(28)	(22)	21
SBI Life	(9)	(7)	(12)	1	(11)	5	(14)	(9)	7	8	(9)	(4)	5
Tata AIA	30	29	33	24	42	6	11	63	43	70	68	9	(12)
Private sector	(2)	_	1	6	(4)	(3)	(10)	(2)	4	6	(3)	(3)	9
Top 4 players	(5)	4	(3)	4	(11)	(0)	(8)	(6)	10	7	(5)	(2)	13
Private (ex-top 4)	1	(3)	6	9	4	(6)	(11)	3	(2)	6	(1)	(4)	4
Select tier-II players	16	(4)	27	8	22	(8)	_	27	13	18	24	(2)	(6)
LIC	(61)	(43)	(33)	(16)	(32)	(24)	(16)	(14)	(15)	(10)	(14)	(43)	126
Industry	(43)	(29)	(21)	(10)	(23)	(19)	(14)	(10)	(9)	(5)	(11)	(32)	63

Source: LI Council, Kotak Institutional Equities

Ticket sizes rose for most players in October 2025

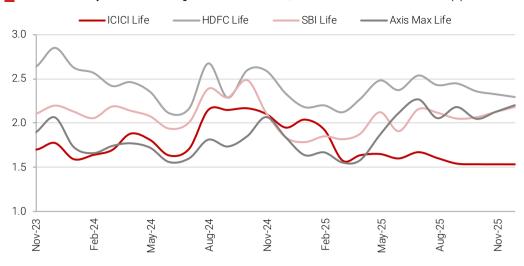
Exhibit 10: Average ticket size of individual non-single policies, October 2024-October 2025 (Rs)

	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25
Average ticket size (Rs	;)												
Aditya Birla Sun Life	77,619	110,697	137,435	133,446	125,778	155,922	103,979	114,825	123,897	123,859	118,739	129,384	114,933
Axis Max Life	110,664	91,122	128,511	88,800	118,677	133,091	92,396	95,506	88,424	100,356	92,220	118,655	82,927
Bajaj Life	97,795	94,315	84,548	98,138	91,818	117,872	97,393	91,748	94,394	84,160	107,366	103,014	103,404
HDFC Life	95,766	99,859	114,348	123,887	120,687	109,952	102,078	112,874	112,329	120,083	116,219	108,990	101,019
ICICI Prudential Life	134,835	132,955	109,783	123,404	133,636	161,122	103,398	92,123	114,202	119,796	129,400	117,425	123,312
Reliance	66,000	63,814	77,272	68,574	62,652	83,480	77,257	55,706	76,668	78,986	81,347	87,172	79,467
SBI Life	89,632	92,732	130,071	102,024	76,561	62,557	84,832	85,311	86,922	91,860	92,695	101,325	102,157
Tata AIA	81,618	82,547	77,845	81,931	76,240	101,926	82,540	69,969	74,525	79,493	68,324	86,140	108,784
Private sector	90,735	94,900	105,631	99,191	94,019	101,673	88,203	86,070	90,528	94,302	94,382	101,135	96,461
LIC	37,653	27,091	24,322	17,342	19,870	16,539	24,881	20,487	21,704	19,527	18,497	20,440	21,283
YoY growth (%)													
Aditya Birla Sun Life	(24)	7	16	23	13	23	1	10	53	20	(0)	2	48
Axis Max Life	24	(11)	10	18	21	8	14	35	(3)	1	(12)	28	(25)
Bajaj Life	8	24	(14)	18	(3)	24	11	11	17	15	16	24	6
HDFC Life	19	2	9	14	12	12	17	19	5	21	18	1	5
ICICI Prudential Life	23	13	(18)	(8)	6	(5)	(17)	(15)	(17)	(7)	_	(15)	(9)
Reliance	23	7	4	7	7	11	(0)	1	35	59	49	33	20
SBI Life	20	16	32	18	11	(1)	19	16	7	_	5	20	14
Tata AIA	(18)	(19)	(13)	(8)	(26)	(4)	(12)	(31)	(8)	(19)	(33)	(9)	33
Private sector	14	15	11	13	6	7	13	9	8	7	5	11	6
LIC	117	52	27	8	16	29	14	8	18	9	11	18	(43)

Source: LI Council, Kotak Institutional Equities

ICICI Prudential trades at a discount to peers

Exhibit 11: One-year forward rolling P/EV for life insurers, November 2023-November 2025 (X)



Source: Company, Bloomberg, Kotak Institutional Equities estimates

ICICI Prudential trades at a discount to peers

Exhibit 12: Valuation summary of life insurers, March fiscal year-ends, 2025-28E

		FV	Price	Mark	et cap.	Eml	bedded v	alue (Rs	bn)		Price/E	EV (X)			Price/\	/NB (X)		Op	erating	RoEV (%)
	Rating	(Rs)	(Rs)	(Rs bn)	(US \$bn)	2025	2026E	2027E	2028E	2025	2026E	2027E	2028E	2025	2026E	2027E :	2028E	2025	2026E	2027E	2028E
HDFC Life	BUY	900	749	1,615	18	554	646	747	866	2.9	2.5	2.2	1.9	41	38	32	27	16.7	15.5	16.1	16.2
ICICI Prudential Life	BUY	765	615	890	10	479	536	612	699	1.9	1.7	1.5	1.3	38	34	30	26	13.1	12.9	13.9	14.0
LIC	BUY	1,275	924	5,845	66	7,769	8,528	9,156	9,833	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	58	56	53	51	11.4	7.9	8.3	8.3
LIC core			421	2,663	30	4,079	4,508	5,136	5,813	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.5	27	25	24	23	NA	NA	NA	NA
Max FS	ADD	1,700	1,618	558	6	252	300	352	414	3.1	2.6	2.2	1.9	37	31	26	22	19.1	18.1	18.0	18.0
SBI Life	BUY	2,300	1,999	2,004	23	703	832	981	1,154	2.9	2.4	2.0	1.7	34	30	26	22	20.2	18.1	17.9	17.8

Source: Company, Bloomberg, Kotak Institutional Equities estimates

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BUY. We expect this stock to deliver more than 15% returns over the next 12 months.

ADD. We expect this stock to deliver 5-15% returns over the next 12 months.

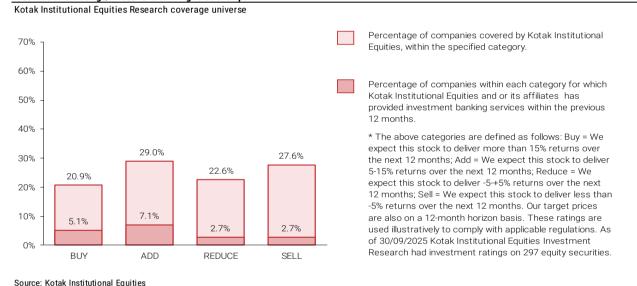
REDUCE. We expect this stock to deliver -5-+5% returns over the next 12 months.

SELL. We expect this stock to deliver <-5% returns over the next 12 months.

Our Fair Value estimates are also on a 12-month horizon basis.

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