

We expect average EBITDA of our cement universe to surge ~56% YoY (low base following the General Elections-2024 quarter), albeit decline ~22% QoQ. Per our channel checks report "*Prices steady with full GST benefits; pet coke rears its head*", we see the industry logging a low single-digit (3-4%) YoY volume growth in Q2FY26E, while our coverage stocks are estimated to report 10% YoY growth. However, excluding estimated volumes from acquired entities (UTCEM and ACEM), we see the growth aligning with industry levels. Energy costs are expected to be rangebound on the back of stable fuel prices (QoQ), though companies shall see negative operating leverage and hence a >2% (~Rs100) QoQ rise in total operating cost/t. Stable cement prices (down a mere ~1.5% QoQ) during Q2FY26E have provided the industry a vantage point, which should arrest the downside in profitability. On the valuation front, the risk-reward ratio for cement stocks appears balanced, and the street is banking on improvement in the pricing and demand parameters in the ensuing quarters.

Aided by the range-bound cost scenario, coupled with an improving demand outlook (post *Diwali*), we remain positive on the sector and retain UTCEM, SRCM, and JKCE as our top picks. In Q2FY26E, SRCM shall continue outperforming peers in terms of profitability, in our view.

Our cement universe volume to increase 10% YoY

Demand trends indicate continuity of a low single-digit (3-4%) YoY volume growth in Q2FY26 as well (H1FY26E: 3-4%). Lackluster demand growth can be attributed to factors like severe rainfall, low channel inventory due to re-alignment of GST rates, and festive/ritual period (*Navratri*, *Pitru-Paksh* in Sep-25). We estimate our coverage stocks would clock 10% YoY volume growth in Q2FY26E. However, excluding volumes from acquired entities UTCEM and ACEM, we expect growth to align with industry levels.

Marginal drop in blended realization

Our checks suggest ~1.5% QoQ realization drop on pan-India basis in Q2FY26E, implying that the cement industry has seen its 2nd best performance in the past five years (best performance seen in Q2FY24, when prices were flat QoQ). We believe sector players with exposure in North and Central India (SRCM, JKCE) would report a lower QoQ realization dip as against companies with exposure in South and East India (TRCL, Dalmia). We believe blended realization of our overall cement coverage would dip by a meagre 0.6% QoQ (or ~Rs35/bag) and thus restrict any profitability decline.

Negative operating leverage to hurt margins slightly

Major fuel costs (barring imported pet coke) stood rangebound in Q2FY26, and we expect unit energy costs to be flat QoQ. However, lower volumes should trigger negative operating leverage which shall result in total operating costs rising >2% (~Rs100/t) QoQ.

Harsh Mittal

harsh.mittal@emkayglobal.com
+91-22-66242446

Omkar Rane

omkar.rane@emkayglobal.com
+91-22-66242414

Rating, Target Price and Valuation

	Rating	CMP (Rs)	TP (Rs)	Upside (%)	EBITDA margin (%)		Net Debt/EBITDA (x)		EV/EBITDA (x)	
					FY26	FY27	FY26	FY27	FY26	FY27
ACC	BUY	1,858	2,280	23	14.2	16.2	(1.3)	(1.4)	9.7	7.4
Ambuja Cements	ADD	570	650	14	19.7	22.2	(0.5)	(0.5)	19.5	15.2
Dalmia Bharat	ADD	2,243	2,450	9	22.9	23.0	0.5	0.6	12.6	11.7
JK Cement	BUY	6,470	7,300	13	20.8	22.2	1.3	0.7	19.2	15.3
Shree Cement	BUY	29,555	35,300	19	25.8	27.1	(1.3)	(1.7)	19.7	16.0
Star Cement	BUY	261	265	2	23.4	23.5	0.4	0.2	12.9	11.0
The Ramco Cements	ADD	1,006	1,150	14	20.5	22.1	2.4	1.6	16.6	13.1
UltraTech Cement	BUY	12,184	14,700	21	20.9	23.5	0.8	0.1	21.3	16.7

Source: Company, Emkay Research

This report is intended for Team White Marquee Solutions (team.emkay@whitemarquesolutions)

Stable prices + controlled costs + improving demand run-rate = Strong H2FY26

Due to negative operating leverage and marginally lower cement prices, we expect the average EBITDA/t to fall ~14% QoQ to ~Rs970 (albeit rise ~40% YoY). We expect players like UltraTech, Shree, Star, JK Cement, and Dalmia Bharat to maintain EBITDA/t above Rs1,000, whereas Ambuja (consolidated) and Ramco are likely to clock EBITDA/t of ~Rs900. SRCM shall continue to outperform peers in terms of profitability and is expected to report EBITDA/t above Rs1,200.

Ahead, we estimate robust profitability in H2FY26 as we see 1) a better demand run-rate owing to a busy construction period coupled with benefits of reduced GST rates, 2) checks suggesting the possibility of price hikes in Dec-25, 3) steady input costs; hence we remain positive on the sector.

Exhibit 1: Quarterly summary — Q2FY26E

Basis	Company	Q2FY26E	Change (%)		Q2FY26E	Change (%)		Q2FY26E	Change (%)	
(C/SA)	(Rs mn)	Revenue	YoY	QoQ	EBITDA	YoY	QoQ	PAT	YoY	QoQ
C	Ultratech Cement	187,395	19.9	(11.9)	33,972	68.3	(23.0)	15,178	83.9	(31.7)
C	Ambuja Cements	85,910	14.3	(16.5)	15,258	37.3	(22.2)	4,291	(5.9)	(45.5)
SA	Shree Cement	44,127	13.0	(14.3)	9,689	63.5	(21.2)	4,290	360.6	(30.6)
SA	JK Cement	27,692	15.8	(12.1)	4,876	78.8	(27.6)	2,205	387.8	(34.3)
C	Dalmia Bharat	34,958	13.2	(3.9)	7,618	75.5	(13.7)	2,837	516.7	(27.8)
SA	Ramco Cement	21,309	4.5	2.9	3,963	27.0	(0.3)	863	237.4	0.4
SA	ACC	50,961	10.6	(16.0)	4,939	15.1	(36.1)	2,161	(7.6)	(43.8)
C	Star Cement	7,631	18.9	(16.3)	1,626	70.2	(28.7)	502	786.3	(48.8)
Blended	Total	459,982	15.5	(12.5)	81,941	55.6	(22.4)	32,327	86.8	(34.4)

Source: Company, Emkay Research

Exhibit 2: Emkay cement coverage volume is likely to rise ~10% YoY/dip ~12% QoQ...

(C/SA)	Volume (mt)	Q2FY26E	Q2FY25	YoY (%)	Q1FY26	QoQ (%)
C	Ultratech Cement	32.5	27.8	16.8	36.8	(11.7)
C	Ambuja Cements	15.8	14.2	11.0	18.8	(16.3)
SA	Shree Cement	7.9	7.7	2.6	9.0	(12.1)
SA	JK Cement	4.7	4.2	11.3	5.4	(13.4)
C	Dalmia Bharat	6.8	6.7	2.0	7.0	(2.4)
SA	Ramco Cement	4.3	4.5	(3.6)	4.1	5.0
SA	ACC	9.9	9.3	6.0	11.5	(14.3)
C	Star Cement	1.1	1.0	11.0	1.3	(16.3)
Blended	Total	82.9	75.4	10.0	93.9	(11.7)

Source: Company, Emkay Research

Exhibit 3: ...while realization is expected to be flat QoQ and at ~5% YoY

Type	Realization (Rs/t)	Q2FY26E	Q2FY25	YoY (%)	Q1FY26	QoQ (%)
Blended	Ultratech Cement	5,762	5,616	2.6	5,777	(0.3)
Blended	Ambuja Cements	5,450	5,293	3.0	5,463	(0.2)
Gray	Shree Cement	5,066	4,579	10.6	5,089	(0.4)
Gray	JK Cement	4,913	4,707	4.4	4,938	(0.5)
Gray	Dalmia Bharat	5,115	4,607	11.0	5,193	(1.5)
Gray	Ramco Cement	4,891	4,506	8.6	4,981	(1.8)
Gray	ACC	4,892	4,674	4.7	4,951	(1.2)
Gray ex-incentives	Star Cement	6,529	6,188	5.5	6,559	(0.4)
Blended	Weighted Average	5,397	5,134	5.1	5,431	(0.6)

Source: Company, Emkay Research

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Exhibit 4: Negative operating leverage may hurt margins in Q2FY26E

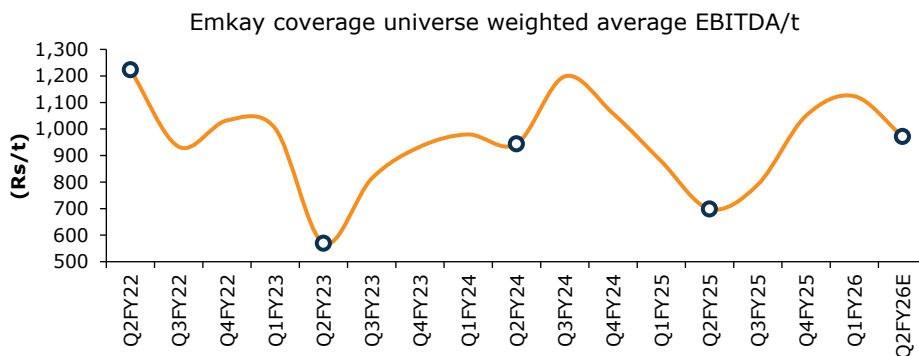
(C/SA)	Total Cost (Rs/t)	Q2FY26E	Q2FY25	YoY (%)	Q1FY26	QoQ (%)
C	Ultratech Cement	4,717	4,891	(3.6)	4,579	3.0
C	Ambuja Cements	4,569	4,510	1.3	4,422	3.3
SA	Shree Cement	4,120	4,087	0.8	4,155	(0.9)
SA	JK Cement	4,880	5,044	(3.2)	4,584	6.5
C	Dalmia Bharat	4,001	3,960	1.0	3,932	1.7
SA	Ramco Cement	4,011	3,846	4.3	4,061	(1.2)
SA	ACC	4,669	4,493	3.9	4,603	1.4
C	Star Cement	5,537	5,588	(0.9)	5,276	4.9
Blended	Weighted Average	4,551	4,561	(0.2)	4,449	2.3

Source: Company, Emkay Research

Exhibit 5: Emkay cement universe – Profitability to drop by ~14% QoQ

Type	EBITDA (Rs/t)	Q2FY26E	Q2FY25	YoY (%)	Q1FY26	QoQ (%)
Blended	Ultratech Cement	1,044	725	44.1	1,197	(12.8)
Blended	Ambuja Cements	881	783	12.6	1,041	(15.4)
Blended	Shree Cement	1,231	773	59.3	1,373	(10.4)
Blended	JK Cement	1,043	649	60.7	1,247	(16.4)
Gray	Dalmia Bharat	1,115	648	72.1	1,261	(11.6)
Blended	Ramco Cement	916	695	31.8	966	(5.1)
Gray	ACC	501	462	8.6	672	(25.4)
Gray incl. incentives	Star Cement	1,500	978	53.3	1,761	(14.8)
Blended	Weighted Average	971	699	39.1	1,124	(13.6)

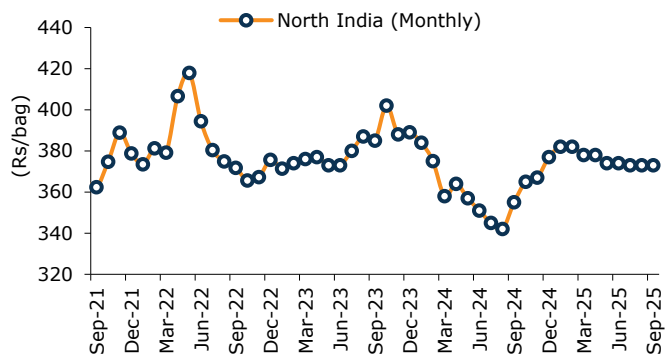
Source: Company, Emkay Research

Exhibit 6: Emkay coverage universe – Weighted average EBITDA/t marks its second-strongest performance in five years

Source: Company, Emkay Research

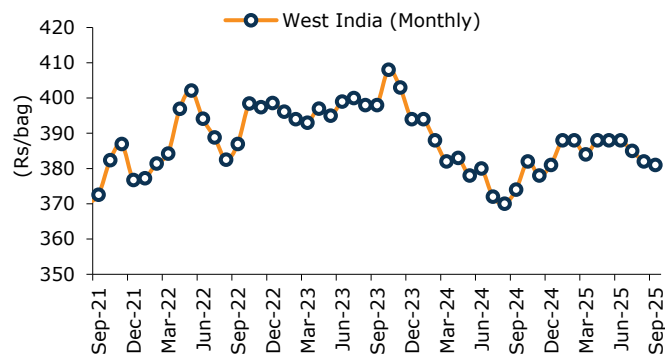
Regional pricing trends

Exhibit 7: North India – Cement price trend



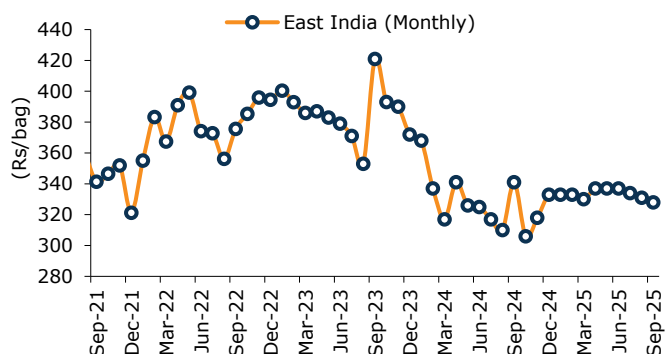
Source: Company, Industry, Emkay Research; Note: We have not factored in the GST rate reduction to maintain the base effect

Exhibit 8: West India – Cement price trend



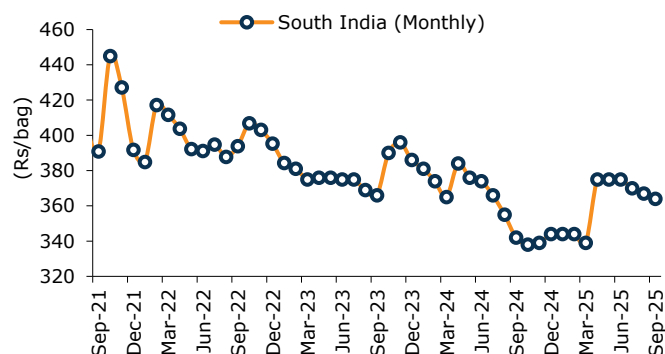
Source: Company, Industry, Emkay Research; Note: We have not factored in the GST rate reduction to maintain the base effect

Exhibit 9: East India – Cement price trend



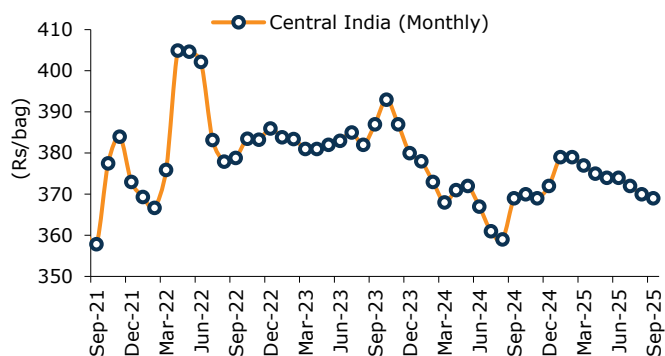
Source: Company, Industry, Emkay Research; Note: We have not factored in the GST rate reduction to maintain the base effect

Exhibit 10: South India – Cement price trend



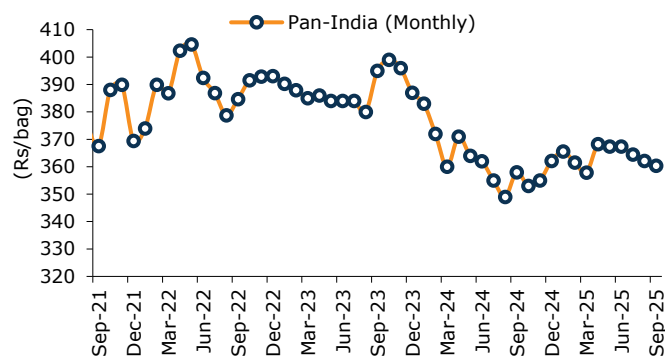
Source: Company, Industry, Emkay Research; Note: We have not factored in the GST rate reduction to maintain the base effect

Exhibit 11: Central India – Cement price trend



Source: Company, Emkay Research; Note: We have not factored in the GST rate reduction to maintain the base effect

Exhibit 12: Pan India – Cement price trend

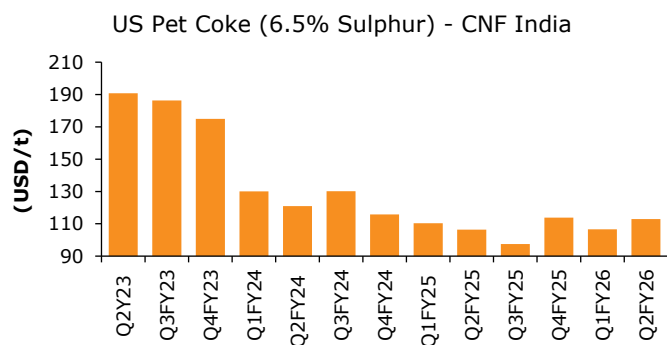


Source: Company, Emkay Research; Note: We have not factored in the GST rate reduction to maintain the base effect

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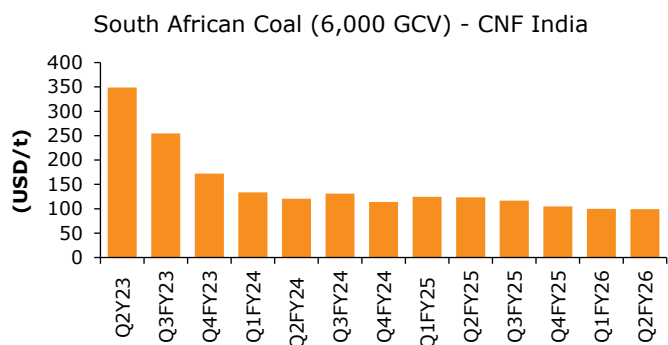
Input cost

Exhibit 13: International pet coke prices up ~6% in Q2FY26



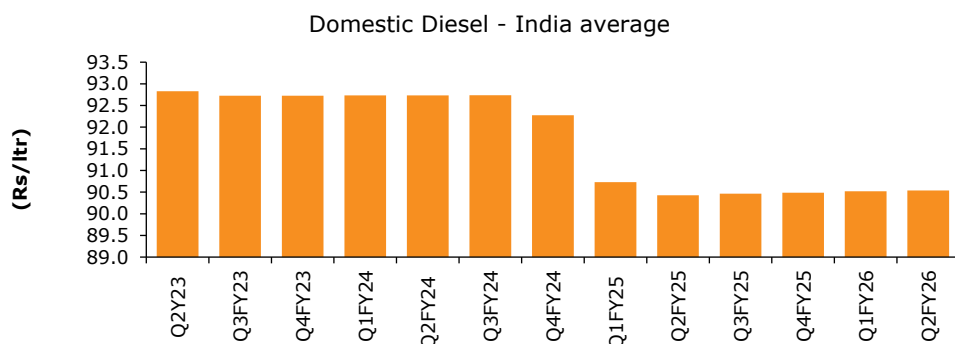
Source: Industry, Emkay Research

Exhibit 14: Prices of imported coal stood flat



Source: Industry, Emkay Research

Exhibit 15: Domestic diesel price has been broadly flat for the past few quarters



Source: Industry, Emkay Research

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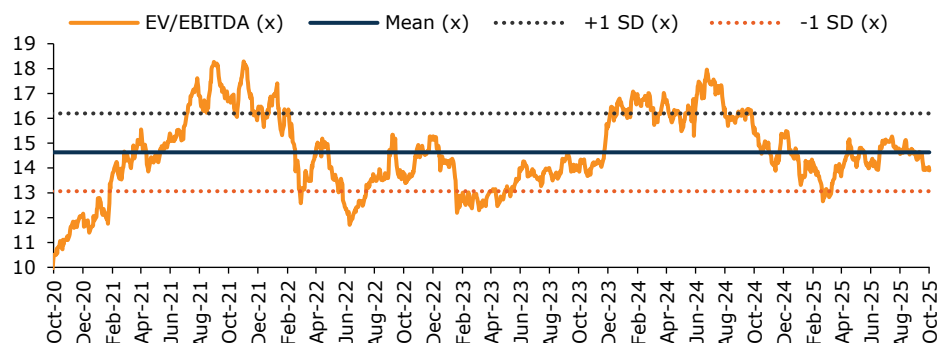
Exhibit 16: Quarterly summary

Ultratech Cement (Rs mn)	Q2FY26E	Q2FY25	YoY (%)	Q1FY26	QoQ (%)	Comments
Revenue	187,395	156,347	19.9	212,755	(11.9)	Volumes expected to rise ~17% YoY (down ~12% QoQ) on a consolidated basis, while blended realization is expected to be flat QoQ. Consequently, we estimate blended EBITDA/t at up ~44% YoY, though down ~13% QoQ to ~Rs1,045.
EBITDA	33,972	20,183	68.3	44,103	(23.0)	
EBITDA Margin (%)	18.1	12.9	522 bps	20.7	(260) bps	
PAT	15,178	8,252	83.9	22,209	(31.7)	
PAT Margin (%)	8.1	5.3	282 bps	10.4	(234) bps	
Ambuja Cements (Rs mn)	Q2FY26E	Q2FY25	YoY (%)	Q1FY26	QoQ (%)	Comments
Revenue	85,910	75,161	14.3	102,891	(16.5)	Ambuja Cements's (consol) volumes are estimated to increase ~11% YoY, albeit decrease ~16% QoQ. Assuming flat realization QoQ, we expect steady EBITDA/t at ~Rs880, which is up ~13% YoY and down ~15% QoQ.
EBITDA	15,258	11,114	37.3	19,611	(22.2)	
EBITDA Margin (%)	17.8	14.8	297 bps	19.1	(130) bps	
PAT	4,291	4,560	(5.9)	7,879	(45.5)	
PAT Margin (%)	5.0	6.1	(107) bps	7.7	(266) bps	
Shree Cement (Rs mn)	Q2FY26E	Q2FY25	YoY (%)	Q1FY26	QoQ (%)	Comments
Revenue	44,127	39,046	13.0	51,490	(14.3)	We expect cement volumes to grow ~3% YoY to ~8mt; gray cement realization is estimated to dip ~0.5% QoQ. Total cost/ton is likely to remain flattish QoQ. Blended EBITDA/t is expected to surge ~60% YoY to ~Rs1,230, but dip ~10% QoQ.
EBITDA	9,689	5,925	63.5	12,291	(21.2)	
EBITDA Margin (%)	22.0	15.2	678 bps	23.9	(191) bps	
PAT	4,290	931	360.6	6,185	(30.6)	
PAT Margin (%)	9.7	2.4	734 bps	12.0	(229) bps	
JK Cement (Rs mn)	Q2FY26E	Q2FY25	YoY (%)	Q1FY26	QoQ (%)	Comments
Revenue	27,692	23,917	15.8	31,498	(12.1)	Gray cement volumes expected to rise ~12% YoY (down ~14% QoQ), while realizations may dip 0.5% QoQ. For white segment, we estimate volumes to inch up 5% YoY, while realization would clock a 0.5% QoQ dip. Blended EBITDA/t to rise ~60% YoY (down ~12% QoQ) to ~Rs1,045.
EBITDA	4,876	2,727	78.8	6,738	(27.6)	
EBITDA Margin (%)	17.6	11.4	621 bps	21.4	(378) bps	
PAT	2,205	452	387.8	3,356	(34.3)	
PAT Margin (%)	8.0	1.9	607 bps	10.7	(269) bps	
Dalmia Bharat (Rs mn)	Q2FY26E	Q2FY25	YoY (%)	Q1FY26	QoQ (%)	Comments
Revenue	34,958	30,870	13.2	36,360	(3.9)	Volumes are expected to increase ~2% YoY, whereas realizations are estimated to decline ~1.5% QoQ. Blended EBITDA/t is expected to surge 72%% YoY (albeit dip 12% QoQ) to Rs1,115.
EBITDA	7,618	4,340	75.5	8,830	(13.7)	
EBITDA Margin (%)	21.8	14.1	773 bps	24.3	(249) bps	
PAT	2,837	460	516.7	3,930	(27.8)	
PAT Margin (%)	8.1	1.5	663 bps	10.8	(269) bps	
Ramco Cement (Rs mn)	Q2FY26E	Q2FY25	YoY (%)	Q1FY26	QoQ (%)	Comments
Revenue	21,309	20,382	4.5	20,701	2.9	Ramco Cements's volumes are expected to drop ~4% YoY, while realization is expected to decline ~2% QoQ. Consequently, EBITDA/t is expected to jump up by 32% YoY to ~Rs915.
EBITDA	3,963	3,121	27.0	3,976	(0.3)	
EBITDA Margin (%)	18.6	15.3	328 bps	19.2	(61) bps	
PAT	863	256	237.4	860	0.4	
PAT Margin (%)	4.1	1.3	280 bps	4.2	(10) bps	
ACC (Rs mn)	Q2FY26E	Q2FY25	YoY (%)	Q1FY26	QoQ (%)	Comments
Revenue	50,961	46,080	10.6	60,658	(16.0)	We estimate ACC's volumes to improve ~6% YoY. Assuming >1% QoQ decrease in realization, we estimate EBITDA/t to increase ~9% YoY (down 25% QoQ) to ~Rs500.
EBITDA	4,939	4,292	15.1	7,728	(36.1)	
EBITDA Margin (%)	9.7	9.3	38 bps	12.7	(305) bps	
PAT	2,161	2,339	(7.6)	3,845	(43.8)	
PAT Margin (%)	4.2	5.1	(84) bps	6.3	(210) bps	
Star Cement (Rs mn)	Q2FY26E	Q2FY25	YoY (%)	Q1FY26	QoQ (%)	Comments
Revenue	7,631	6,415	18.9	9,120	(16.3)	Star Cement's volumes may rise 11% YoY (down ~16% QoQ), while realizations may shed ~0.4% QoQ. EBITDA/t is expected to jump ~53% YoY (down ~15% QoQ) ~Rs1,500. @whitemarquesolutions
EBITDA	1,626	956	70.2	2,282	(28.7)	
EBITDA Margin (%)	21.3	14.9	641 bps	25.0	(371) bps	
PAT	502	57	786.3	982	(48.8)	
PAT Margin (%)	6.6	0.9	570 bps	10.8	(418) bps	

Source: Company, Emkay Research

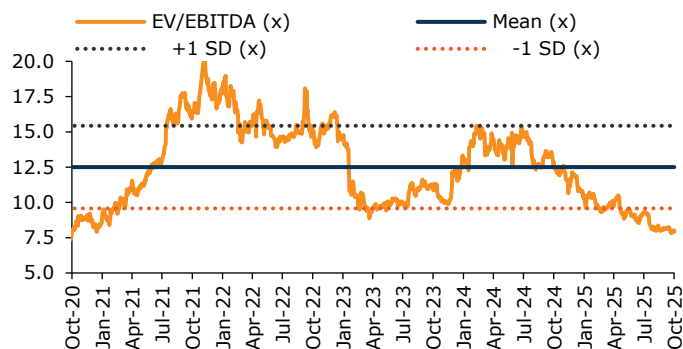
Valuation

Exhibit 17: Emkay cement universe is trading close to its 5Y mean 1YF EV/EBITDA



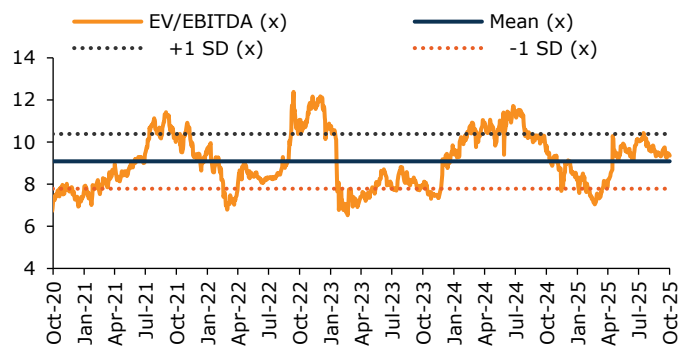
Source: Company, Bloomberg, Emkay Research

Exhibit 18: ACC is trading below its -1SD EV/EBITDA



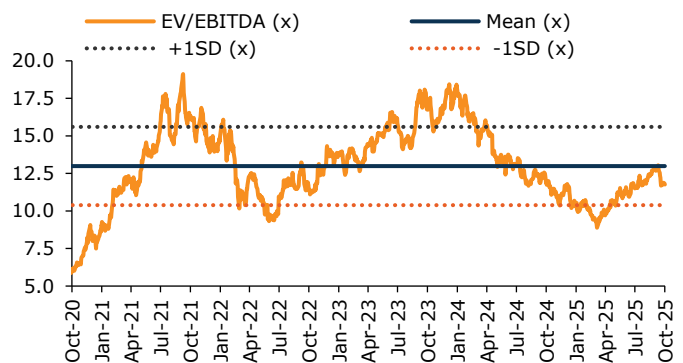
Source: Company, Bloomberg, Emkay Research

Exhibit 19: ACEM is trading close to its 5Y mean 1YF EV/EBITDA



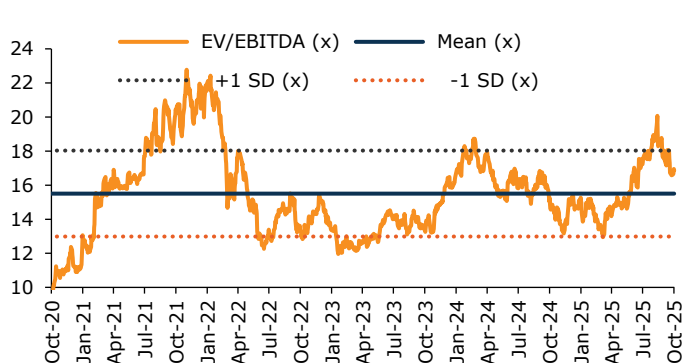
Source: Company, Bloomberg, Emkay Research

Exhibit 20: Dalmia Bharat is trading near its 5Y avg EV/EBITDA



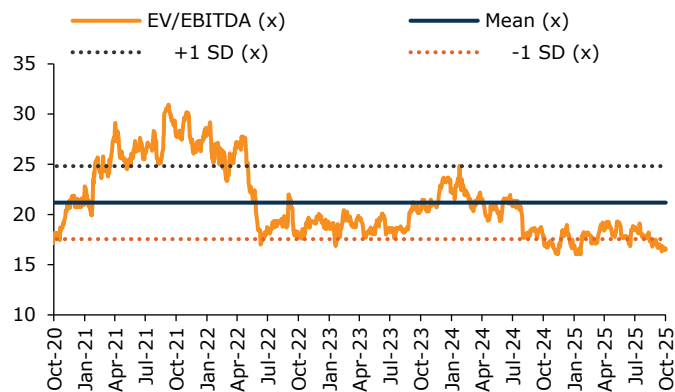
Source: Company, Bloomberg, Emkay Research

Exhibit 21: Post-correction, JCKE trades near 5Y avg EV/EBITDA

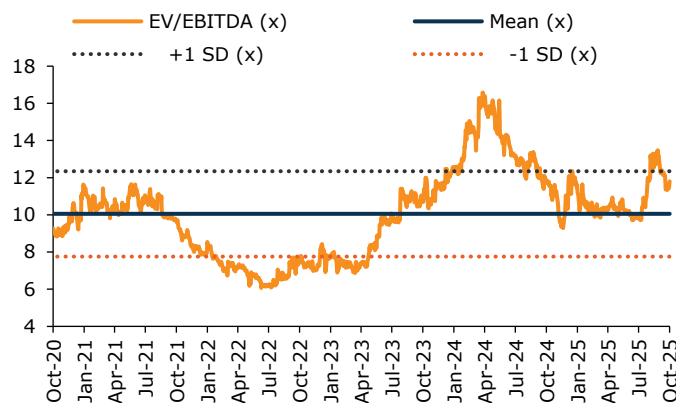


Source: Company, Bloomberg, Emkay Research

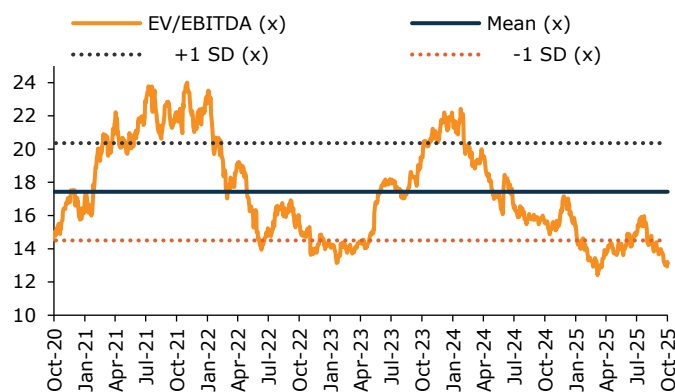
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Exhibit 22: SRCM is trading below its -1SD EV/EBITDA

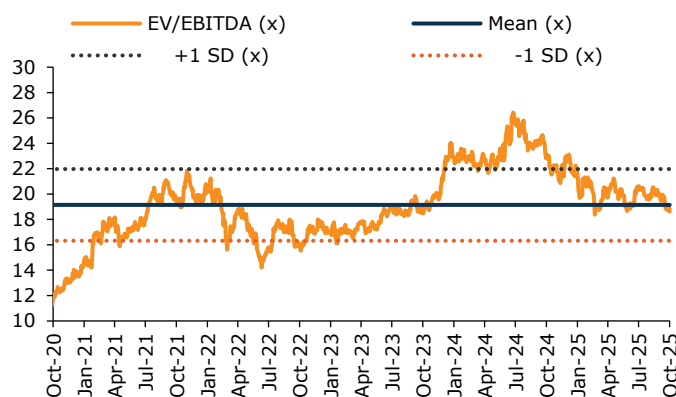
Source: Company, Bloomberg, Emkay Research

Exhibit 23: Post-correction, STRCM trades near +1SD EV/EBITDA

Source: Company, Bloomberg, Emkay Research

Exhibit 24: TRCL is trading below its -1SD EV/EBITDA

Source: Company, Bloomberg, Emkay Research

Exhibit 25: UTCM is trading near its 5Y avg EV/EBITDA

Source: Company, Bloomberg, Emkay Research

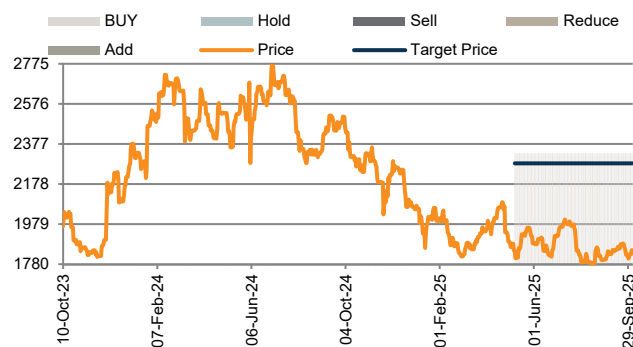
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ACC RECOMMENDATION HISTORY - DETAILS

Date	Closing Price (Rs)	TP (Rs)	Rating	Analyst
02-Oct-25	1,828	2,280	Buy	Harsh Mittal
07-May-25	1,845	2,280	Buy	Harsh Mittal

Source: Company, Emkay Research

RECOMMENDATION HISTORY - TREND



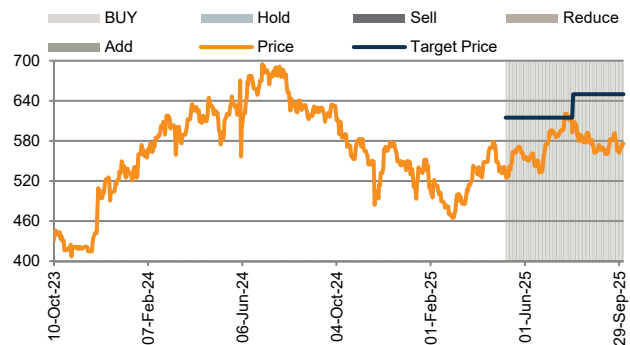
Source: Company, Bloomberg, Emkay Research

AMBUJA CEMENTS RECOMMENDATION HISTORY - DETAILS

Date	Closing Price (Rs)	TP (Rs)	Rating	Analyst
02-Oct-25	571	650	Add	Harsh Mittal
31-Aug-25	563	650	Add	Harsh Mittal
01-Aug-25	608	650	Add	Harsh Mittal
07-May-25	535	615	Add	Harsh Mittal

Source: Company, Emkay Research

RECOMMENDATION HISTORY - TREND



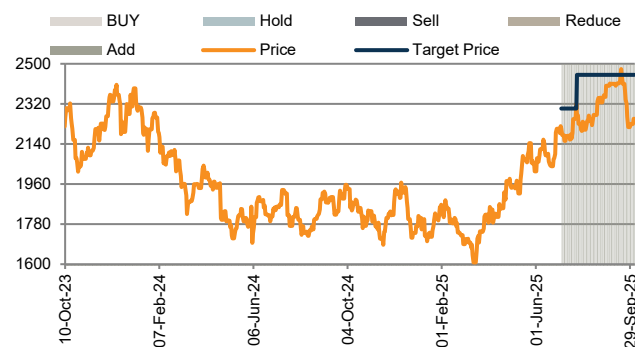
Source: Company, Bloomberg, Emkay Research

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DALMIA BHARAT**RECOMMENDATION HISTORY - DETAILS**

Date	Closing Price (Rs)	TP (Rs)	Rating	Analyst
02-Oct-25	2,229	2,450	Add	Harsh Mittal
31-Aug-25	2,402	2,450	Add	Harsh Mittal
23-Jul-25	2,270	2,450	Add	Harsh Mittal
03-Jul-25	2,210	2,300	Add	Harsh Mittal

Source: Company, Emkay Research

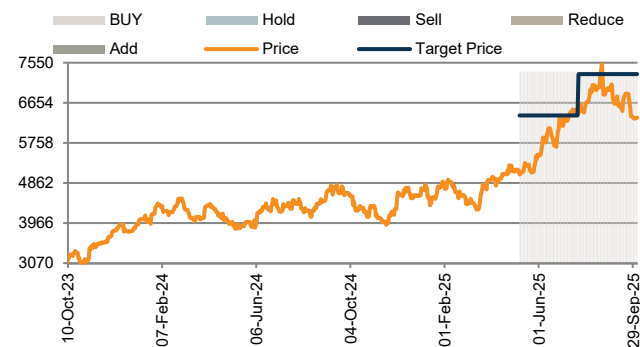
RECOMMENDATION HISTORY - TREND

Source: Company, Bloomberg, Emkay Research

JK CEMENT**RECOMMENDATION HISTORY - DETAILS**

Date	Closing Price (Rs)	TP (Rs)	Rating	Analyst
02-Oct-25	6,305	7,300	Buy	Harsh Mittal
31-Aug-25	6,947	7,300	Buy	Harsh Mittal
21-Jul-25	6,416	7,300	Buy	Harsh Mittal
25-May-25	5,109	6,375	Buy	Harsh Mittal
07-May-25	5,049	6,375	Buy	Harsh Mittal

Source: Company, Emkay Research

RECOMMENDATION HISTORY - TREND

Source: Company, Bloomberg, Emkay Research

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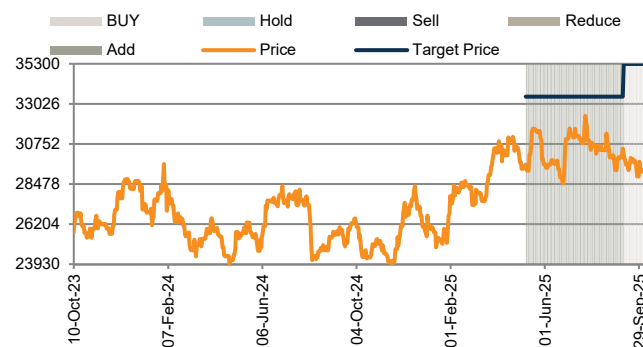
SHREE CEMENT

RECOMMENDATION HISTORY - DETAILS

Date	Closing Price (Rs)	TP (Rs)	Rating	Analyst
02-Oct-25	29,295	35,300	Buy	Harsh Mittal
09-Sep-25	30,190	35,300	Buy	Harsh Mittal
31-Aug-25	29,275	33,445	Add	Harsh Mittal
05-Aug-25	30,205	33,445	Add	Harsh Mittal
15-May-25	31,400	33,445	Add	Harsh Mittal
07-May-25	29,570	33,445	Add	Harsh Mittal

Source: Company, Emkay Research

RECOMMENDATION HISTORY - TREND



Source: Company, Bloomberg, Emkay Research

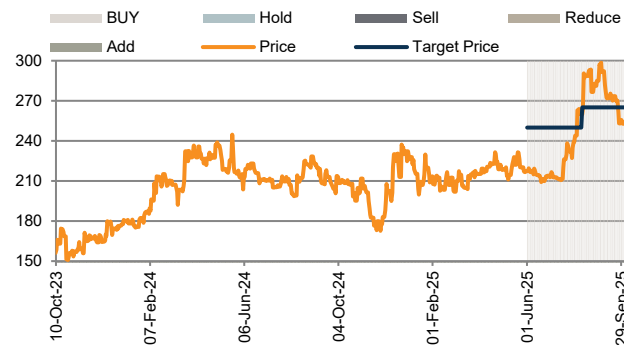
STAR CEMENT

RECOMMENDATION HISTORY - DETAILS

Date	Closing Price (Rs)	TP (Rs)	Rating	Analyst
02-Oct-25	253	265	Buy	Harsh Mittal
12-Sep-25	272	265	Buy	Harsh Mittal
10-Aug-25	260	265	Buy	Harsh Mittal
10-Aug-25	260	265	Buy	Harsh Mittal
01-Jun-25	217	250	Buy	Harsh Mittal

Source: Company, Emkay Research

RECOMMENDATION HISTORY - TREND



Source: Company, Bloomberg, Emkay Research

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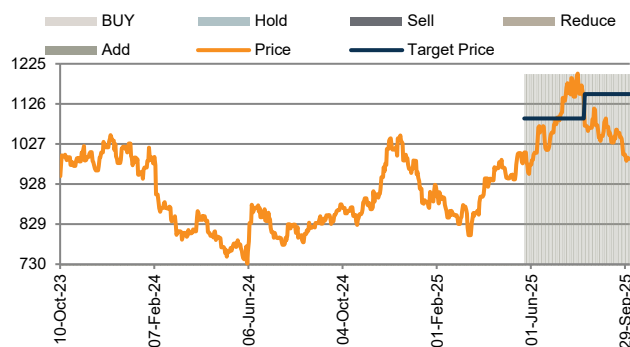
THE RAMCO CEMENTS

RECOMMENDATION HISTORY - DETAILS

Date	Closing Price (Rs)	TP (Rs)	Rating	Analyst
02-Oct-25	993	1,150	Add	Harsh Mittal
31-Aug-25	1,047	1,150	Add	Harsh Mittal
19-Aug-25	1,087	1,150	Add	Harsh Mittal
08-Aug-25	1,072	1,150	Add	Harsh Mittal
23-May-25	1,006	1,090	Add	Harsh Mittal

Source: Company, Emkay Research

RECOMMENDATION HISTORY - TREND



Source: Company, Bloomberg, Emkay Research

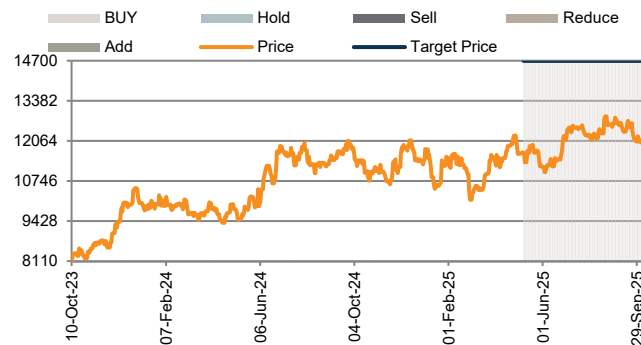
ULTRATECH CEMENT

RECOMMENDATION HISTORY - DETAILS

Date	Closing Price (Rs)	TP (Rs)	Rating	Analyst
02-Oct-25	12,095	14,700	Buy	Harsh Mittal
31-Aug-25	12,640	14,700	Buy	Harsh Mittal
22-Jul-25	12,452	14,700	Buy	Harsh Mittal
07-May-25	11,658	14,700	Buy	Harsh Mittal

Source: Company, Emkay Research

RECOMMENDATION HISTORY - TREND



Source: Company, Bloomberg, Emkay Research

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BUY	>15% upside
ADD	5-15% upside
REDUCE	5% upside to 15% downside
SELL	>15% downside

Emkay Global Financial Services Ltd.

CIN - L67120MH1995PLC084899

7th Floor, The Ruby, Senapati Bapat Marg, Dadar - West, Mumbai - 400028. India

Tel: +91 22 66121212 Fax: +91 22 66121299 Web: www.emkayglobal.com

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