

Malaysia Banking

NEUTRAL [Unchanged]

Stable loan growth in Aug 2025

NEUTRAL on sector

Generally, the bank stats for August point to a stable operating environment for the banks, with fairly decent loan growth thus far of 5.4% YoY, and stable asset quality. Deposit growth, however, continues to lag loan growth, but that CASA growth is faster than deposit growth, is encouraging. BUYs maintained on HLBK, AMMB, PBK and HLFG.

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Loan growth of 5.4% YoY

Industry loan growth was unchanged at 5.4% YoY in Aug 2025 - household (HH) loan growth slipped slightly to 5.7% YoY (5.8% YoY end-Jul) but non-HH loan growth improved to 5.2% YoY from 5.1% YoY end-Jul 2025. On the non-HH front, construction lending growth remained fairly robust at 6.0% YoY (6.2% YoY in Jul 2025). Working capital loan growth picked up pace to 4.8% YoY from 4.1% YoY in Jul 2025. Deposit growth was unchanged at 4.8% end-Aug 2025 and this compares against 3.3% end-2024. CASA growth was a tad slower at 6.1% YoY end-Aug 2025 (6.6% end-Jul 2025).

Asset quality still improving

Absolute impaired loans contracted YoY for the 20th consecutive month (-4.3% YoY end-Aug 2025 versus -4.0% YoY end-Jul 2025). On a YTD basis, impaired loans rose a marginal 2.2%. Where we are seeing some stress is in the passenger car and credit card segments, where absolute impaired loans rose 18% YoY and 19% YoY respectively end-Aug 2025. Nevertheless, the industry's gross impaired loans (GIL) ratio continued to 1.43% end-Aug 2025 from 1.44% end-Jul 2025.

Top 3 BUYs: HLBK, AMMB and PBK

Our top 3 picks in the sector continue to be HLBK, AMMB and PBK. HLBK offers strong asset quality, high loan loss coverage and a very liquid balance sheet. Having recently raised its dividend payout policy to 46% from 33% in FY25, its dividend yield of >5% brings it in line with that of its peers. AMMB's focus on proactive funding cost management and business banking operations should contribute to growth momentum, as it strives for higher dividend payouts. PBK is well-managed and its MYR1b management overlays should keep credit costs low.

Banking Sector - Peer Valuation Summary

Stock	Rec	Shr px (MYR)	Mkt cap (MYR m)	TP (MYR)	Upside (%)	PER (x) CY 25E	PER (x) CY 26E	P/B (x) CY 25E	P/B (x) CY 26E	ROAE (%) CY 25E	ROAE (%) CY 26E	Net yield CY 25E	Net yield CY 26E
Maybank *	NR	9.91	119,724	NR	NA	11.8	11.2	1.2	1.2	10.7	10.9	6.2	6.5
Public Bank	BUY	4.33	84,048	5.05	17%	11.6	11.0	1.4	1.3	12.4	12.5	5.1	5.5
CIMB	HOLD	7.34	79,035	7.60	4%	10.2	9.7	1.1	1.0	10.9	10.9	5.4	5.7
HL Bank	BUY	20.52	44,482	22.80	11%	9.4	9.0	1.0	1.0	11.2	11.3	4.8	5.1
RHB Bank	HOLD	6.60	28,789	7.20	9%	9.0	8.8	0.9	0.8	9.6	9.5	6.7	6.8
HLFG	BUY	17.22	19,760	21.70	26%	5.7	5.4	0.6	0.6	10.7	10.8	3.7	3.7
AMMB	BUY	5.65	18,725	6.05	7%	9.4	9.0	0.9	0.8	9.6	9.5	5.3	5.5
ABMB	HOLD	4.37	7,561	4.80	10%	9.5	9.2	0.9	0.8	9.8	9.4	4.3	4.5
BIMB	HOLD	2.29	5,190	2.40	5%	9.7	9.4	0.7	0.6	6.9	6.9	6.2	6.4
Simple avg			407,314			9.6	9.2	1.0	0.9	10.2	10.2	5.3	5.5
MC-wtd						10.5	10.0	1.1	1.1	10.9	11.0	5.5	5.8

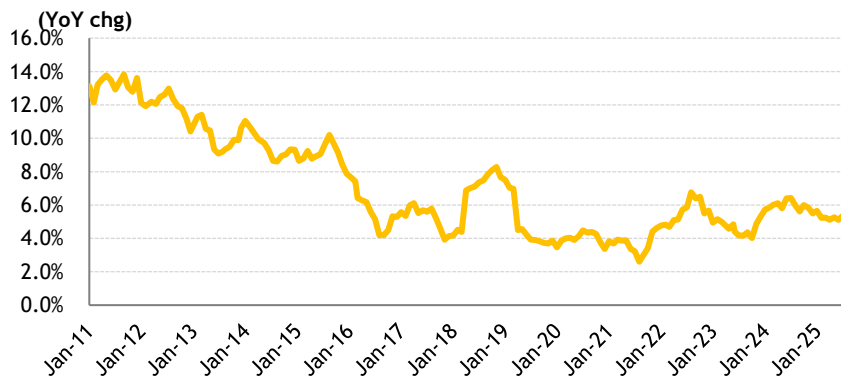
* Consensus estimates Source: Maybank IBG Research

1. Loan growth stable at 5.4% YoY

1.1 Loan growth unchanged

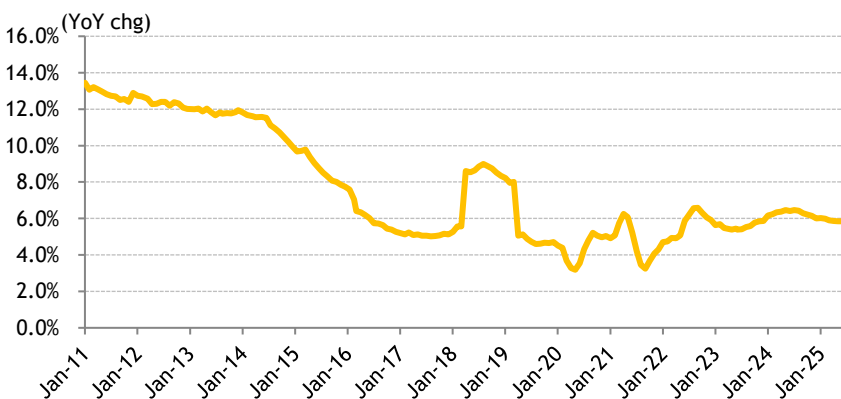
Industry loan growth was unchanged at 5.4% YoY in Aug 2025. Household (HH) loan growth slipped slightly to 5.7% YoY end-Aug 2025 (5.8% YoY end-Jul) but non-HH loan growth improved to 5.2% YoY from 5.1% YoY end-Jul 2025.

Fig 1: Total industry YoY loan growth (Jan 2011 - Aug 2025)



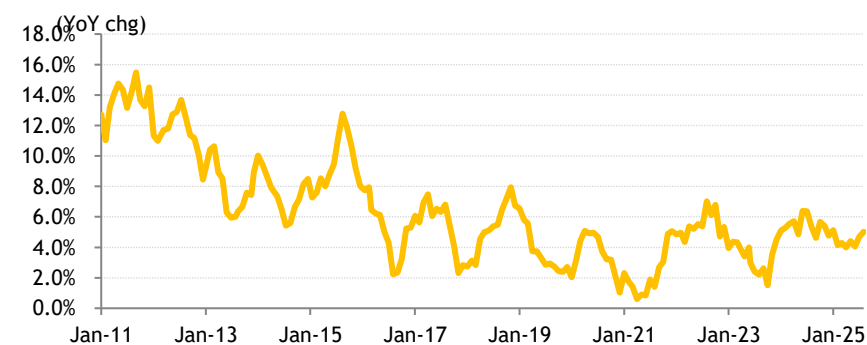
Source: BNM

Fig 2: YoY household loan growth (Jan 2011 - Aug 2025)



Source: BNM

Fig 3: YoY non-household loan growth (Jan 2011 - Aug 2025)



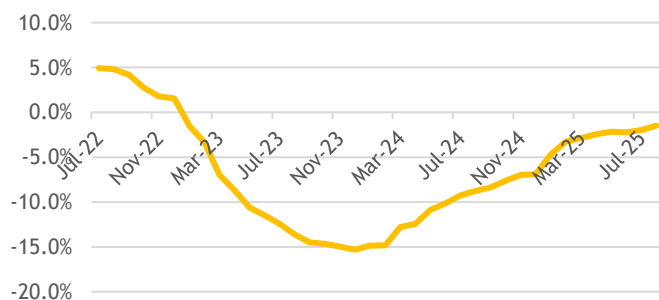
Source: BNM

1.2 HH loan growth of 5.7% YoY

HH loans accounted for 60% of total loans. Of HH loans, residential property loans accounted for 62.6% of total HH loans end-Aug 2025, followed by passenger car loans (15.0%), personal loans (8.6%) and non-residential property loans (6.2%).

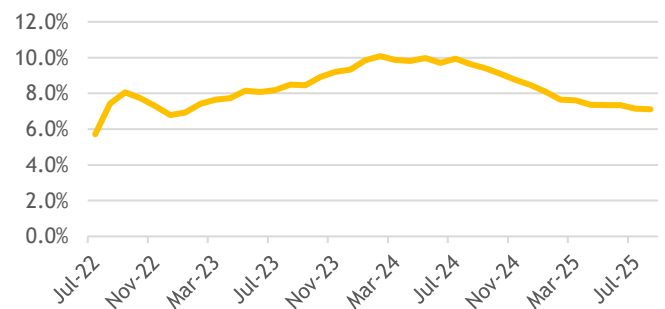
On a YoY basis, mortgage lending growth was a tad slower at 6.3% end-Aug 2025 (6.5% end-Jul), as was auto financing growth at 7.1% end-Aug 2025 (7.2% end-Jul). Non-residential property loan growth was a stable 4% YoY. Personal financing slowed to 2.5% YoY from 3.3% end-Jul 2025, but credit card financing improved to 9.5% YoY from 8.9%.

Fig 4: Securities loans (Jul 2022-Aug 2025)



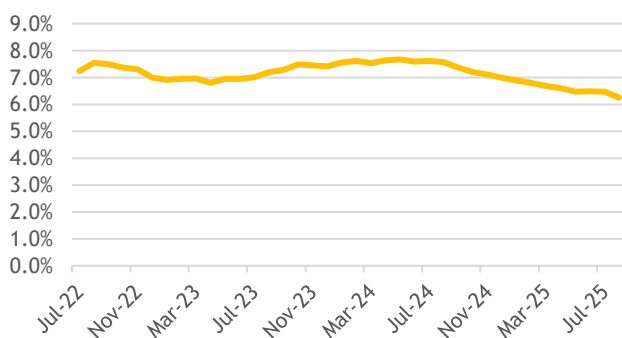
Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

Fig 5: Passenger car loans (Jul 2022-Aug 2025)



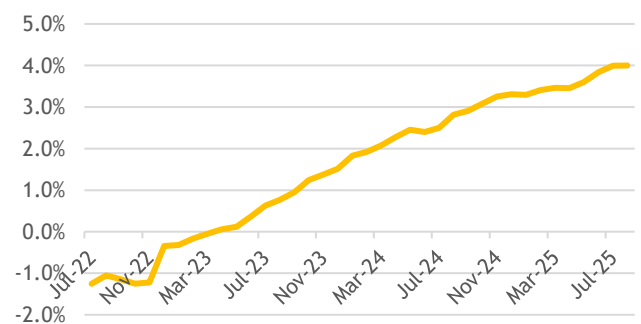
Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

Fig 6: Mortgage loans (Jul 2022-Aug 2025)



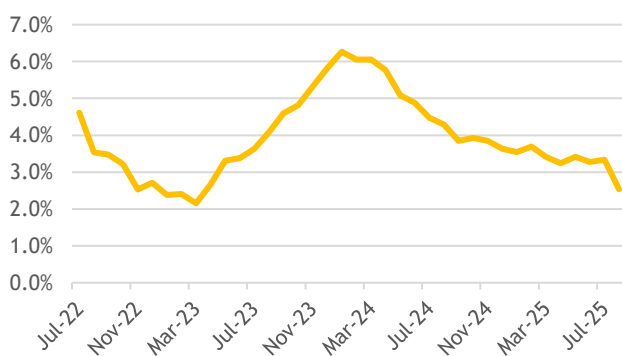
Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

Fig 7: Non-residential property loans (Jul 22-Aug 25)



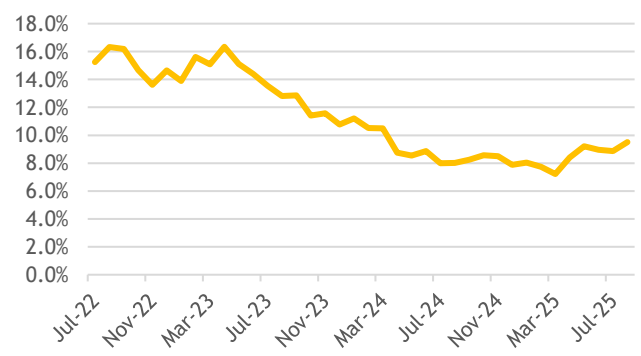
Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

Fig 8: Personal loans (Jul 2022-Aug 2025)



Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

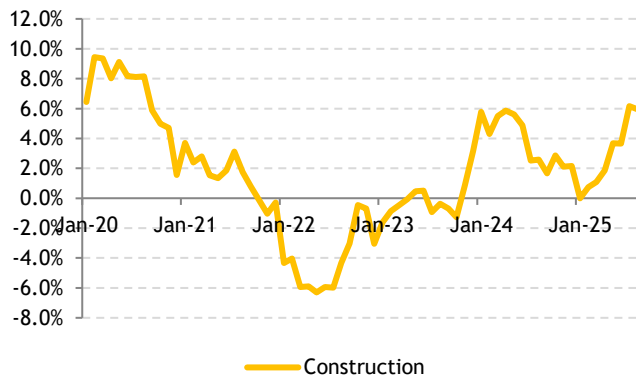
Fig 9: Credit card loans (Jul 2022-Aug 2025)



Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

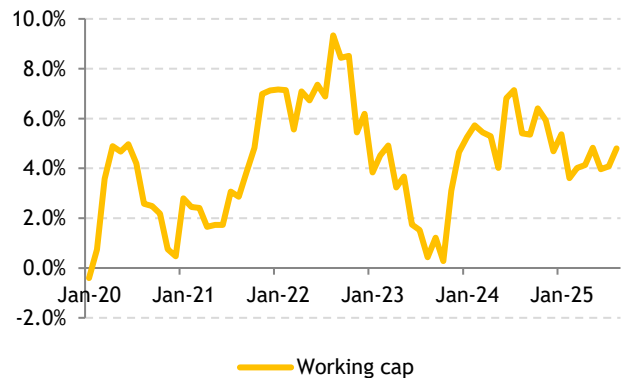
On the non-HH front, construction lending growth remained fairly robust at 6.0% YoY (6.2% YoY in Jul 2025). Working capital loan growth picked up pace to 4.8% YoY from 4.1% YoY in Jul 2025.

Fig 10: YoY chg in construction loans (Jan 2020 - Aug 2025)



Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

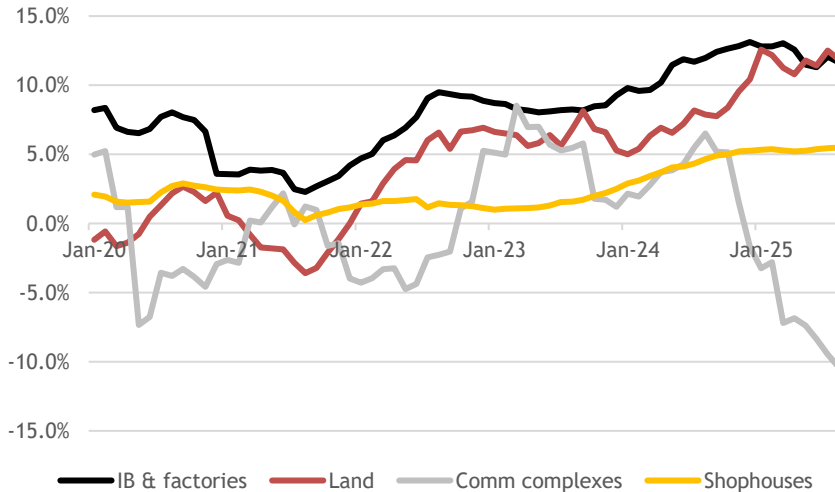
Fig 11: YoY chg in working cap loans (Jan 2020 - Aug 2025)



Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

Within commercial property financing, lending for industrial buildings and factories rose 11.7% YoY end-Aug 2025 (12.1% YoY end-Jul 2025), while loan growth for the purchase of land was 11.9% YoY versus 12.5% YoY end-Jul 2025. Shophouse financing increased at a stable pace of 5.5% YoY, but lending for commercial complexes continued its downward spiral, contracting for the ninth consecutive month and by a sharper -10.4% YoY.

Fig 12: YoY chg in non-residential property loans (Jan 2020 - Aug 2025)

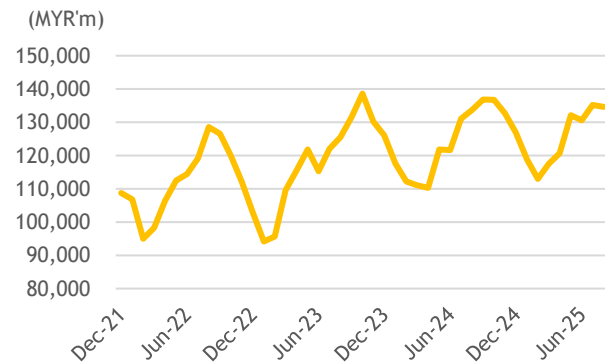


Source: BNM

1.3 Loan applications stable YoY

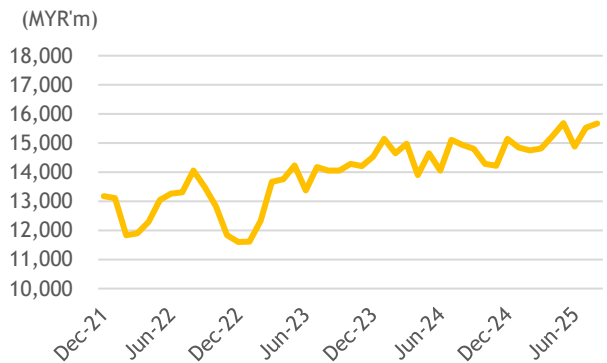
As Fig 13 would indicate, loan applications (on a 3-month moving average (3MMA) basis) have continued on an uptrend, and were stable YoY in Aug 2025. Across the key HH segments - mortgages and auto loan applications continued to rise, but contracted YoY for credit cards and personal loans. Construction loan applications rose 3% YoY while working capital loan applications contracted 6% YoY.

Fig 13: 3MMA total loan applications (Dec 2021-Aug 2025)



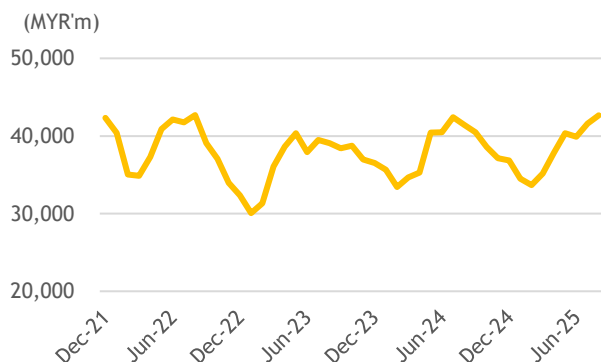
Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

Fig 14: 3MMA auto loan applications (Dec 2021-Aug 2025)



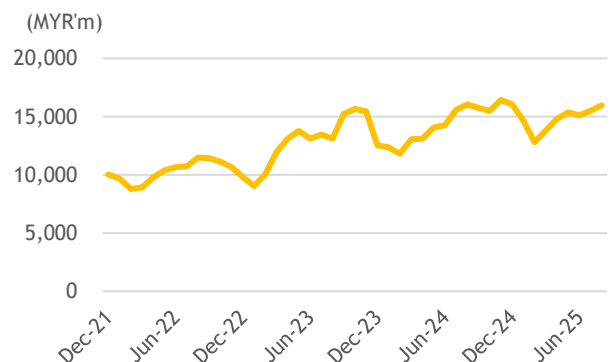
Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

Fig 15: 3MMA mortgage applications (Dec 2021-Aug 2025)



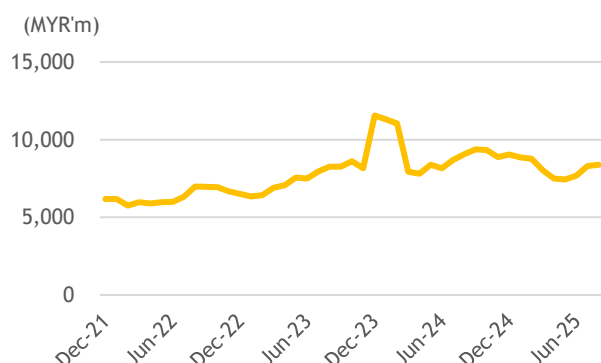
Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

Fig 16: 3MMA non-resi prop loan apps (Dec 2021-Aug 2025)



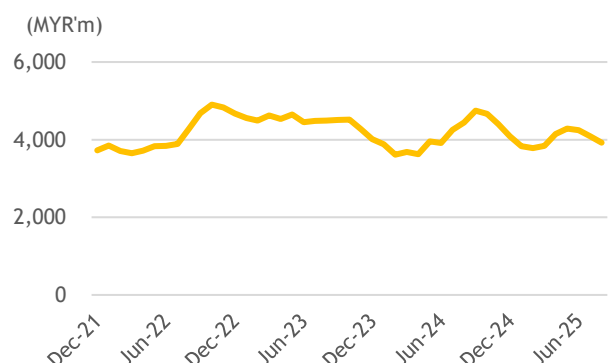
Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

Fig 17: 3MMA personal loan applications (Dec 2021-Aug 2025)



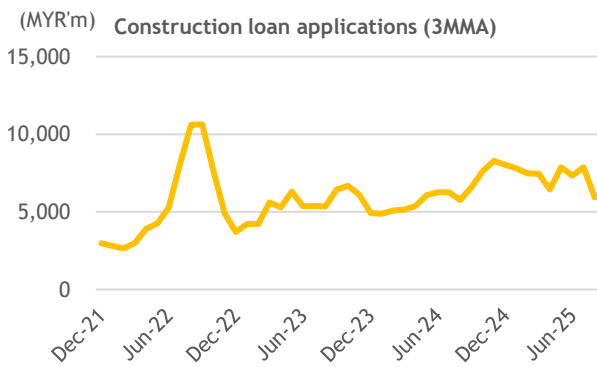
Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

Fig 18: 3MMA credit card loan application (Dec 21-Aug 25)



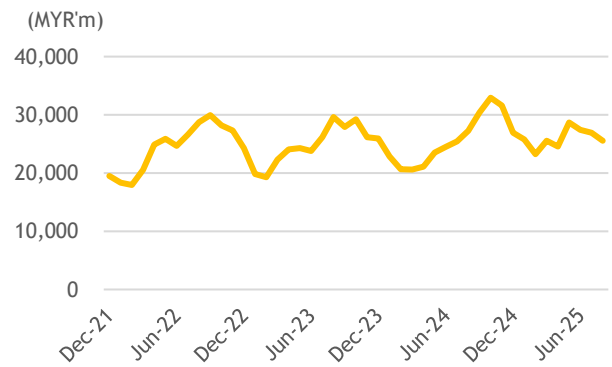
Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

Fig 19: Construction loan applications (Dec 2021-Aug 2025)



Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

Fig 20: Working cap loan applications (Dec 2021-Aug 2025)

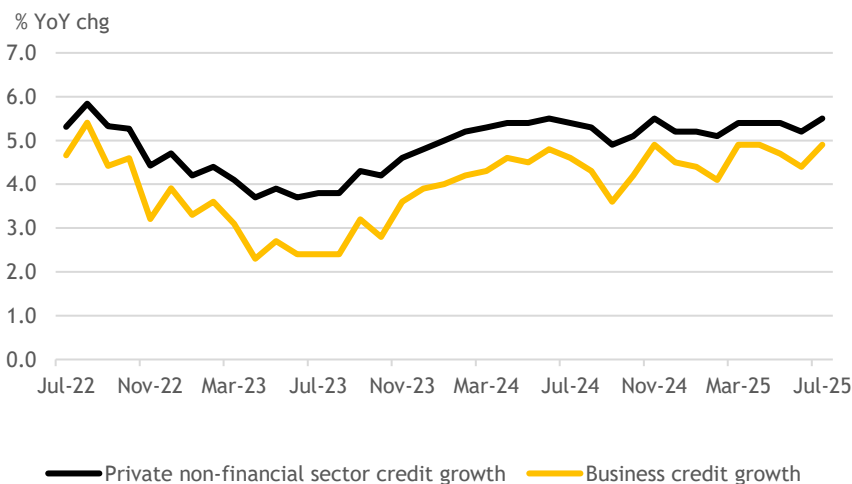


Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

1.4 Total industry credit growth of 5.5%

Outstanding corporate bonds issued by the private non-financial sector totaled MYR615b end-Aug 2025 (MYR609b end-Jul 2025). Adding this to industry loans, total credit to the private non-financial sector expanded 5.7% end-Aug 2025 (5.5% end-Jul 2025). Business credit growth was a faster 5.4% YoY end-Aug 2025 (4.9% YoY end-Jul 2025).

Fig 21: Private non-financial sector credit growth



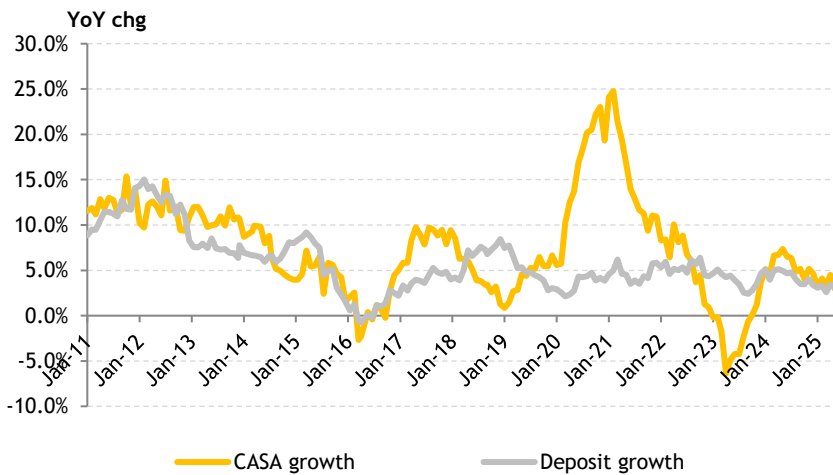
Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

2. Stable deposit growth at 4.8%

2.1 Deposit growth stable at 4.8%

Deposit growth was unchanged at 4.8% end-Aug 2025 (4.8% end-Jul 2025) and this compares against 3.3% end-2024. CASA growth was a tad slower at 6.1% YoY end-Aug 2025 (6.6% end-Jul 2025), but outpaced total deposit growth, which we view positively for banks in managing funding costs.

Fig 22: Total deposits vs CASA growth (Jan 2011 - Aug 2025)



Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

3. Improvement in asset quality

3.1 Asset quality continues to improve

Absolute impaired loans contracted YoY for the 20th consecutive month (-4.3% YoY end-Aug 2025 versus -4.0% YoY end-Jul 2025). On a YTD basis, impaired loans rose a marginal 2.2%.

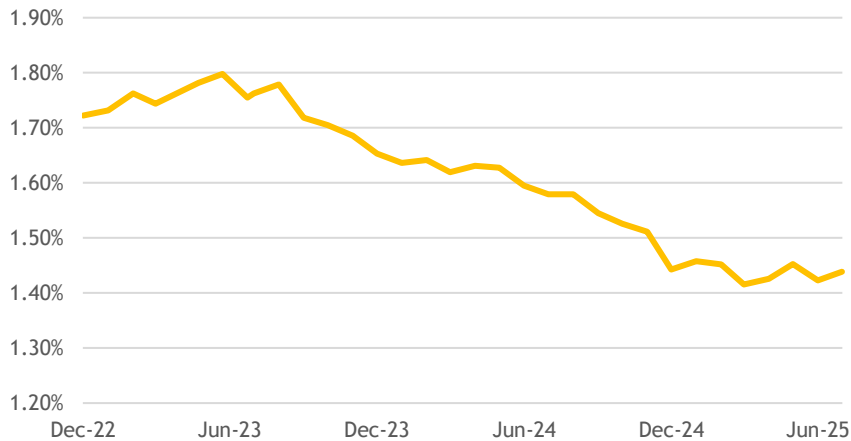
Fig 24: YoY chg in gross impaired loans (Dec 2022 - Aug 2025)



Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

Where we are seeing some stress is in the passenger car and credit card segments, where absolute impaired loans rose 18% YoY and 19% YoY respectively end-Aug 2025. Nevertheless, the industry's gross impaired loans (GIL) ratio continued to 1.43% end-Aug 2025 from 1.44% end-Jul 2025. This compares to a pre-COVID ratio of 1.51% end-Dec 2019.

Fig 25: GIL ratios (Jul 2021 - Aug 2025)



Source: BNM, Maybank IBG Research

4. Top Buys

Our **top 3 picks** in the sector continue to be **HLBK, AMMB and PBK**. HLBK offers strong asset quality, high loan loss coverage and a very liquid balance sheet. Having recently raised its dividend payout policy to 46% from 33% in FY24, its dividend yield of >5% brings it in line with that of its peers. AMMB's focus on proactive funding cost management and business banking operations should contribute to growth momentum, as it strives for higher dividend payouts. PBK is well-managed and its MYR1b management overlays should keep credit costs low. The acquisition of LPI Capital enhances non-interest income and we still think that concerns over a share overhang are overblown.

5. Risk statement

5.1 Upside risk

(i) Stronger-than-expected GDP growth, which would contribute to stronger loan growth and lower credit risks; as well as (ii) improved liquidity, which would help to sustain interest margins.

5.2 Downside risk

(i) Weaker-than-expected GDP growth, which could lead to slower loan growth and asset quality issues; (ii) potential interest rate cuts that could negatively impact interest margins in the short term; and (iii) a slowdown in CASA growth, which could exacerbate deposit competition.

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