

March 28, 2024

Bharti Enterprises (Holding) Private Limited: Rating reaffirmed

Summary of rating action

Instrument*	Previous Rated Amount (Rs. crore)	Current Rated Amount (Rs. crore)	Rating Action
Commercial paper	1,000.00	1,000.00	[ICRA]A1+ reaffirmed
Total	1,000.00	1,000.00	

*Instrument details are provided in Annexure-I

Rationale

The rating reaffirmation factors in Bharti Enterprises (Holding) Private Limited's (BEHPL) status as a majority shareholder of Bharti Telecom Limited (BTL; rated [ICRA] A1+) — the holding company of Bharti Airtel Limited (BAL) — a leading player in the Indian telecommunication industry. The company enjoys financial flexibility on account of its economic interest of around 20% in BAL (market value of around ~Rs. 140,000 crore as on March 21, 2024) and zero external borrowings.

BEHPL's current debt profile continues to be characterised largely by intra-Group borrowings. One of BEHPL's subsidiary, Bharti Enterprises Limited (BEL), has availed external debt, against which it shall have adequate liquid assets, resulting in a negligible net debt position. The external debt at BTL level stood at Rs. 24,950 crore as on March 20, 2024 against which its market value of investments stood at ~Rs. 275,000 crore, indicating healthy buffer against the market value of investments.

The rating also factors in the significant concentration of the investment portfolio in a listed company (although held indirectly) — BAL — with the balance towards the Group's insurance business, among others. With modest operating cash flows, the company remains dependent on intra-Group advances or promoter loans/equity and dividends to meet its funding requirements.

Key rating drivers and their description

Credit strengths

Bharti Group's holding company for BAL – BEHPL holds ~20% economic interest in BAL (through BTL), a leading telecom service provider in India. The market value of this economic interest was around Rs. 140,000 crore as on March 21, 2024. The company's economic interest in BAL lends financial flexibility to BEHPL. BAL's operating metrics have been consistently improving, translating into a consistent improvement in ARPU levels. Thus, a consistent improvement in cash flow generation from operations would strength BAL's credit profile, going forward.

Reputed and resourceful promoter Group – The company is part of the reputed Bharti Group (Mittal family), which has interests in telecom in India and Africa. The Group also has interests in other domestic business segments like real estate, insurance, etc. The promoter Group has demonstrated a conservative approach by addressing the rising indebtedness at holding companies through equity infusion and investment monetisation.

Credit challenges

Investment concentration in BAL through BTL; negligible additional investments expected in short term – BEHPL's investment portfolio is majorly concentrated on BAL, though indirectly through its stake in BTL. While BTL constitutes a majority of BEHPL's investments, the balance is towards the Group's other businesses like insurance.

Negligible operating cash flows – BEHPL has limited operations with the company deriving income mainly from royalty and management fees, thus the operating cash flows are not material. In the absence of any material operating cash flows, BEHPL remains dependent on timely refinancing and recovery of Group advances and dividends to service its Group debt. At present, the company has no external debt on its books. While one of its subsidiary, BEL, availed external debt to support the requirements of the Group, it shall have adequate marketable liquid assets, resulting in a negligible net debt position.

Vulnerability to market risks – BEHPL’s financing ability can be vulnerable to the share price performance of BAL and thus remains exposed to market risks.

Liquidity position: Adequate

The company does not have any major operations of its own and primarily derives income from royalty and management fees. Although BEHPL remains dependent on the Group or external funding to maintain its liquidity position, there are no working capital or debt servicing requirements. ICRA believes that given the reputed promoters, BEHPL has the financial flexibility to arrange funds at a short notice.

Rating sensitivities

Positive factors – Not Applicable

Negative factors – Pressure on the rating could arise if there is a significant deterioration in the credit profile of the key operating asset — BAL — or if there is a significant decline in the market value buffer of its investments in BAL, impacting its financial flexibility.

Analytical approach

Analytical Approach	Comments
Applicable rating methodologies	Investment Companies
Parent/Group support	Not Applicable
Consolidation/Standalone	Standalone

About the company

BEHPL is part of the Bharti Enterprises Group, which is promoted by Mr. Sunil Bharti Mittal. BEHPL is a holding company and its primary investment includes a stake in BTL, which has further investments in BAL. Apart from the telecom business, BEHPL has investments in the holding companies of the Group’s other interests like insurance.

Key financial indicators (audited)

BEHPL Standalone	FY2022	FY2023
Operating income	1.5	0.2
PAT	-18.7	168.7
OPBDIT/OI	76.2%	-474.8%
PAT/OI	-1222.1%	69812.0%
Total outside liabilities/Tangible net worth (times)	0.3	0.3
Total debt/OPBDIT (times)	680.1	- 631.46
Interest coverage (times)	0.04	-

Source: Company, ICRA Research; All ratios as per ICRA’s calculations; Amount in Rs. crore

PAT: Profit after tax; OPBDIT: Operating profit before depreciation, interest, taxes and amortisation

Status of non-cooperation with previous CRA: Not applicable

Any other information: None

Rating history for past three years

Instrument	Type	Current rating (FY2024)		Chronology of rating history for the past 3 years				
		Amount rated (Rs. crore)	Amount outstanding as on March 21, 2023 (Rs. crore)	Date & rating in FY2024	Date & rating in FY2023	Date & rating in FY2022	Date & rating in FY2021	
				Mar 28, 2024	Mar 21, 2023	Mar 04, 2022	Mar 30, 2021	Jun 05, 2020
1 Commercial paper	Short-term	1000.0	-	[ICRA]A1+	[ICRA]A1+	[ICRA]A1+	[ICRA]A1+	[ICRA]A1+

Complexity level of the rated instruments

Instrument	Complexity Indicator
Commercial paper	Simple

The Complexity Indicator refers to the ease with which the returns associated with the rated instrument could be estimated. It does not indicate the risk related to the timely payments on the instrument, which is rather indicated by the instrument's credit rating. It also does not indicate the complexity associated with analysing an entity's financial, business, industry risks or complexity related to the structural, transactional or legal aspects. Details on the complexity levels of the instruments are available on ICRA's website: [Click Here](#)

Annexure I: Instrument details

ISIN*	Instrument Name*	Date of Issuance	Coupon Rate	Maturity	Amount Rated (Rs. crore)	Current Rating and Outlook
-	Commercial paper	NA	NA	NA	1000.00	[ICRA]A1+

Source: Company *- Unplaced

Annexure II: List of entities considered for consolidated analysis: Not Applicable

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