

RESULT UPDATE

KEY DATA

Rating	BUY
Sector relative	Outperformer
Price (INR)	441
12 month price target (INR)	500
52 Week High/Low	585/189
Market cap (INR bn/USD bn)	167/2.0
Free float (%)	47.0
Avg. daily value traded (INR mn)	3,366.4

SHAREHOLDING PATTERN

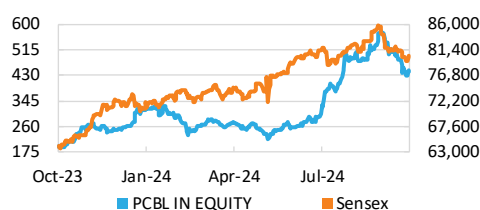
	Sep-24	Jun-24	Mar-24
Promoter	51.41%	51.41%	51.41%
FII	4.99%	5.29%	6.68%
DII	8.04%	7.64%	6.85%
Pledge	0%	0%	0%

FINANCIALS

(INR mn)

Year to March	FY23A	FY24E	FY25E	FY26E
Revenue	58,739	56,743	58,261	67,710
EBITDA	7,364	9,666	12,124	14,245
Adjusted profit	4,441	5,333	6,466	7,628
Diluted EPS (INR)	11.8	14.1	17.1	20.2
EPS growth (%)	4.0	20.1	21.2	18.0
RoAE (%)	16.4	17.5	18.4	18.8
P/E (x)	36.5	30.4	25.0	21.2
EV/EBITDA (x)	22.9	19.6	16.5	14.0
Dividend yield (%)	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.2

PRICE PERFORMANCE



EBITDA/mt to improve further

PCBL posted in-line results with a 46% YoY jump in consolidated revenue to INR21.6bn led by higher carbon black volumes and improved realisation. EBITDA shot up 52% YoY to INR3.7bn as EBITDA/ton for carbon black inched up to INR21,234/MT, although PAT stayed flat at INR1.2bn due to rising interest and depreciation.

Aquapharm demonstrated a stable performance, with management guiding for significant growth and margin expansion in FY26E. Additionally, the joint venture with Kinaltek is expected to enhance future growth and margins. All in all, we are raising the TP to INR500 (earlier INR486) as we roll forward the valuation to Q3FY27E EV/EBITDA; reiterate 'BUY'.

In-line results boosted by better volumes and improved realisations

PCBL's posted in-line results overall with revenue rising 46% YoY to INR21.6bn fuelled by improved realisation and a 14% increase in carbon black volumes; however, Q2 revenue, which includes contribution from Aquapharm (not in base), edged down 3% QoQ. Carbon black volume shot up 42% while all segments saw revenue increases: carbon black up 22%, power up 26%, and chemicals at INR3.6bn. Gross profit margin improved by 123bp YoY to 30.7% and EBITDA surged 52% YoY to INR3.7bn due to higher top line and improved margins at 16.8%. EBIT for carbon black rose 37% YoY to INR2.8bn, but PAT remained flat YoY at INR1.23bn due to a sharp increase in interest and depreciation costs, resulting in a PAT margin of 5.7%.

Strong guidance for Aquapharm

Aquapharm reported revenue of INR3.6bn and EBITDA of INR500mn, resulting in a 5% margin. Capacity utilization was at 75% with sales volume reaching 24,510 metric tons. Management highlighted that a 38,000mtpa expansion project is on course to be commissioned by March 2025. Management has guided for 17–18% growth and 20% margins for FY26. We believe this expansion along with improved utilisation of existing facilities will aid margin expansion going ahead.

Diversification aids margin improvement; debt remains a concern

We believe that the recent acquisition of Aquapharm and the JV with Kinaltek would positively influence the company's long-term growth and margins. Additionally, the upcoming capacity addition for carbon black is expected to enhance EBITDA/ton as utilisation increases. Amid these encouraging developments, the company's leveraged balance sheet remains a concern; however, we believe a pickup in utilisation of Aquapharm would help generate strong cash flows.

Financials

Year to March	Q2FY25	Q2FY24	% Change	Q1FY25	% Change
Net Revenue	15,361	13,983	9.9	14,910	3.0
EBITDA	2,732	2,347	16.4	2,674	2.2
Adjusted Profit	1,290	1,324	(2.5)	1,163	11.0
Diluted EPS (INR)	0.0	0.0		0.0	

Financial Statements

Income Statement (INR mn)

Year to March	FY23A	FY24E	FY25E	FY26E
Total operating income	58,739	56,743	58,261	67,710
Gross profit	14,265	17,290	20,856	24,162
Employee costs	1,903	2,050	2,131	2,217
Other expenses	4,998	5,575	6,600	7,700
EBITDA	7,364	9,666	12,124	14,245
Depreciation	1,366	1,505	1,896	2,087
Less: Interest expense	534	1,262	1,600	1,600
Add: Other income	384	310	355	340
Profit before tax	5,848	7,208	8,983	10,899
Prov for tax	1,407	1,875	2,516	3,271
Less: Other adj	0	0	0	0
Reported profit	4,441	5,333	6,466	7,628
Less: Excp.item (net)	0	0	0	0
Adjusted profit	4,441	5,333	6,466	7,628
Diluted shares o/s	378	378	378	378
Adjusted diluted EPS	11.8	14.1	17.1	20.2
DPS (INR)	4.0	4.0	4.3	5.1
Tax rate (%)	24.1	26.0	28.0	30.0

Important Ratios (%)

Year to March	FY23A	FY24E	FY25E	FY26E
Specialty Chemicals	40,376.0	57,247.0	67,247.0	75,000.0
Performance chemical	92,094.0	1,48,038.0	1,58,038.0	1,68,038.0
Tyre	3,11,585.0	3,26,565.0	3,74,715.0	4,56,962.0
EBITDA margin (%)	12.5	17.0	20.8	21.0
Net profit margin (%)	7.6	9.4	11.1	11.3
Revenue growth (% YoY)	32.1	(3.4)	2.7	16.2
EBITDA growth (% YoY)	12.3	31.2	25.4	17.5
Adj. profit growth (%)	4.0	20.1	21.2	18.0

Assumptions (%)

Year to March	FY23A	FY24E	FY25E	FY26E
GDP (YoY %)	6.4	5.8	6.3	6.3
Repo rate (%)	6.0	5.5	5.0	5.0
USD/INR (average)	80.0	78.0	77.0	77.0
Volumes (MT)	4,85,000.0	5,40,000.0	6,00,000.0	7,00,000.0
Crude Prices (USD)	91.2	75.0	70.0	70.0
Specialty Product Perc.	9.1	10.8	11.2	10.7
EBITDA/tonne	15,184.1	17,899.3	20,206.7	20,350.4
Realis. Premium (Spec. V/s Carbon Black)	1,75,351.4	1,47,272.7	1,48,860.8	1,48,860.8
Non-Speciality – realis.	1,00,699.1	86,785.7	87,721.5	87,721.5

Valuation Metrics

Year to March	FY23A	FY24E	FY25E	FY26E
Diluted P/E (x)	36.5	30.4	25.0	21.2
Price/BV (x)	5.7	4.9	4.3	3.7
EV/EBITDA (x)	22.9	19.6	16.5	14.0
Dividend yield (%)	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.2

Source: Company and Nuvama estimates

Balance Sheet (INR mn)

Year to March	FY23A	FY24E	FY25E	FY26E
Share capital	378	378	378	378
Reserves	27,819	32,415	37,264	42,985
Shareholders funds	28,196	32,792	37,642	43,362
Minority interest	0	0	0	0
Borrowings	7,127	28,877	38,661	38,661
Trade payables	9,497	14,358	11,376	13,183
Other liabs & prov	3,427	3,801	3,801	3,801
Total liabilities	50,162	81,838	93,489	1,01,017
Net block	19,992	26,599	28,928	31,074
Intangible assets	7	20	9	9
Capital WIP	2,855	1,629	3,794	4,794
Total fixed assets	22,853	28,248	32,732	35,877
Non current inv	10,100	36,794	36,794	36,794
Cash/cash equivalent	421	1,690	478	1,575
Sundry debtors	11,078	12,875	12,770	14,841
Loans & advances	5	6	6	6
Other assets	6,838	8,198	11,433	12,648
Total assets	50,162	81,838	93,489	1,01,017

Free Cash Flow (INR mn)

Year to March	FY23A	FY24E	FY25E	FY26E
Reported profit	4,441	5,333	6,466	7,628
Add: Depreciation	1,366	1,505	1,896	2,087
Interest (net of tax)	406	934	1,152	1,120
Others	(595)	197	448	626
Less: Changes in WC	1,600	2,287	(6,090)	(1,815)
Operating cash flow	7,218	10,256	3,872	9,645
Less: Capex	(2,894)	(6,816)	(6,207)	(5,042)
Free cash flow	4,324	3,440	(2,335)	4,603

Key Ratios

Year to March	FY23A	FY24E	FY25E	FY26E
RoE (%)	16.4	17.5	18.4	18.8
RoCE (%)	18.7	17.5	15.3	15.8
Inventory days	45	49	71	80
Receivable days	69	77	80	74
Payable days	76	110	126	103
Working cap (% sales)	12.9	10.2	20.4	19.7
Gross debt/equity (x)	0.3	0.9	1.0	0.9
Net debt/equity (x)	0.2	0.8	1.0	0.9
Interest coverage (x)	11.2	6.5	6.4	7.6

Valuation Drivers

Year to March	FY23A	FY24E	FY25E	FY26E
EPS growth (%)	4.0	20.1	21.2	18.0
RoE (%)	16.4	17.5	18.4	18.8
EBITDA growth (%)	12.3	31.2	25.4	17.5
Payout ratio (%)	34.0	28.3	25.0	25.0

*THESE ARE STANDALONE NUMBERS

Exhibit 1: Quarterly financial snapshot (INR mn)

Year to March	Q2FY25	Q2FY24	% change	Q1FY25	% change
Revenues	21,632	14,867	45.5	21,436	1
Raw material	14,986	10,483	43.0	14,491	3
Staff costs	985	560	76.0	1,001	-2
Other expenditure	2,026	1,443	40.4	2,361	-14
Total expenditure	17,997	12,486	44.1	17,853	1
EBITDA	3,635	2,381	52.7	3,583	1
Depreciation	864	482	79.1	845	2
EBIT	2,827	1,926	46.8	2,847	-1
Interest	1,189	210	467.1	1,211	-2
Other income	57	27	110.8	109	-48
Profit Before Tax	1,638	1,716	(4.5)	1,636	0
Less: Provision for Tax	404	488	(17.2)	457	-12
Reported Profit	1,234	1,228	0.5	1,179	5
No. of Diluted shares outstanding (mn)	378	378		378	
Adjusted Diluted EPS	2.9	3.3	(12.1)	3.1	(8.5)
As % of revenues					
COGS	69.3	70.5	-123.3	67.6	167.8
Gross profit	30.7	29.5	123.3	32.4	-167.8
Employee costs	4.6	3.8	78.8	4.7	-11.6
Other expenses	9.4	9.7	-34.2	11.0	-165.2
Total operating expenses	83.2	84.0	-78.7	83.3	-9.0
EBITDA	16.8	16.0	78.7	16.7	9.0
Net profit	5.7	8.3	-255.6	5.5	20.5

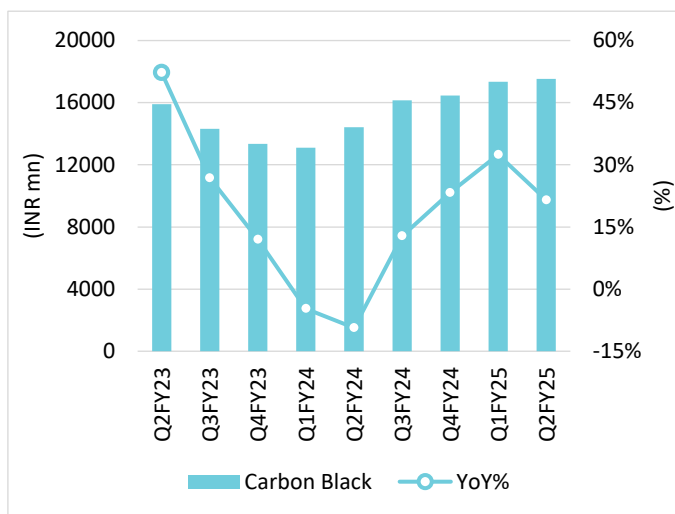
Source: Company, Nuvama Research

Exhibit 2: Segmental information

Breakdown by segment	Q2FY25	Q2FY24	% change	Q1FY25	% change
Revenues					
Carbon Black	17,531	14,426	22	17,343	1
Power	807	639	26	813	-1
Chemical	3,609	0	-	3,574	1
Inter segment	315	197		294	7
Total	16,066	13,983	15	14,910	8
EBIT					
Carbon Black	2,720	1,991	37	3,043	-11
Power	497	416	19	553	-10
Chemicals	196	0		158	24
Less Interest	1,189	210	467	1,211	-2
Other Un-Allocable Expenditure	585	481	22	907	-36
Net Off Un-Allocable Income					
Total	1,638	1,716	-5	1,636	0

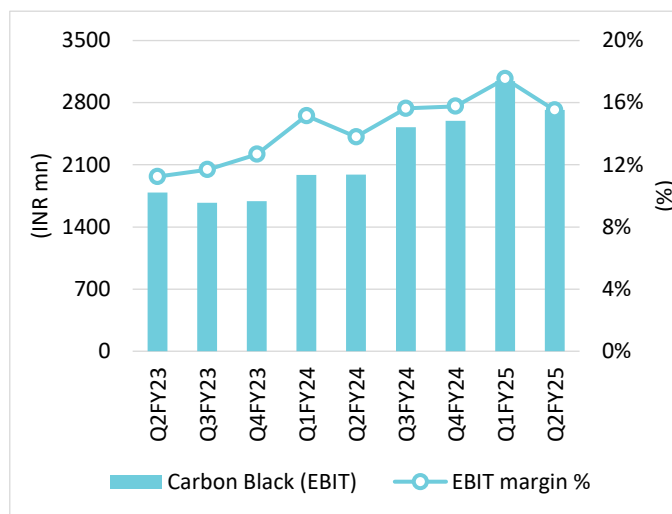
Source: Company, Nuvama Research

Exhibit 3: Carbon black growth continues



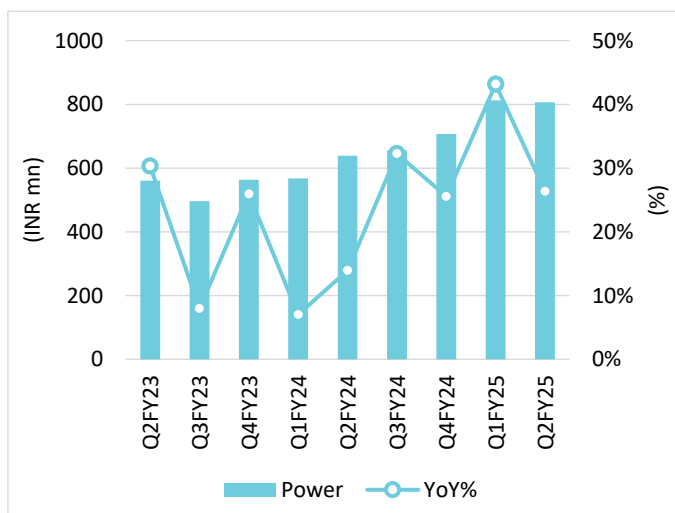
Source: Company, Nuvama Research

Exhibit 4: EBIT margin decline



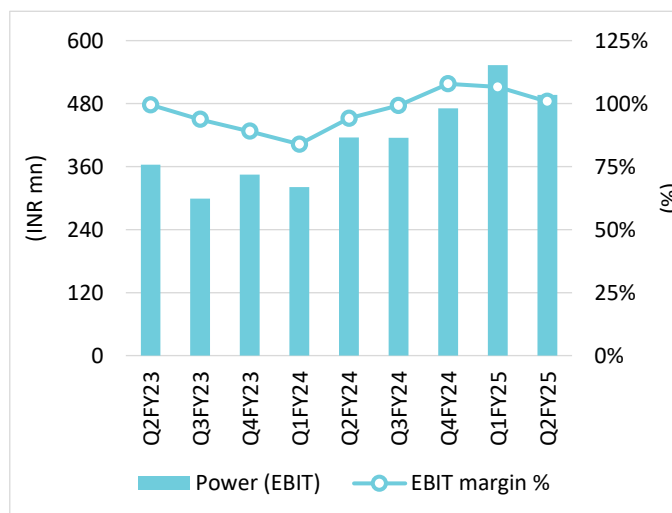
Source: Company, Nuvama Research

Exhibit 5: Power revenue increases YoY



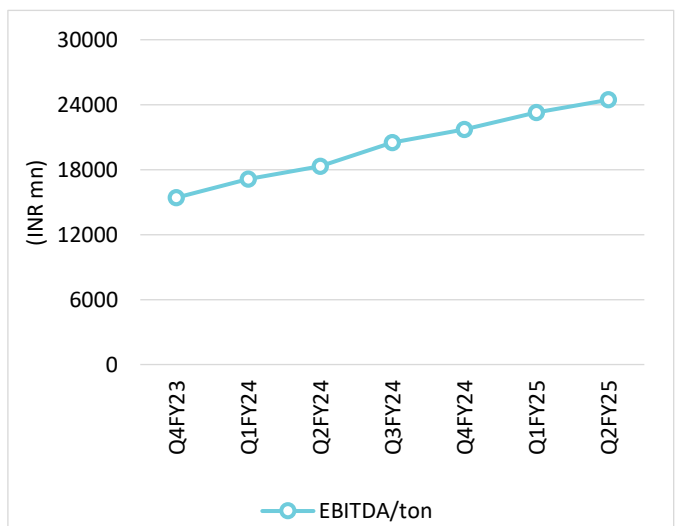
Source: Company, Nuvama Research

Exhibit 6: Power margin stable



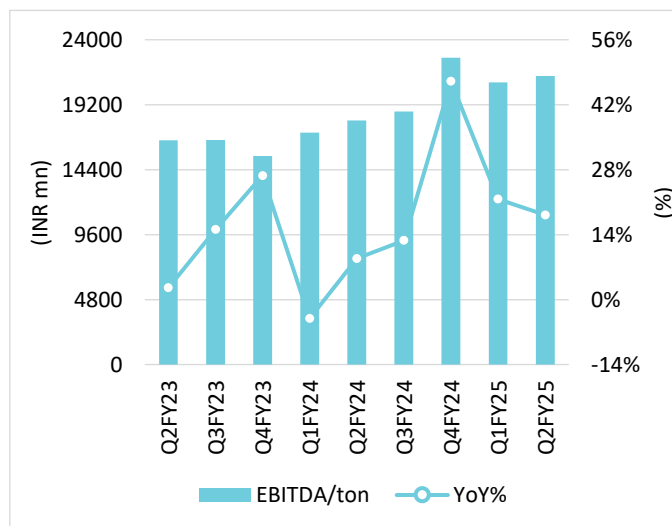
Source: Company, Nuvama Research

Exhibit 7: EBITDA/ton increases sequentially



Source: Company, Nuvama Research

Exhibit 8: EBITDA/ton for carbon black remains stable



Source: Company, Nuvama Research

Q2FY25 conference call key takeaways

Financial update

- PCBL's result is in line with our estimates with revenue increasing 46% YoY to INR21.6bn (down 3% sequentially); this was mainly due to better realisation and a 14% increase in volumes in carbon black and revenue contribution from Aquapharm.
- **Volumes:** In carbon black, the performance segment clocked highest volume growth of 42% YoY, followed by specialty black and tyre segment at 10% and 3%, respectively.
- **Segmental:** Revenue increased across segments as revenue from carbon black segment rose 22% YoY and that of the power segment by 26% YoY while that of chemicals business came in at INR3.6bn.
- Sequential decline in carbon black volumes is attributable to maintenance shutdowns during monsoon at tyre companies; plus, container availability issues.
- Gross profit margins stood at 30.7%, up by 123bp YoY because of lower raw material prices.
- EBITDA grew 52% YoY to INR3.7Bn with EBITDA margin rising 80bp YoY to 16.8%. EBITDA/mt for carbon black for Q2FY25 increased to INR21,234/mt.
- EBIT from carbon black business increased by 37% YoY to INR2.8bn while power segment saw an increase of 20% YoY to INR500mn. EBIT margin for the chemicals business came in at 5%.
- PAT came in flat at INR1.23bn, mainly as interest costs increased by 467% YoY and depreciation by 80% YoY while PAT margins stood at 5.7%.
- **Decline in other expense:** Sequential decline in other expenses is largely due to the higher maintenance and repair costs and higher carbon black volumes in Q1.

Aquapharm

- During the quarter, Aquapharm reported revenue of INR3.6bn with EBITDA of INR500mn yielding a 5% margin.
- Margins were lower as demand from US markets was substantially down, which led to lower volumes and margin decline.
- Sales volume for the quarter stood at 24,150MT with capacity utilisation at 75%.
- Production capacity is at 1,30,000MT with plants situated in India, USA and Saudi Arabia.
- Capacity expansion by 38,000MTPA is underway and is expected to be completed by Mar-25.
- Currently, it has more than 275 products and phosphonates account for over 50% of revenue share in the product portfolio.
- Management is focused on improving product mix with greater contribution from green chelates and polymers in India wherein current market share of Aquapharm is low.
- **Expansion in Texas:** Aquapharm plans to increase specialty phosphonate products in the US for serving the oil & gas industry.

- **New geography:** Aquapharm aims to expand into newer geographies by serving Europe and de-risking concentration from America.
- **Guidance:** Management expects 17–18% volume growth from FY26, and margins should reach 20%, which should further improve to 25% by FY29.

Other key highlights

- Power generation increased during the quarter by 25% YoY to 209MU while units sold increased by 22% to 126MU.
- Sales mix between domestic and exports stood at 61% and 39%, respectively. Export volumes increased 22% YoY while domestic volumes rose by 10% YoY.
- During the quarter, the Tamil Nadu plant's sales volume stood at 25,982MT with capacity utilisation at 80%.
- Brownfield expansion at the Tamil Nadu facility by 90,000MTPA and 12MW green power is being expedited. First phase of 30,000 MTPA to be commissioned by Q3FY25 and second phase of 60,000MTPA by H1FY26.
- By the next year, carbon black capacity shall be 8,80,000MTPA and green power capacity will be 134MW.
- Export volumes to the European market are expected to increase with ramp-up of the Tamil Nadu facility.
- **JV with Kindia:** They have started work on a pilot plant to develop Nano – Silicon additives used in anodes of Li-ion batteries.
- PCBL to infuse USD44m in multiple stages over the next two years for acquiring IP and setting up plants.
- They would be making an additive, which will increase the absorption capacity of anode and will in turn increase efficiency.
- Currently, the selling price of same product is USD300/kg and even if they sell it at USD100/kg they will be making 60% margins due to better process.
- Currently the production process used to manufacture this product is very costly and, through their process, the cost goes down by 1/5th of cost, which helps them have a cost advantage.
- **Expected revenue:** Management expects at 2,000 tonne capacity, revenue of INR20bn is sustainable by FY29.
- **Debt guidance:** Management is firm with maintaining a debt level at 2x debt/EBITDA.
- **Carbon black demand scenario:** Due to pricing pressure, management expects the Chinese companies to consolidate and additional capacity would not be added. Due to sanctions, Russian supply is largely restricted to Asian countries. This macro event aids India to provide for meet demand.

Company Description

PCBL, a part of RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group is the largest carbon-black producer in India by capacity. PCBL was set up in association with Phillips Petroleum a US-based company in 1960. PCBL commenced its commercial production in Dec-62 with 14ktpa plant in Durgapur, using oil furnace technology. PCBL had a technical collaboration with Columbian Chemical for about a decade. In FY97, Carbon and Chemicals India Ltd was amalgamated with the company. By FY04, PCBL had three plants at Durgapur, Palej and Kochi with a total capacity of 270ktpa.

Investment theme

In the Carbon-Black market, PCBL enjoys an indomitable 50% market share in India, 11%-globally and 17%-world ex-China. Furthermore, we see the global market share in the profitable Speciality-Carbon-Black market increasing to 5.9% by FY25E (FY22: 3.6%). Even in Rubber and Performance Chemicals grade, we expect the market share to rise by 30bp in both the categories. On the ESG front, the company outscores its global peers in areas such as GHG intensity (Scope 1) – 1.43tCO₂e/t vs. 2.28tCO₂e/t and water intensity- 6.2m³/t vs. 9.2m³/t. The company's long-term targets is demonstrative of its focussed pursuit towards a spirited advancement.

In a business that enjoys little margin volatility, owing to the cost pass-through mechanism, PCBL is strengthening its market leadership. Key growth drivers includes: i) volume ramp up in core rubber business as 147ktpa Tiruvallur plant ramps up; ii) margin aggrandizement via higher speciality product sales volume (up 10ktpa p.a. through to FY25E) – yielding ~2.6x margin compared to rubber products; and iii) harnessing state-of-the-art technology at the greenfield Chennai plant, resulting in better plant processes and yields. All in all, we see EBITDA margin surpassing 21% (FY22: 12%) and RoE improving to 22% (FY22: 18.8%) through FY25E.

Key Risks

PCBL operates in a very competitive environment with significant dependence on automotive and tyre industries. Automotive industry is particularly susceptible to supply chain disruptions such as semiconductor shortage and calamity such as covid19, potentially impacting revenue and cash flows adversely.

While operations are largely cost pass-through, the inability to do so, in the absence of a firm binding contract might have an impact on profitability.

Besides, there is a need for constant innovation due to variations and changes required. The threat of substitution from silica precipitate, advanced materials and fused alloys remains.

PCBL is subject to significant environmental and regulatory risks. Globally, carbon black is being investigated as potential carcinogenic and nano-scale material. Any development in this regard, could have a significant impact on company's sales volumes and cashflows.

Additional Data

Management

Chairman	Sanjiv Goenka
Managing Director	Kaushik Roy
CFO	Raj Kumar Gupta
Auditor	S. R. Batliboi & Co. LLP

Holdings – Top 10*

	% Holding		% Holding
HDFC AMC	1.71	Tata Asset mana	0.49
Mahindra Manuli	1.58	Australlian sup	0.40
IDFC Mutual fun	1.34	BOI Investment	0.32
Dimensional Fun	1.24	ICICI Prudentia	0.29
Blackrock Inc	0.68	FIL ltd	0.29

*Latest public data

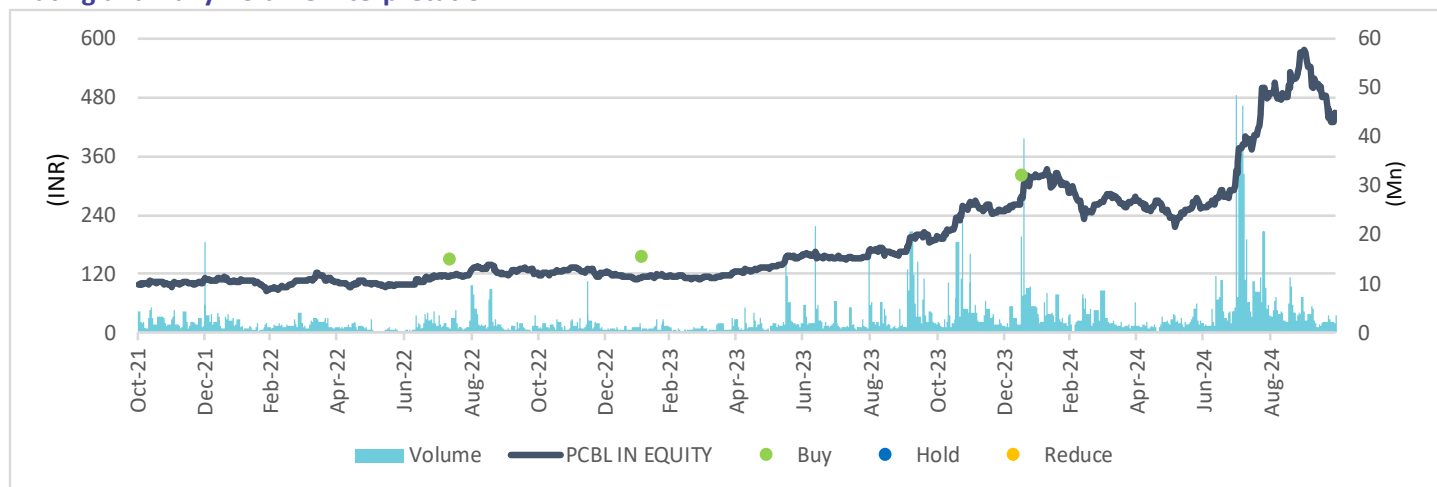
Recent Company Research

Date	Title	Price	Reco
12-Aug-24	Moving towards specialty chemicals; <i>Result Update</i>	386	Buy
23-May-24	EBITDA/mt scales new heights; <i>Result Update</i>	259	Buy
15-Jan-24	Operating margin holds strong; <i>Result Update</i>	132	Buy

Recent Sector Research

Date	Name of Co./Sector	Title
19-Feb-24	Chemical	Early signs of revival; <i>Sector Update</i>
25-Apr-19	Chemical	Chemspec: Party for domestic manufacture; <i>Sector Update</i>

Rating and Daily Volume Interpretation



Rating Rationale & Distribution: Nuvama Research

Rating	Expected absolute returns over 12 months	Rating Distribution
Buy	15%	220
Hold	<15% and >-5%	66
Reduce	<-5%	25

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