

September 30, 2025

Ripley & Co. Stevedoring & Handling Pvt. Ltd.: Ratings reaffirmed

Summary of rating action

Instrument*	Previous rated amount (Rs. crore)	Current rated amount (Rs. crore)	Rating action
Long term fund based – Cash credit	63.00	48.00	[ICRA]A(Stable); reaffirmed
Long term/Short term – Non-fund based limits	151.41	21.00	[ICRA]A(Stable)/[ICRA]A2+; reaffirmed
Total	214.41	69.00	

*Instrument details are provided in Annexure I

Rationale

The reaffirmation of the ratings factors in the long-standing experience of Ripley & Co. Stevedoring & Handling Pvt. Ltd. (RSHPL) and the extensive track record of the promoters in providing port support services and a dominant market share at Haldia Dock Complex (HDC). This is due to its exclusive licences to provide certain services and established relationship with the customers through short-term and long-term contracts.

The ratings also factor in the increasing revenue diversification over the years. While port-related services have been the mainstay for the company in the last few years, it has also ventured into the mineral trading segment and rail sea rail (RSR) activities with a drop in coal trading volumes. Apart from direct services, RSHPL has leased out equipment to Group entities with minimum guaranteed volume commitments, which provides an additional stable revenue stream. The Group is also involved in trading operations in other geographies. Further, the Group has entered the shipping business by acquiring five ships in the last three years under its subsidiaries.

RSHPL's standalone revenue declined in FY2025 with a three month impact of non-operations of a floating crane impacting the stevedoring segment. This, along with lower trading volumes, lowered the revenue to Rs. 974.1 crore in FY2025 against Rs. 1,103.9 crore in FY2024. The operating margins had also declined because of the lower contribution of the higher-margin stevedoring segment to the overall revenue compared to the preceding years. At the same time, the contribution of the RSR segment to the revenue increased. ICRA expects the revenue to grow and the margins to improve in FY2026 over the FY2025 levels with higher stevedoring volumes and RSR activities. The capital structure and coverage indicators (excluding the contingent liabilities) have remained healthy over the last few years on the back of healthy accretion to reserves with a gearing of 0.16 times and interest coverage of 12.5 times in FY2025 at a standalone level. The return indicators remained healthy with ROCE of 15.1% in FY2025 at a standalone level.

The company has provided loans and advances to some of its subsidiaries/JVs (including Kalinga International Coal Terminal Private Limited - KICTPL), which stood at Rs. 441.00 crore as on March 31, 2025. The company has also extended corporate guarantees to some of the subsidiaries/SPVs, including KICTPL, which stood at ~Rs. 310.00 crore as on March 31, 2025.

The ratings also take note of the increasing competition from private sector non-major ports, resulting in a shift of cargo from the major ports over the last few years. The impact of competition on HDC is partly mitigated as there are large customers providing repeat business on account of favourable connectivity to their plants in the hinterland. HDC is a riverine port needing periodic dredging to maintain navigability, supported by the Central Government, and any moderation in funds/support could have an adverse impact on the port traffic. Moreover, RSHPL operates in areas with a highly unionised work force, which coupled with its labour-intensive operations, exposes the company to the risk of strike/industrial actions. Nevertheless, the vast experience of the Group in the industry and at HDC, coupled with the increased mechanisation of operations in the last few years, mitigates the risk to an extent.

The ratings also consider the susceptibility of its operational and financial performance to the broader import-export cycle and the vulnerability of the port services sector to changes in Government policies.

The Stable outlook on the rating reflects ICRA's expectation that RSHPL is likely to sustain its operating metrics with stable revenue growth. Further, the outlook underlines ICRA's expectation that the entity's incremental capex, if any, to further diversify/expand will be funded in a manner that it is able to durably maintain its debt protection metrics commensurate with the existing rating.

Key rating drivers and their description

Credit strengths

Longstanding experience in stevedoring industry and dominant market share at HDC – RSHPL, incorporated in 2000, is a part of the Ripley Group, which belongs to the broader Swapan Sadhan Bose Group (SS Bose Group) with interests in stevedoring and cargo handling, port handling, coastal cargo movement, media, etc. The Group has an established presence in the eastern ports for more than 120 years.

HDC accounts for a major share of RSHPL's volumes, followed by the Paradip Port. The company commenced operations at the Vizag and Kolkata ports in FY2015; while there has been incremental growth from these ports, their share remains moderate at present. The company has reputed customers, including Steel Authority of India Limited, Tata Steel Limited, Central Coal Fields Limited, TM International Logistics Limited, etc. There are a large number of licensed stevedoring companies operating at the Haldia Port. However, along with the other Ripley Group companies, RSHPL has maintained a dominant market share at HDC due to its reputation and relationship with customers. Apart from direct services, RSHPL has specific contracts for operations at key berths and contracts with terminal operators or other entities (some of which are JV/SPV in which the Ripley group has stake) operating at the ports for additional services/equipment.

Increasing revenue stream diversification - While port-related services have been the mainstay for the company in the last few years, the company had entered the mining and mineral trading segments, and in February 2024, ventured into rail sea rail activities. The share of mineral trading has been volatile, but has brought in diversification to the business profile. The Group is also involved in trading operations in other geographies. Further, the Group has entered the shipping business by acquiring five ships in the last few years under its overseas subsidiaries, wherein the Group holds 12%. ICRA also notes the project received by the company from Andhra Pradesh Power Generation Corporation Limited (APGENCO) for RSR activities, which is expected to improve the revenue profile and diversification. The RSR activities had contributed to Rs. 226.07 crore to the topline in FY2025, and aided the topline during a period of lower volumes in the stevedoring and trading segment.

Comfortable financial profile - RSHPL's standalone revenue declined to Rs. 974.1 crore in FY2025 from Rs. 1,103.9 crore in FY2024 due to lower volumes in the stevedoring segment owing to an accident in one of the two floating cranes at Haldia, resulting in a period of three months of no operations. This, combined with the lower trading activities carried out by the company amid global uncertainties, caused the revenue fall. The operating margins declined to 12.4% in FY2025 from 15.5% in FY2024 because of lower contribution from the high-margin stevedoring business. The capital structure and coverage indicators have remained robust over the last few years on the back of healthy accretion to reserves with a gearing of 0.16 times and interest coverage of 12.5 times in FY2025. The return indicators remained healthy with ROCE of around 15.1% in FY2025. RSHPL's consolidated financial profile also remained strong in FY2025 with healthy margins and a comfortable capital structure.

Moderate working capital intensity - The working capital intensity increased in FY2025 due to the RSR segment; though it remains moderate. The company typically maintains an inventory of 50-65 days in mineral trading. RSHPL extends a credit period of ~30 days to its customers, which sometimes gets stretched to 45-60 days and gets a credit period of 30-60 days from labour contractors and consumable suppliers. The working capital requirement is met through internal sources and working capital limits from banks.

Credit challenges

Cargo handled vulnerable to broader economic trends, commodity demand cyclicality and competition from other ports – RSHPL mainly handles bulk cargo such as coal along with limestone, gypsum, pyroxenite and ores, and the remaining revenue is driven by coke, steel, chemicals, etc. The cargo handled, and consequently, the financial performance remains vulnerable to the broader economic cycle's impact on exim traffic at the ports, demand cyclicality for specific commodities such as coal and competition from other major and minor ports. In the last few years, there has been some shift in cargo from the major to the minor ports in India due to location benefits and the superior facilities provided. Nonetheless, the impact on HDC has been mitigated to some extent by the presence of large customers providing repeat business owing to better connectivity to their plants in the hinterland.

Labour-intensive operations with exposure to highly unionised workforce - The company remains exposed to the risk of strikes/industrial actions due to the labour-intensive operations in regions with a highly unionised workforce. However, the risk is mitigated to some extent on account of the increasing mechanisation of operations over the last few years. Moreover, its longstanding experience in the industry and at HDC mitigates the impact and RSHPL has not faced any issues in the last few years.

Being a riverine port, Haldia Port faces challenges related to low draft – HDC, being a riverine port, requires periodic dredging to maintain its draft and navigability and is dependent on the Central Government's support for the same. Thus, the continued support for dredging remains critical for the operations and any reduction in support may have an adverse impact on the operations. Additionally, large vessels are partly unloaded at other ports before entering the Haldia Port because of low draft. However, the floating jetty project and floating cranes installed at Saugor have aided faster lighterage operations owing to the higher capacity of the floating cranes and the jetty being outside the lock gates, which handles the barges carrying cargo unloaded from the larger vessels at the lighterage point.

Port services sector vulnerable to changes in Government regulations - – During 2015-2016, HDC awarded the licence for shore handling on the basis of competitive bidding for revenue share and imposed ceiling rates (ceiling rates of Rs. 119.48/tonne and revenue share of Rs. 14.77/tonne). Subsequently, the Ministry of Shipping had announced a policy to implement a similar licence scheme for stevedoring and shore-handling services at all the major ports, while the operators have been paying a modest licence fee to the port and charging rates from customers based on the market dynamics.

In FY2017, the Government announced the new stevedoring policy under which the ceiling rates and the revenue share will be imposed on specific commodities on a per tonne basis for stevedoring and shore handling operations. In November 2021, the new Major Port Authorities Act 2021 was operationalised and a new tariff guideline was announced in December 2021. The tariff is decided by the Major Port Authority itself and there is more flexibility in setting the tariff, although they have a ceiling rate.

Ongoing capex plans, investment requirements and large contingent liabilities may put pressure on capital structure - The company has capex plans of Rs. 120-130 crore per annum for acquiring/replacing equipment/vehicles and other developments during the next two to three years. Further, the company has provided loans and advances to some of its subsidiaries/JVs (including KICTPL), which stood at Rs. 441.00 crore as on March 31, 2025.

The company has also extended corporate guarantees to some of the subsidiaries/SPVs, including KICTPL, which stood at ~Rs. 310.00 crore as on March 31, 2025, down from Rs. 859.77 crore as on March 31, 2024, due to the release of majority of the CG of KICTPL by the consortium lenders.

Liquidity position: Adequate

RSHPL (standalone) has a capex plan of Rs. 20 crore per annum in FY2026 and FY2027 and minimal debt repayment obligations. At a standalone level, the company has repayment obligations of Rs. 7.75 crore in FY2026. The consolidated capex is expected to be Rs. 120-130 crore per annum and a debt repayment of Rs. 65-75 crore is expected majorly towards the obligations for the vessels. The liquidity position is adequate and will be met by expected healthy cash accruals, availability of unutilised working capital limits, and cash and cash equivalents of ~Rs. 328 crore at a standalone level as on March 31, 2025. The consolidated liquidity position also remains adequate with healthy cash flows against the repayment obligations.

Rating sensitivities

Positive factors – The ratings could be upgraded if the company exhibits a substantial improvement in its revenue and profitability on a sustained basis, while maintaining a healthy capital structure and coverage indicators.

Negative factors – Pressure on the ratings could arise if there is a significant moderation in revenue and profitability on a sustained basis, or if there is a large debt-funded capital expenditure/investments in subsidiaries or JVs, or if a stretch in the working capital intensity weakens RSHPL’s debt coverage and liquidity profile.

Analytical approach

Analytical Approach	Comments
Applicable rating methodologies	Corporate Credit Rating Methodology
Parent/Group support	Not Applicable
Consolidation/Standalone	For arriving at the ratings, ICRA has considered the consolidated financials of RSHPL. Refer to Annexure II for the list of entities considered for consolidation

About the company

RSHPL, incorporated in 2000, is primarily involved in providing stevedoring, shore handling and other port support services. The company has major presence in the Haldia Dock Complex (HDC), along with other Group entities. It has also been providing services at the ports of Kolkata, Paradip and Vizag. The company has a registered office in Kolkata and branches in Haldia, Paradip and Vizag. It owns a fleet of 200 mobile equipment (mobile harbour cranes, dumpers, loaders, forklifts, excavators and dozers) and has a workforce of over 1,200 employees. Since FY2019, the company is engaged in mineral trading at the Haldia, Paradip, Vizag and Kolkata ports. It is a part of the larger group of companies promoted by Mr. Swapan Sadhan Bose, with business interests in port support services, coastal cargo movement, mining and media, and a longstanding presence in the eastern ports, especially in HDC.

Key financial indicators

RSHPL Standalone	FY2024	FY2025*
Operating income	1,103.9	974.1
PAT	134.5	110.9
OPBDIT/OI	15.5%	12.4%
PAT/OI	12.2%	11.4%
Total outside liabilities/Tangible net worth (times)	0.6	0.5
Total debt/OPBDIT (times)	0.5	1.4
Interest coverage (times)	17.0	12.5

PAT: Profit after tax; OPBDIT: Operating profit before depreciation, interest, taxes and amortisation; Amount in Rs crore; *Provisional

RSHPL Consolidated	FY2023	FY2024
Operating income	1556.0	1268.2
PAT	138.8	138.8
OPBDIT/OI	14.7%	14.9%
PAT/OI	8.9%	10.9%
Total outside liabilities/Tangible net worth (times)	0.8	0.6
Total debt/OPBDIT (times)	0.7	0.5
Interest coverage (times)	8.3	8.6

PAT: Profit after tax; OPBDIT: Operating profit before depreciation, interest, taxes and amortisation; Amount in Rs. crore

Status of non-cooperation with previous CRA: Not applicable

Any other information: None

Rating history for past three years

Instrument	Type	Current rating (FY2026) Amount rated (Rs. crore)	Chronology of rating history for the past 3 years				
			Date & rating in FY2026	Date & rating in FY2025	Date & rating in FY2024	Date & rating in FY2023	
			Sep 30, 2025	June 28, 2024	-	March 22, 2023	March 15, 2023
1 Cash credit	Long term	48.00	[ICRA]A (Stable)	[ICRA]A (Stable)	-	[ICRA]A (Stable)	[ICRA]A (Stable)
2 Non-fund based	Long term/Short term	21.00	[ICRA]A (Stable)/ [ICRA]A2+	[ICRA]A (Stable)/ [ICRA]A2+	-	[ICRA]A (Stable)/ [ICRA]A2+	[ICRA]A (Stable)/ [ICRA]A2+
3 Unallocated	Long term/Short term	0.00	-	-	-	[ICRA]A (Stable)/ [ICRA]A2+	[ICRA]A (Stable)/ [ICRA]A2+

Complexity level of the rated instruments

Instrument	Complexity indicator
Long-term fund based – Cash credit	Simple
Long term/Short term – Non-fund based limits	Very 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
-	Cash credit	NA	NA	NA	48.0	[ICRA]A(Stable)
-	Letter of credit	NA	NA	NA	20.0	[ICRA]A(Stable)/[ICRA]A2+
-	Credit exposure limit	NA	NA	NA	1.0	[ICRA]A(Stable)/[ICRA]A2+

Source: Company

[Please click here to view details of lender-wise facilities rated by ICRA](#)

Annexure II: List of entities considered for consolidated analysis

Company name	RSHPL ownership	Consolidation approach
Ripley Shipping Private Limited	100.00%	Full consolidation
Ripley Offshore Private Limited	74.00%	Full consolidation
Ripley Infrastructure Private Limited	100.00%	Full consolidation
Ripley Northern Dredging Private Limited	100.00%	Full consolidation
Ripley Commodities FZ LLC	100.00%	Full consolidation
Ripley International DMCC	100.00%	**
Ripley Overseas Pte Ltd	100.00%	Full consolidation
OSL Ripley Shipping Private Limited	50.00%	Joint venture
High Rock Mining LLP	50.00%	Joint venture
Kalinga International Coal Terminal Private Limited [^]	33.33%*	Joint venture
Netincon Logistics Private Limited	0%	Full consolidation

Source: RSHPL Annual report; *Effective holding RSHPL along with RIPL

Note: ICRA has taken a consolidated view of the parent (RSHPL), its subsidiaries and associates while assigning the ratings. [^] ICRA has also considered the corporate guarantee (CG) extended to KICTPL. For the guarantee extended by RSHPL to KICTPL, ICRA has also taken into cognisance the presence of other JV partners who, along with RSHPL, are jointly and severally liable to discharge the guaranteed obligations in case of default; **Of the 5 ships wherein Ripley International DMCC has 12% shareholding of, CG has been extended to 4 ships, which have been fully consolidated. As CG has been extended to Netincon Logistics Private Limited, the same has also been consolidated.

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