

December 05, 2025

The Mathrubhumi Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd.: Ratings downgraded to [ICRA]BBB(Stable)/[ICRA]A3+

Summary of rating action

Instrument*	Previous rated amount (Rs. crore)	Current rated amount (Rs. crore)	Rating action
Long-term Fund-based/ CC	110.00	110.00	[ICRA]BBB(Stable); downgraded from [ICRA]BBB+(Stable)
Long-term Fund-based TL	15.00	35.00	[ICRA]BBB(Stable); downgraded from [ICRA]BBB+(Stable)
Short-term Fund-based	20.00	20.00	[ICRA]A3+; downgraded from [ICRA]A2
Long-term/Short-term Non-fund based	6.00	6.00	[ICRA]BBB(Stable)/[ICRA]A3+; downgraded from [ICRA]BBB+(Stable)/[ICRA]A2
Long-term/ Short-term – Unallocated	20.00	-	-
Total	171.00	171.00	

*Instrument details are provided in Annexure-I

Rationale

The rating downgrade for The Mathrubhumi Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd. (TMPPCL) factors in the sustained pressure on its debt protection metrics owing to fall in earnings level driven by declining revenues and subsequent impact on margins as well as elongated working capital cycle. The receivable position remains elongated, with sizeable payments due for more than three months from the state government departments/authorities. Contrary to earlier expectations of debt reduction, borrowings are expected to increase in FY2026 due to planned investments for two new FM stations in Kerala (Kanhagad and Palakkad). Consequently, the debt levels are unlikely to decline materially in the near to medium term. ICRA notes that moderation in circulation and advertisement revenue has also exerted pressure on its revenue growth and profitability, as reflected in about 6% YoY decline in turnover and deterioration in operating margins to 8.7% in FY2025 (FY2024: 9.9%). TMPPCL continued to make losses in the digital segment, television segment and overseas FM business in FY2025. However, ICRA notes the company's decision to discontinue the FM operations in Dubai to contain its losses.

The ratings continue to be constrained by TMPPCL's high geographical concentration risk, as inherent to any vernacular daily, with significant dependence on Kerala for circulation and advertisement revenues, exposing it to regional economic and political developments as well as publishing spends by corporates. The company's operating margins remain vulnerable to volatility in global newsprint prices and foreign exchange fluctuations, given that around 87% of its newsprint requirement is imported. Additionally, the growing popularity of digital platforms and changing media consumption habits continue to pose structural challenges to the print industry, eroding readership with sustained pressure on circulation and advertisement revenues. In FY2025, circulation volumes for Mathrubhumi daily fell by about 2%, while print advertisement revenues moderated by nearly 12%, leading to decline of almost 6% in the overall revenue. TMPPCL also operates six FM radio stations and two television channels, which together accounted for about 14% of revenues in FY2025; however, these segments remain a drag on the margins due to high placement expenses leading to segmental losses.

The ratings, however, continue to favourably factor in TMPPCL's established position in the Malayalam newspaper publishing industry, anchored by its flagship daily *Mathrubhumi*, which remains the second most widely read Malayalam daily in Kerala. The company benefits from strong brand recall, long-standing presence since 1923, and an experienced management team.

Further, its diversified presence across media platforms, including print, radio, television broadcasting, and digital platforms, provides operational synergies and revenue diversification. Moreover, unlike most of its peers, TMPPCL is able to cover its newsprint costs through circulation revenue, supporting its operating margins over the years.

The Stable outlook reflects ICRA's opinion that the credit profile of TMPPCL will be supported by its diversified offerings, established market position and healthy brand reputation in Kerala.

Key rating drivers and their description

Credit strengths

Established position of *The Mathrubhumi* in Malayalam newspaper publishing business – TMPPCL's flagship daily, *Mathrubhumi*, enjoys healthy market position in Kerala and has been ranked as the second most widely read Malayalam daily based on the circulation base of various newspapers in Kerala. Over the years, the company has maintained a range-bound readership base owing to strong brand recall, long presence with circulation since 1923 and experienced management. Moreover, unlike most of its peers, the circulation income adequately covers the newsprint cost supporting its operating margins.

Diversified presence across media platforms – TMPPCL has a diversified presence across media platforms including print, publication, online, radio and TV broadcasting. With a common advertisement revenue-driven business model, the diverse operating segments provide strong operational synergies by way of leveraging the Mathrubhumi brand. The improvement in the Indian radio business has supported the revenue and profitability for FY2025.

Credit challenges

Sustained pressure on debt protection metrics; elongated working capital cycle – In FY2025, TMPPCL's debt protection metrics remained under pressure owing to impact on profitability due to decline in top line coupled with elongated working capital cycle, necessitating short-term borrowings. The receivable position remains elongated, with sizeable payments due for more than three months from the state government departments/authorities. Contrary to earlier expectations of debt reduction, borrowings are expected to increase in FY2026 due to planned investments for two new FM stations in Kerala (Kanhangad and Palakkad). Consequently, the debt levels are unlikely to decrease materially in the near to medium term. However, with the expected hike in cover price, ICRA expects the debt protection metrics to improve over the medium term.

High geographical concentration – The company's revenues are geographically concentrated with Kerala accounting for a major share of the circulation revenues. While it has presence in other geographies—like New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Dubai, and Doha, etc.—the contribution from these remains low. Its high dependence on the Kerala market exposes its revenues to regional economic and political developments as well as publishing spends by corporates.

Vulnerability of operating margins to newsprint prices; competition from digital media, structural shift towards alternative media platform – The company's revenues and profits remain vulnerable to the cyclicity in advertising spends by corporates and the newsprint paper prices. TMPPCL's advertisement revenues declined YoY by about 6% to Rs. 319.2 crore in FY2025. The operating margins declined to 8.7% in FY2025 from 9.9% in FY2024 resulting from higher operational costs and persistent losses in television and overseas radio segments. TMPPCL imports around 87% of its newsprint requirement and its profitability remains susceptible to adverse fluctuations in foreign exchange rates. Moreover, the growing popularity of digital platforms, in line with changing media consumption habits, is likely to impact the growth prospects of the print media companies.

Liquidity position: Adequate

The company had a free cash balance and liquid investment of Rs. 3.3 crore and Rs. 3.5 crore as on March 31 and June 30, 2025, respectively. It plans to maintain free cash balance and liquid investment of Rs. 5.0-7.0 crore, going ahead. The company also reported an average cushion of Rs. 5.6 crore in its fund-based limits over the 16-month period ending in July 2025. TMPPCL

has scheduled debt repayments of nearly Rs. 1.6 crore in FY2026 and about Rs. 5.6 crore each in FY2027 and FY2028. The projected cash flows from operations are likely to be sufficient to service its repayment obligations and any other maintenance capex beyond the planned debt funded capex of Rs. 20 crore in FY2026.

Rating sensitivities

Positive factors – ICRA could upgrade ratings if scale up in revenues, along with sustained increase in profit margins, leads to a consistent and material improvement in debt coverage indicators and liquidity.

Negative factors – Pressure on the ratings could arise if there is a significant decline in the company's revenues or profitability margins or weakening of its debt coverage metrics. Any major debt-funded capex or increase in working capital intensity adversely impacting the liquidity position will also be a negative factor. Specific credit metric for a rating downgrade would be DSCR below 1.5 times on a sustained basis.

Analytical approach

Analytical approach	Comments
Applicable rating methodologies	Corporate Credit Rating Methodology Print Media TV Broadcasting
Parent/Group support	Not applicable
Consolidation/Standalone	Standalone

About the company

The Mathrubhumi Printing & Publishing Co. Ltd., incorporated in 1922, has a presence across print media, radio space, television broadcasting and internet portals. The company's flagship and popular Malayalam daily, *Mathrubhumi* is printed across 16 locations in India (10 in Kerala, and one each in New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chennai) and two overseas locations (Dubai in the UAE and Doha in Qatar). The other publications include periodicals—such as *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, *Grihalakshmi*, *Star & Style*, *Thozhil Vartha*, *Mathrubhumi Sports Masika*, *Balabhumi*, *Arogya Masika*, *Mathrubhumi Yathra*, *Mathrubhumi Minnaminni*, *Chitra Kadha*, *Mathrubhumi GK & Current Affairs* and the *Mathrubhumi* yearbook. The company currently operates six FM radio stations under the brand Club FM in Kerala (Thrissur, Kannur, Trivandrum, Kochi, Calicut and Alappuzha) and is in the process of launching two additional stations in Kanhangad and Palakkad, awarded in FY2025. Further, it is the broadcaster of Mathrubhumi News TV Channel and Kappa TV (music channel). It also has a presence in the publishing business, Mathrubhumi Music catalogues, sound recordings and in the events division with Red Mic.

It is an unlisted, closely-held company with majority of equity stake held by two families, headed by Mr. M. V. Shreyams Kumar (Managing Director) and Mr. P. V. Chandran (Chairman).

Key financial indicators

Standalone	FY2024	FY2025
Operating income	617.6	581.1
PAT	4.0	0.9
OPBDIT/OI	9.9%	8.7%
PAT/OI	0.6%	0.2%
Total outside liabilities/Tangible net worth (times)	1.1	1.0
Total debt/OPBDIT (times)	2.3	2.7
Interest coverage (times)	2.5	2.1

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

Status of non-cooperation with previous CRA: Not applicable

Any other information: None

Rating history for past three years

Instrument	Current rating (FY2026)			Chronology of rating history for the past 3 years					
	FY2026			FY2025		FY2024		FY2023	
	Type	Amount rated (Rs crore)	Dec 05, 2025	Date	Rating	Date	Rating	Date	Rating
Fund-based-Cash credit	Long Term	110.00	[ICRA]BBB (Stable)	Sep 23, 2024	[ICRA]BBB+ (Stable)	Sep 20, 2023	[ICRA]A- (Negative)	Jul 29, 2022	[ICRA]A- (Stable)
Non-fund based-Others	Long Term/Short Term	6.00	[ICRA]BBB (Stable)/[ICRA]A3+	Sep 23, 2024	[ICRA]BBB+ (Stable)/[ICRA]A2	Sep 20, 2023	[ICRA]A- (Negative)/[ICRA]A2+	Jul 29, 2022	[ICRA]A- (Stable)/[ICRA]A2+
Unallocated limits	Long Term/Short Term	0.00	-	Sep 23, 2024	[ICRA]BBB+ (Stable)/[ICRA]A2	Sep 20, 2023	[ICRA]A- (Negative)/[ICRA]A2+	Jul 29, 2022	[ICRA]A- (Stable)/[ICRA]A2+
Term loan	Long Term	35.00	[ICRA]BBB (Stable)	Sep 23, 2024	[ICRA]BBB+ (Stable)	Sep 20, 2023	[ICRA]A- (Negative)	Jul 29, 2022	[ICRA]A- (Stable)
Fund Based	Short Term	20.00	[ICRA]A3+	Sep 23, 2024	[ICRA]A2	Sep 20, 2023	[ICRA]A2+	Jul 29, 2022	[ICRA]A2+

Complexity level of the rated instruments

Instrument	Complexity Indicator
Long-term - Fund-based/ CC	Simple
Long-term - Fund-based TL	Simple
Short-term – Fund-based	Simple
Long-term/Short-term – Non-fund based	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
NA	Cash credit	NA	NA	NA	110.00	[ICRA]BBB (Stable)
NA	Term loans	FY2015	NA	FY2031	35.00	[ICRA]BBB (Stable)
NA	Short-term loans/FCNR	-	-	90 days	20.00	[ICRA]A3+
NA	Letter of credit/Bank guarantee	NA	NA	NA	6.00	[ICRA]BBB(Stable)/[ICRA]A3+

Source: Company

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

Annexure II: List of entities considered for consolidated analysis – Not applicable

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