

Ref: PEL 20/ 2024-25

Date: November 13, 2024

To
The Secretary
BSE Limited
Phiroze Jeejeebhoy Towers,
Dalal Street,
Mumbai - 400001
Scrip Code: 544238

To
The Manager,
Listing Department
National Stock Exchange of India Limited
Exchange Plaza, C-1, G Block, Bandra-Kurla
Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai – 400 051
Trading Symbol: PREMIERENE

Dear Sirs,

Sub: Announcement under Regulation 30 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulation, 2015.

Pursuant to Regulation 30 and other respective regulations of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, we would like to bring to your notice the credit ratings assigned to bank facilities of our company and its subsidiaries as issued by CRISIL Ratings Limited.

Please find below the details of the credit rating issued by CRISIL Ratings Limited vide its press release dated 13th November, 2024

Credit Rating Agency	Facilities	Amount (Rs. in crores)	Revised rating/Rating Action
CRISIL Ratings Limited	Long Term Bank Facilities	40.28	CRISIL A-/Positive (Upgraded from "CRISIL BBB+/Stable)
CRISIL Ratings Limited	Short Term Bank Facilities	208.00	CRISIL A2+(Upgraded from "CRISIL A2")

Thanks & Regards,

For **Premier Energies Limited**

Ravella Sreenivasa Rao
Company Secretary & Compliance officer
M. No: A17755

Rating Rationale

November 12, 2024 | Mumbai

Premier Energies Limited

Ratings upgraded to 'CRISIL A-/Positive/CRISIL A2+'

Rating Action

Total Bank Loan Facilities Rated	Rs.248.28 Crore
Long Term Rating	CRISIL A-/Positive (Upgraded from 'CRISIL BBB+/Stable')
Short Term Rating	CRISIL A2+ (Upgraded from 'CRISIL A2')

Note: None of the Directors on CRISIL Ratings Limited's Board are members of rating committee and thus do not participate in discussion or assignment of any ratings. The Board of Directors also does not discuss any ratings at its meetings.

1 crore = 10 million

Refer to Annexure for Details of Instruments & Bank Facilities

Detailed Rationale

CRISIL Ratings has upgraded its ratings on the bank facilities of Premier Energies Ltd (PEL, part of the Premier Energies group) to '**CRISIL A-/Positive/CRISIL A2+**' from '**CRISIL BBB+/Stable/CRISIL A2**'. The Premier Energies group includes Premier Energies Ltd (PEL) and its subsidiaries.

The rating upgrade is driven by strong improvement in business profile with increased scale of operations, healthy utilization rates and operating profitability, along with material improvement in financial profile with increased operating cash accruals and significant fund raising through recent Initial Public Offer (IPO) in September 2024, which resulted in fresh issuance with net proceeds of Rs 1,239 crores which will support ongoing capex and capital structure of the group.

The utilization rates in both cells and modules segments have ramped up significantly since last year, with effective average utilization rates of 81% for cells and 60% for modules in FY2024 (41% and 43% respectively in FY2023). The effective utilization rates have remained at similar levels in the current fiscal as well, indicating increased operational efficiency. The increased utilization was driven by healthy domestic as well as export demand for cells and modules along with stabilization of new capacities added by the group over the past 1-2 years. Implementation of approved list of module manufacturers (ALMM) scheme in April 2024 and increasing share of projects with Domestic Content Requirement (DCR) are leading to healthy demand for domestic modules and cells and should support healthy utilisation rates going forward as well. At a consolidated level, the group reported an operating income of Rs 3,159 crores and earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (Ebitda) of Rs 493 crores during fiscal 2024 (15.6% EBITDA margin) as compared to revenue of Rs 1,442 crores and EBITDA of Rs 92 crores, during fiscal 2023 (6.4% EBITDA margin). Further during Q1FY2025, the consolidated operating income and ebitda was Rs 1,657 crores and Rs 370 crores respectively (22% EBITDA margin). Also, healthy consolidated order book of Rs 5,474 crores as on September 30, 2024 provides good revenue visibility for the current fiscal as well.

CRISIL Ratings has also taken note of the ongoing capex plans of ~ Rs 4,000 crore by the group, wherein the group plans to add 1 GW of TopCon cell in PEPPL and 4 GW Module line + 4 GW TopCon Cell line in PEGEPL over the next couple of years, for which land and enabling infrastructure is understood to be in place. Further, IPO proceeds as well as operating cash accruals are expected to support a sizeable part of the ongoing capex, although the group has tied up adequate term loans for the said capex plans. While the planned capex will enable further increase in scale of operations with higher cell level integration, timely completion and stabilization of the planned capacity expansion without any time and cost overruns will be key monitorable.

The rating action is also supported by PEL's strong financial risk profile which is likely to remain healthy despite the sizeable capex over the medium term, supported by increasing operating cash accruals, healthy networth and reduced leverage. As on March 2024, the company's net leverage (ratio of net debt to EBITDA), and interest coverage ratio stood at 2.0, and 4.2 times respectively, improved from the levels of 5.4 and 1.6 times respectively in FY2023. Further, the same is expected to remain healthy over the medium term. The positive outlook reflects CRISIL Ratings' expectation that the group will witness continued increase in scale of operations with high utilization rates, timely commissioning and ramp up of capacities, along with sustenance of healthy financial profile and liquidity, at or above current levels, which can result in a rating upgrade.

The ratings continue to reflect PEL's established market position in the domestic solar module manufacturing industry, extensive experience of the promoter, and robust demand supported by government thrust on capacity addition and favourable policies in the form of ALMM, basic customs duty (BCD) and a proposed approved list of cell manufacturers (ALCM) similar to ALMM which is likely to boost demand for domestic cells. However, susceptibility to intense competition, regulatory changes, volatility in raw material prices and timely stabilization of new capacities will remain key monitorables going forward.

Analytical Approach

CRISIL Ratings has combined the business and financial risk profiles of PEL and its subsidiaries and associates to arrive at the ratings

Also, CRISIL Ratings has treated compulsory convertible debentures from the private equity investor, GEF Capital Partners, as quasi-equity instruments as the debentures are subordinate to senior debt and will remain in the business over the medium term against nil coupon outflow.

Please refer Annexure - List of Entities Consolidated, which captures the list of entities considered and their analytical treatment of consolidation.

Key Rating Drivers & Detailed Description

Strengths:

- **Established market presence and longstanding experience of the promoter in the solar industry:** The promoter's experience of over 25 years in the solar industry and strong relationships with stakeholders will continue to support the business. The group has one of the largest integrated (solar cell and module) manufacturing facilities (capacity-wise) in India and enjoys a sizeable share in the total domestic installed capacity with its current installed capacity of 2 GW of cells and 4.1 GW of modules.

While the group had a module manufacturing line of 3 megawatt (MW) in 1995, its projects ranged from installing solar lanterns to village electrification and export of solar modules. It entered the solar EPC (engineering procurement and construction) segment in 2011 but is now focused on the module and cell manufacturing business.

- **Favourable domestic demand outlook for the solar industry which should support increasing volumes:** Amid growing emphasis for solar power in India, the group is well-positioned to absorb the demand arising from the long-term plans of the government to increase generation from renewable sources. Introduction of protectionist measures by the government, such as BCD of 40% and 25% on imported solar modules and solar cells, respectively, from April 2022; and implementation of ALMM along with incentivising domestic players under the PLI scheme increase the cost competitiveness of domestic modules vis-à-vis that of imported ones. Government-approved schemes such as Kisan Urja Suraksha Utthan Mahabhiyan, Central Public Sector Undertaking and rooftop scheme are also pushing up demand. Further, MNRE is looking to introduce an approved list of models and manufacturers for solar PV cells (ALCM). Under ALCM, all modules approved under ALMM are required to use cells from ALCM list. Further, all projects where ALMM is applicable also need to use cells from ALCM list. This will support the demand for domestic cells.
- **Healthy order book providing revenue visibility:** The group has a cumulative order book of ~1545 MW for modules and ~2797 MW for cells (from reputed customers such as NTPC, IRCON, Shakti Pump), worth ~Rs.5,474 crores to be executed over the next 3-4 quarters. This translated to an order book to sales ratio of 1.7 (vis-à-vis FY24 operating income). The order book is expected to be delivered over the next 3-4 quarters thereby, providing ample revenue visibility and indicating a continued increase in the scale of operations.
- **Increased scale of operations with improved operating margins:** The group has witnessed increase in scale of operations to 2GW cell line and 3.4GW module line in March 2024 (4.1 GW installed module capacity currently). Driven by increased capacities and better utilization rates, revenue increased from Rs 1,442 crores in fiscal 2023 to Rs 3,159 crores in fiscal 2024. Additionally, operating margins also improved from ~6.4% in fiscal 2023 to ~15.6% during fiscal 2024 and further improved to 22.3% in Q1 of fiscal 2025. Stabilization of operational capacities and improved supply chain dynamics have supported operating performance with higher capacity utilization. Further, higher share of exports also boosted margins in fiscal 2024. However, sustainability of margin in the near term will remain a key monitorable.
- **Improved financial profile with increasing scale and recent fund raise through IPO:** The financial profile of the group significantly improved in fiscal 2024 with its net leverage and interest coverage ratios improving to 2.0 and 4.2 times respectively from 5.4 and 1.6 times in fiscal 2023. The financial profile is likely to further improve in fiscal 2025 on account of healthy operational performance and the successful IPO funding. The group's gearing ratio is expected to witness a significant improvement from 4.4 times in fiscal 2024 to 2.3 times in fiscal 2025. Furthermore, the group's net leverage is expected to remain below 2.0 times while its interest coverage is likely to remain healthy at 3.5-4.0 times.

Weaknesses:

- **Susceptibility to intense competition, regulatory changes, and volatility in raw material prices:** PEL is exposed to increasing competition from domestic as well as imported modules. This is on account of large capacity additions planned in the domestic market to meet increasing demand. Furthermore, Indian manufacturers face competition from Chinese imports, which have witnessed significant reduction in module and cell prices due to supply glut in China amid

restrictions imposed by US on Chinese imports. However, increasing integration of operations with new cell capacities and implementation of BCD and ALMM provides the required support for the group to be cost-competitive against Chinese imports. However, the risk of further material reduction in prices of imports impacting competitiveness of premier energy group will remain a key monitorable.

Though the group has price-variation clauses for most raw materials and undertakes order-backed procurement to mitigate this risk, any sharp rise in input cost may impact the demand levels in the domestic industry. Currently, the group has the second-largest cell manufacturing capacity at 2GW in India which helps its operating margins and supports it to cater to DCR module tenders. The capacity additions planned by other domestic players over the medium term and further intensification of competition will need to be monitored going forward.

- **Exposure to stabilisation and project execution risks:** PEL is undertaking sizeable capacity expansion with addition of 1 GW of TopCon cell in PEPPL and 4 GW Module line + 4 GW TopCon Cell line in PEGEPL. This will enable it to become an almost fully-integrated player leading to economies of scale.

This poses stabilization related risks. Resultantly, timely completion of the project and commensurate ramp-up will remain key monitorable. The stabilization of these capacities needs to be tracked as there was a delay in the past albeit due to other reasons. The company has learned from its past experience of stabilizing plants and has taken the necessary steps to avoid occurrence of the same concerns for PEIPL line. CRISIL Ratings draws comfort from the group's track record of executing projects in both modules and cells segments.

Liquidity: Adequate

Consolidated annual net cash accrual was Rs 327 crores in fiscal 2024 and is expected to be around ~Rs 571 crores in fiscal 2025 which should sufficiently cover debt and interest obligation of ~Rs 250-300 crores in fiscal 2025. This coupled with undrawn term debt line should suffice to fund incremental capex and working capital requirement.

Outlook: Positive

PEL is expected to sustain the growth momentum in its operating performance amid healthy demand scenario, favourable government policies and increasing operational capacities. This is likely to result in an expansion in its scale of operations and support strong financial and liquidity profile.

Rating sensitivity factors

Upward factors

- Healthy utilization rates and increasing sales volume, coupled with consolidated operating margin sustaining at or above 13-15% at group level, resulting in significant improvement in operating cash accruals from current levels
- Improvement in debt coverage indicators backed by increased accrual and/or faster-than-expected debt reduction, leading to significant improvement in capital structure and debt coverage ratios

Downward factors

- Slower-than-expected ramp-up in operating rates or materially lower than expected realisations, resulting in consolidated operating margin sustaining below 12-14%, and thereby, significantly lower than expected cash accruals
- Substantial delays in project execution, resulting in material time and cost overruns, leading to higher than expected debt funded capex and weakening of the capital structure
- Stretched working capital cycle, leading to higher reliance on borrowing and moderation in liquidity from current levels

About the Company

Incorporated in 1995 by Mr Surender Pal Singh, PEL is one of the largest integrated (solar cell and module) manufacturing facilities (capacity-wise) in India. It has a 300 MW operating module line at its plant in Annaram, Telangana. PEPPL, a 100% subsidiary of PEL, has a 1,400 MW module and 750 MW cell line located in Raviryala, Telangana. PEIPL, a 74% subsidiary of PEL, has set up a 1.6 GW module and 1.25 GW cell line in Telangana. PEGEPL, a 100% subsidiary of PEL, also has 1.1 GW of module manufacturing capacity. Cumulatively, as of June 2024, the group has total module capacity of 4.1 GW and 2 GW of cell capacity. The group derives a small portion of revenue from solar EPC business.

Key Financial Indicators– PEL – consolidated – CRISIL Ratings-adjusted numbers

As on / for the period ended March 31		2024	2023
Operating income	Rs crore	3159	1442
Reported profit after tax (PAT)	Rs crore	231	-13
PAT margin	%	7.3	-0.9
Adjusted debt/adjusted networth	Times	2.1	1.8
Interest coverage	Times	4.2	1.6

Any other information: Not Applicable

Note on complexity levels of the rated instrument:

CRISIL Ratings' complexity levels are assigned to various types of financial instruments and are included (where applicable) in the 'Annexure - Details of Instrument' in this Rating Rationale.

CRISIL Ratings will disclose complexity level for all securities - including those that are yet to be placed - based on available information. The complexity level for instruments may be updated, where required, in the rating rationale published subsequent to the issuance of the instrument when details on such features are available.

For more details on the CRISIL Ratings` complexity levels please visit www.crisilratings.com. Users may also call the Customer Service Helpdesk with queries on specific instruments.

Annexure - Details of Instrument(s)

ISIN	Name Of Instrument	Date Of Allotment	Coupon Rate (%)	Maturity Date	Issue Size (Rs.Crore)	Complexity Levels	Rating Outstanding with Outlook
NA	Proposed Long Term Bank Loan Facility	NA	NA	NA	40.28	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Proposed Short Term Bank Loan Facility	NA	NA	NA	208.00	NA	CRISIL A2+

Annexure – List of entities consolidated

Names of entities consolidated	Extent of consolidation	Rationale for consolidation
Premier Energies Ltd	Full	Parent entity
Premier Energies Photovoltaic Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary
Premier Energies International Pvt Ltd		Subsidiary
Premier Energies Global Environment Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary
Premier Photovoltaic Gajwel Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary
Premier Photovoltaic Zaheerabad Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary
Premier Solar Powertech Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary

Annexure - Rating History for last 3 Years

Instrument	Type	Current		2024 (History)		2023		2022		2021		Start of 2021
		Outstanding Amount	Rating	Date	Rating	Date	Rating	Date	Rating	Date	Rating	Rating
Fund Based Facilities	LT/ST	248.28	CRISIL A2+ / CRISIL A-/Positive	03-01-24	CRISIL BBB+/Stable	--	--	13-12-22	CRISIL BBB+/Negative	26-11-21	CRISIL BBB+/Positive / CRISIL A2	Suspended
								07-04-22	CRISIL BBB+/Positive	--	--	
Non-Fund Based Facilities	ST	--	--	03-01-24	CRISIL A2	--	--	13-12-22	CRISIL A2	26-11-21	CRISIL A2	Suspended
								07-04-22	CRISIL A2	--	--	

All amounts are in Rs.Cr.

Annexure - Details of Bank Lenders & Facilities

Facility	Amount (Rs.Crore)	Name of Lender	Rating
Proposed Long Term Bank Loan Facility	40.28	Not Applicable	CRISIL A-/Positive
Proposed Short Term Bank Loan Facility	208	Not Applicable	CRISIL A2+

Criteria Details

Links to related criteria
CRISILs Approach to Financial Ratios
Rating criteria for manufacturing and service sector companies
Criteria for rating entities belonging to homogenous groups
CRISILs Criteria for rating short term debt

CRISILs Criteria for Consolidation

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Note for Media:

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About CRISIL Limited

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It is India's foremost provider of ratings, data, research, analytics and solutions with a strong track record of growth, culture of innovation, and global footprint.

It has delivered independent opinions, actionable insights, and efficient solutions to over 100,000 customers through businesses that operate from India, the US, the UK, Argentina, Poland, China, Hong Kong and Singapore.

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Rating Rationale

November 12, 2024 | Mumbai

Premier Energies Global Environment Private Limited

'CRISIL A-/Positive/CRISIL A2+' assigned to Bank Debt

Rating Action

Total Bank Loan Facilities Rated	Rs.443.78 Crore
Long Term Rating	CRISIL A-/Positive (Assigned)
Short Term Rating	CRISIL A2+ (Assigned)

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1 crore = 10 million

Refer to Annexure for Details of Instruments & Bank Facilities

Detailed Rationale

CRISIL Ratings has assigned its '**CRISIL A-/Positive/CRISIL A2+**' ratings to the bank loan facilities of Premier Energies Global Environment Private Limited (PEGEPL, part of the Premier Energies group). The Premier Energies group includes Premier Energies Ltd (PEL) and its subsidiaries.

The Premier Energies group has seen strong improvement in its business risk profile with increased scale of operations, healthy utilisation rates and operating profitability, along with material improvement in financial profile with increased operating cash accruals and significant fund raising through the recent Initial Public Offer (IPO) in September 2024. The IPO resulted in fresh issuance with net proceeds of Rs 1,239 crores which will support ongoing capital expenditure (capex) and capital structure of the group.

The group's utilisation rates in both cells and modules segments have ramped up significantly since last year, with effective average utilisation rates of 81% for cells and 60% for modules in fiscal 2024 (41% and 43% respectively in fiscal 2023). The effective utilization rates have remained at similar levels in fiscal 2025 as well, indicating increased operational efficiency. The increased utilisation was driven by healthy domestic as well as export demand for cells and modules along with stabilization of new capacities added by the group over the past 1-2 years. Implementation of approved list of module manufacturers (ALMM) scheme in April 2024 and increasing share of projects with Domestic Content Requirement (DCR) are leading to healthy demand for domestic modules and cells and should support healthy utilisation rates going forward as well. At a consolidated level, the group reported an operating income of Rs 3,159 crores and earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (Ebitda) of Rs 493 crores during fiscal 2024 (15.6% EBITDA margin) as compared to revenue of Rs 1,442 crores and EBITDA of Rs 92 crores, during fiscal 2023 (6.4% EBITDA margin). Further during Q1FY2025, the consolidated operating income and ebitda was Rs 1,657 crores and Rs 370 crores respectively (22% EBITDA margin). Also, healthy consolidated order book of Rs 5,474 crores as on September 30, 2024 provides good revenue visibility for the current fiscal as well.

CRISIL Ratings has also taken note of the ongoing capex plans of ~ Rs 4,000 crore by the group, wherein the group plans to add 1 GW of TopCon cell in PEPPL and 4 GW Module line + 4 GW TopCon Cell line in PEGEPL over the next couple of years, for which land and enabling infrastructure is understood to be in place. Further, IPO proceeds as well as operating cash accruals are expected to support a sizeable part of the ongoing capex, although the group has tied up adequate term loans for the said capex plans. While the planned capex will enable further increase in scale of operations with higher cell level integration, timely completion and stabilization of the planned capacity expansion without any time and cost overruns will be key monitorable.

The rating is also supported by the group's strong financial risk profile which is likely to remain healthy despite the sizeable capex over the medium term, supported by increasing operating cash accruals, healthy networth and reduced leverage. As on March 2024, the company's net leverage (ratio of net debt to EBITDA), and interest coverage ratio stood at 2.0, and 4.2 times respectively, improved from the levels of 5.4 and 1.6 times respectively in FY2023. Further, the same is expected to remain healthy over the medium term. The positive outlook reflects CRISIL Ratings' expectation that the group will witness continued increase in scale of operations with high utilization rates, timely commissioning and ramp up of capacities, along with sustenance of healthy financial profile and liquidity, at or above current levels, which can result in a rating upgrade.

The ratings also reflect the group's established market position in the domestic solar module manufacturing industry, extensive experience of the promoter, and robust demand supported by government thrust on capacity addition and favourable policies in the form of ALMM, basic customs duty (BCD) and a proposed approved list of cell manufacturers (ALCM) similar to ALMM which is likely to boost demand for domestic cells. However, susceptibility to intense competition, regulatory changes, volatility in raw material prices and timely stabilization of new capacities will remain key monitorables going forward.

Analytical Approach

CRISIL Ratings has applied the parent notch-up framework to factor in support from the parent, Premier Energies Ltd (PEL). PEL and PEGEPL are engaged in the same business, and under a common management with significant operational and financial linkages. Also, PEL holds 100% stake in PEGEPL. The entities, collectively referred to as the Premier Energies group, are in the same business, and have strong business and financial linkages and common promoters. Also, PEL has issued corporate guarantees for the debt facilities of its subsidiaries.

Please refer Annexure - List of Entities Consolidated, which captures the list of entities considered and their analytical treatment of consolidation.

Key Rating Drivers & Detailed Description

Strengths:

- **Established market presence and longstanding experience of the promoter in the solar industry:** The promoter's experience of over 25 years in the solar industry and strong relationships with stakeholders will continue to support the business. The group has one of the largest integrated (solar cell and module) manufacturing facilities (capacity-wise) in India and enjoys a sizeable share in the total domestic installed capacity with its current installed capacity of 2 GW of cells and 4.1 GW of modules.

While the group had a module manufacturing line of 3 megawatt (MW) in 1995, its projects ranged from installing solar lanterns to village electrification and export of solar modules. It entered the solar EPC (engineering procurement and construction) segment in 2011 but is now focused on the module and cell manufacturing business.

- **Favourable domestic demand outlook for the solar industry which should support increasing volumes:** Amid growing emphasis for solar power in India, the group is well-positioned to absorb the demand arising from the long-term plans of the government to increase generation from renewable sources. Introduction of protectionist measures by the government, such as BCD of 40% and 25% on imported solar modules and solar cells, respectively, from April 2022; and implementation of ALMM along with incentivising domestic players under the PLI scheme increase the cost competitiveness of domestic modules vis-à-vis that of imported ones. Government-approved schemes such as Kisan Urja Suraksha Utthan Mahabhiyan, Central Public Sector Undertaking and rooftop scheme are also pushing up demand. Furthermore, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) is looking to introduce an approved list of models and manufacturers for solar PV cells (ALCM). Under ALCM, all modules approved under ALMM are required to use cells from ALCM list. Further, all projects where ALMM is applicable also need to use cells from the ALCM list. This will support the demand for domestic cells.
- **Healthy order book providing revenue visibility:** The group has a cumulative order book of ~1545 MW for modules and ~2797 MW for cells (from reputed customers such as NTPC, IRCON, Shakti Pump), worth ~Rs.5,474 crores to be executed over the next 3-4 quarters. This translated to an order book to sales ratio of 1.7 (vis-à-vis FY24 operating income). The order book is expected to be delivered over the next 3-4 quarters thereby, providing ample revenue visibility and indicating a continued increase in the scale of operations.
- **Increased scale of operations with rising operating margins:** The group has witnessed increase in scale of operations to 2GW cell line and 3.4GW module line in March 2024 (4.1 GW installed module capacity currently). Driven by increased capacities and better utilization rates, revenue increased from Rs 1,442 crores in fiscal 2023 to Rs 3,159 crores in fiscal 2024. Additionally, operating margins also improved from ~6.4% in fiscal 2023 to ~15.6% during fiscal 2024 and further improved to 22.3% in Q1 of fiscal 2025. Stabilization of operational capacities and improved supply chain dynamics have supported operating performance with higher capacity utilization. Further, higher share of exports also boosted margins in fiscal 2024. However, sustainability of margin in the near term will remain a key monitorable.
- **Improved financial risk profile with increasing scale and recent fund raise through IPO:** The financial profile of the group significantly improved in fiscal 2024 with its net leverage and interest coverage ratios improving to 2.0 and 4.2 times respectively from 5.4 and 1.6 times in fiscal 2023. The financial profile is likely to further improve in fiscal 2025 on account of healthy operational performance and the successful IPO funding. The group's gearing ratio is expected to witness a significant improvement from 4.4 times in fiscal 2024 to 2.3 times in fiscal 2025. Furthermore, the group's net leverage is expected to remain below 2.0 times while its interest coverage is likely to remain healthy at 3.5-4.0 times.

Weaknesses:

- **Susceptibility to intense competition, regulatory changes, and volatility in raw material prices:** The group is exposed to increasing competition from domestic as well as imported modules. This is on account of large capacity additions planned in the domestic market to meet increasing demand. Furthermore, Indian manufacturers face competition from Chinese imports, which have witnessed significant reduction in module and cell prices due to supply

glut in China amid restrictions imposed by US on Chinese imports. However, increasing integration of operations with new cell capacities and implementation of BCD and ALMM provides the required support for the group to be cost-competitive against Chinese imports. However, the risk of further material reduction in prices of imports impacting competitiveness of premier energy group will remain a key monitorable.

Though the group has price-variation clauses for most raw materials and undertakes order-backed procurement to mitigate this risk, any sharp rise in input cost may impact the demand levels in the domestic industry. Currently, the group has the second-largest cell manufacturing capacity at 2GW in India which helps its operating margins and supports it to cater to DCR module tenders. The capacity additions planned by other domestic players over the medium term and further intensification of competition will need to be monitored going forward.

- **Exposure to stabilisation and project execution risks:** The group is undertaking sizeable capacity expansion with addition of 1 GW of TopCon cell in PEPPL and 4 GW Module line + 4 GW TopCon Cell line in PEGEPL. This will enable it to become an almost fully-integrated player leading to economies of scale.

This poses stabilization related risks. Resultantly, timely completion of the project and commensurate ramp-up will remain key monitorable. The stabilization of these capacities needs to be tracked as there was a delay in the past albeit due to other reasons. The company has learned from its past experience of stabilizing plants and has taken the necessary steps to avoid occurrence of the same concerns for PEIPL line. CRISIL Ratings draws comfort from the group's track record of executing projects in both modules and cells segments.

Liquidity: Adequate

Consolidated annual net cash accrual was Rs 327 crores in fiscal 2024 and is expected to be around ~Rs 571 crores in fiscal 2025 which should sufficiently cover debt and interest obligation of ~Rs 250-300 crores in fiscal 2025. This coupled with undrawn term debt line should suffice to fund incremental capex and working capital requirement.

Outlook: Positive

The group is expected to sustain the growth momentum in its operating performance amid healthy demand scenario, favourable government policies and increasing operational capacities. This is likely to result in an expansion in its scale of operations and support strong financial and liquidity profile

Rating sensitivity factors

Upward factors:

- Healthy utilization rates and increasing sales volume, coupled with consolidated operating margin sustaining at or above 13-15% at group level, resulting in significant improvement in operating cash accruals from current levels
- Improvement in debt coverage indicators backed by increased accrual and/or faster-than-expected debt reduction, leading to significant improvement in capital structure and debt coverage ratios

Downward factors:

- Slower-than-expected ramp-up in operating rates or materially lower than expected realisations, resulting in consolidated operating margin sustaining below 12-14%, and thereby, significantly lower than expected cash accruals
- Substantial delays in project execution, resulting in material time and cost overruns, leading to higher than expected debt funded capex and weakening of the capital structure
- Stretched working capital cycle, leading to higher reliance on borrowing and moderation in liquidity from current levels

About the Group

Incorporated in 1995 by Mr Surender Pal Singh, PEL is one of the largest integrated (solar cell and module) manufacturing facilities (capacity-wise) in India. It has a 300 MW operating module line at its plant in Annaram, Telangana. PEPPL, a 100% subsidiary of PEL, has a 1,400 MW module and 750 MW cell line located in Raviryala, Telangana. PEIPL, a 74% subsidiary of PEL, has set up a 1.6 GW module and 1.25 GW cell line in Telangana. PEGEPL, a 100% subsidiary of PEL also has 1.1 GW module manufacturing capacity. Cumulatively, as of June 2024, the group has total module capacity of 4.1 GW and 2 GW of cell capacity. The group derives a small portion of revenue from solar EPC business.

Key Financial Indicators – PEGEPL – standalone – CRISIL Ratings-adjusted numbers

As on / for the period ended March 31	Unit	2024	2023
Operating income	Rs crore	5.5	NA
Reported profit after tax (PAT)	Rs crore	-0.6	NA
PAT margin	%	NM	NA
Adjusted debt/adjusted networth	Times	1.7	0.5
Interest coverage	Times	0.3	NM

NA – Not applicable; NM – Not meaningful

Note – Company commenced operations in fiscal 2024

Any other information: Not Applicable

Note on complexity levels of the rated instrument:

CRISIL Ratings' complexity levels are assigned to various types of financial instruments and are included (where

applicable) in the 'Annexure - Details of Instrument' in this Rating Rationale.

CRISIL Ratings will disclose complexity level for all securities - including those that are yet to be placed - based on available information. The complexity level for instruments may be updated, where required, in the rating rationale published subsequent to the issuance of the instrument when details on such features are available.

For more details on the CRISIL Ratings' complexity levels please visit www.crisilratings.com. Users may also call the Customer Service Helpdesk with queries on specific instruments.

Annexure - Details of Instrument(s)

ISIN	Name of the instrument	Date of Allotment	Coupon Rate (%)	Maturity Date	Issue size (Rs.Crore)	Complexity Level	Rating assigned with outlook
NA	Cash Credit	NA	NA	NA	60	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Letter of Credit	NA	NA	NA	240	NA	CRISIL A2+
NA	Term Loan	NA	NA	31-Mar-34	131.25	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Term Loan	NA	NA	31-Dec-29	12.53	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive

Annexure – List of entities consolidated

Names of entities consolidated	Extent of consolidation	Rationale for consolidation
Premier Energies Ltd	Full	Parent entity
Premier Energies Photovoltaic Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary
Premier Energies International Pvt Ltd		Subsidiary
Premier Energies Global Environment Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary
Premier Photovoltaic Gajwel Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary
Premier Photovoltaic Zaheerabad Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary
Premier Solar Powertech Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary

Annexure - Rating History for last 3 Years

Instrument	Current			2024 (History)		2023		2022		2021		Start of 2021
	Type	Outstanding Amount	Rating	Date	Rating	Date	Rating	Date	Rating	Date	Rating	Rating
Fund Based Facilities	LT	203.78	CRISIL A-/Positive		--		--		--		--	--
Non-Fund Based Facilities	ST	240.0	CRISIL A2+		--		--		--		--	--

All amounts are in Rs.Cr.

Annexure - Details of Bank Lenders & Facilities

Facility	Amount (Rs.Crore)	Name of Lender	Rating
Cash Credit	10	Axis Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Cash Credit	6	ICICI Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Cash Credit	28	Canara Bank	CRISIL A-/Positive
Cash Credit	6	HDFC Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Cash Credit	10	YES Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Letter of Credit	50	Axis Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit	44	ICICI Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit	75	Canara Bank	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit	34	HDFC Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit	37	YES Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Term Loan	131.25	Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Term Loan	12.53	Axis Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive

Criteria Details

Links to related criteria
CRISILs Approach to Financial Ratios
Rating criteria for manufacturing and service sector companies
Criteria for rating entities belonging to homogenous groups
CRISILs Criteria for rating short term debt
CRISILs Criteria for Consolidation

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Rating Rationale

November 12, 2024 | Mumbai

Premier Energies International Private Limited

Ratings upgraded to 'CRISIL A-/Positive/CRISIL A2+'; Rated amount enhanced for Bank Debt

Rating Action

Total Bank Loan Facilities Rated	Rs.1188.95 Crore (Enhanced from Rs.964.39 Crore)
Long Term Rating	CRISIL A-/Positive (Upgraded from 'CRISIL BBB+/Stable')
Short Term Rating	CRISIL A2+ (Upgraded from 'CRISIL A2')

Note: None of the Directors on CRISIL Ratings Limited's Board are members of rating committee and thus do not participate in discussion or assignment of any ratings. The Board of Directors also does not discuss any ratings at its meetings.

1 crore = 10 million

Refer to Annexure for Details of Instruments & Bank Facilities

Detailed Rationale

CRISIL Ratings has upgraded its ratings on the bank facilities of Premier Energies International Private Ltd (PEIPL, part of the Premier Energies group) to '**CRISIL A-/Positive/CRISIL A2+**' from '**CRISIL BBB+/Stable/CRISIL A2**'. The Premier Energies group includes Premier Energies Ltd (PEL) and its subsidiaries.

The rating upgrade is driven by strong improvement in business profile with increased scale of operations, healthy utilization rates and operating profitability, along with material improvement in financial profile with increased operating cash accruals and significant fund raising through recent Initial Public Offer (IPO) in September 2024, which resulted in fresh issuance with net proceeds of Rs 1,239 crores which will support ongoing capex and capital structure of the group.

The utilization rates in both cells and modules segments have ramped up significantly since last year, with effective average utilization rates of 81% for cells and 60% for modules in FY2024 (41% and 43% respectively in FY2023). The effective utilization rates have remained at similar levels in the current fiscal as well, indicating increased operational efficiency. The increased utilization was driven by healthy domestic as well as export demand for cells and modules along with stabilization of new capacities added by the group over the past 1-2 years. Implementation of approved list of module manufacturers (ALMM) scheme in April 2024 and increasing share of projects with Domestic Content Requirement (DCR) are leading to healthy demand for domestic modules and cells and should support healthy utilisation rates going forward as well. At a consolidated level, the group reported an operating income of Rs 3,159 crores and earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (Ebitda) of Rs 493 crores during fiscal 2024 (15.6% EBITDA margin) as compared to revenue of Rs 1,442 crores and EBITDA of Rs 92 crores, during fiscal 2023 (6.4% EBITDA margin). Further during Q1FY2025, the consolidated operating income and ebitda was Rs 1,657 crores and Rs 370 crores respectively (22% EBITDA margin). Also, healthy consolidated order book of Rs 5,474 crores as on September 30, 2024 provides good revenue visibility for the current fiscal as well.

CRISIL Ratings has also taken note of the ongoing capex plans of ~ Rs 4,000 crore by the group, wherein the group plans to add 1 GW of TopCon cell in PEPPL and 4 GW Module line + 4 GW TopCon Cell line in PEGEPL over the next couple of years, for which land and enabling infrastructure is understood to be in place. Further, IPO proceeds as well as operating cash accruals are expected to support a sizeable part of the ongoing capex, although the group has tied up adequate term loans for the said capex plans. While the planned capex will enable further increase in scale of operations with higher cell level integration, timely completion and stabilization of the planned capacity expansion without any time and cost overruns will be key monitorable.

The rating action is also supported by the group's strong financial risk profile which is likely to remain healthy despite the sizeable capex over the medium term, supported by increasing operating cash accruals, healthy network and reduced leverage. As on March 2024, the company's net leverage (ratio of net debt to EBITDA), and interest coverage ratio stood at 2.0, and 4.2 times respectively, improved from the levels of 5.4 and 1.6 times respectively in FY2023. Further, the same is expected to remain healthy over the medium term. The positive outlook reflects CRISIL Ratings' expectation that the group will witness continued increase in scale of operations with high utilization rates, timely commissioning and ramp up of capacities, along with sustenance of healthy financial profile and liquidity, at or above current levels, which can result in a rating upgrade.

The ratings continue to reflect the group's established market position in the domestic solar module manufacturing industry, extensive experience of the promoter, and robust demand supported by government thrust on capacity addition and favourable policies in the form of ALMM, basic customs duty (BCD) and a proposed approved list of cell manufacturers (ALCM) similar to ALMM which is likely to boost demand for domestic cells. However, susceptibility to intense competition, regulatory changes, volatility in raw material prices and timely stabilization of new capacities will remain key monitorables going forward.

Analytical Approach

CRISIL Ratings has applied the parent notch-up framework to factor in support from its parent, Premier Energies Ltd (PEL). PEL and PEIPL are engaged in the same business, and under a common management with significant operational and financial linkages. Also, PEL holds 74% stake in PEIPL. The entities, collectively referred to as the Premier Energies group, are in the same business, and have strong business and financial linkages and common promoters. Also, PEL has issued corporate guarantees for the debt facilities of its subsidiaries.

Please refer Annexure - List of Entities Consolidated, which captures the list of entities considered and their analytical treatment of consolidation

Key Rating Drivers & Detailed Description

Strengths:

Established market presence and longstanding experience of the promoter in the solar industry

The promoter's experience of over 25 years in the solar industry and strong relationships with stakeholders will continue to support the business. The group has one of the largest integrated (solar cell and module) manufacturing facilities (capacity-wise) in India and enjoys a sizeable share in the total domestic installed capacity with its current installed capacity of 2 GW of cells and 4.1 GW of modules.

While the group had a module manufacturing line of 3 megawatt (MW) in 1995, its projects ranged from installing solar lanterns to village electrification and export of solar modules. It entered the solar EPC (engineering procurement and construction) segment in 2011 but is now focused on the module and cell manufacturing business.

Favourable domestic demand outlook for the solar industry which should support increasing volumes

Amid growing emphasis for solar power in India, the group is well-positioned to absorb the demand arising from the long-term plans of the government to increase generation from renewable sources. Introduction of protectionist measures by the government, such as BCD of 40% and 25% on imported solar modules and solar cells, respectively, from April 2022; and implementation of ALMM along with incentivising domestic players under the PLI scheme increase the cost competitiveness of domestic modules vis-à-vis that of imported ones. Government-approved schemes such as Kisan Urja Suraksha Utthan Mahabhiyan, Central Public Sector Undertaking and rooftop scheme are also pushing up demand. Further, MNRE is looking to introduce an approved list of models and manufacturers for solar PV cells (ALCM). Under ALCM, all modules approved under ALMM are required to use cells from ALCM list. Further, all projects where ALMM is applicable also need to use cells from ALCM list. This will support the demand for domestic cells.

Healthy order book providing revenue visibility

The group has a cumulative order book of ~1545 MW for modules and ~2797 MW for cells (from reputed customers such as NTPC, IRCON, Shakti Pump), worth ~Rs.5,474 crores to be executed over the next 3-4 quarters. This translated to an order book to sales ratio of 1.7 (vis-à-vis FY24 operating income). The order book is expected to be delivered over the next 3-4 quarters thereby, providing ample revenue visibility and indicating a continued increase in the scale of operations.

Increased scale of operations with improved operating margins

The group has witnessed increase in scale of operations to 2GW cell line and 3.4GW module line in March 2024 (4.1 GW installed module capacity currently). Driven by increased capacities and better utilization rates, revenue increased from Rs 1,442 crores in fiscal 2023 to Rs 3,159 crores in fiscal 2024. Additionally, operating margins also improved from ~6.4% in fiscal 2023 to ~15.6% during fiscal 2024 and further improved to 22.3% in Q1 of fiscal 2025. Stabilization of operational capacities and improved supply chain dynamics have supported operating performance with higher capacity utilization. Further, higher share of exports also boosted margins in fiscal 2024. However, sustainability of margin in the near term will remain a key monitorable.

Improved financial profile with increasing scale and recent fund raise through IPO

The financial profile of the group significantly improved in fiscal 2024 with its net leverage and interest coverage ratios improving to 2.0 and 4.2 times respectively from 5.4 and 1.6 times in fiscal 2023. The financial profile is likely to further improve in fiscal 2025 on account of healthy operational performance and the successful IPO funding. The group's gearing ratio is expected to witness a significant improvement from 4.4 times in fiscal 2024 to 2.3 times in fiscal 2025. Furthermore, the group's net leverage is expected to remain below 2.0 times while its interest coverage is likely to remain healthy at 3.5-4.0 times.

Weaknesses:

Susceptibility to intense competition, regulatory changes, and volatility in raw material prices

The group is exposed to increasing competition from domestic as well as imported modules. This is on account of large capacity additions planned in the domestic market to meet increasing demand. Furthermore, Indian manufacturers face competition from Chinese imports, which have witnessed significant reduction in module and cell prices due to supply glut in China amid restrictions imposed by US on Chinese imports. However, increasing integration of operations with new cell capacities and implementation of BCD and ALMM provides the required support for the group to be cost-competitive against Chinese imports. However, the risk of further material reduction in prices of imports impacting competitiveness of premier energy group will remain a key monitorable.

Though the group has price-variation clauses for most raw materials and undertakes order-backed procurement to mitigate this risk, any sharp rise in input cost may impact the demand levels in the domestic industry. Currently, the group has the second-largest cell manufacturing capacity at 2GW in India which helps its operating margins and supports it to cater to DCR module tenders. The capacity additions planned by other domestic players over the medium term and further intensification of competition will need to be monitored going forward.

Exposure to stabilisation and project execution risks

The group is undertaking sizeable capacity expansion with addition of 1 GW of TopCon cell in PEPPL and 4 GW Module line + 4 GW TopCon Cell line in PEGEPL. This will enable it to become an almost fully-integrated player leading to economies of scale.

This poses stabilization related risks. Resultantly, timely completion of the project and commensurate ramp-up will remain key monitorable. The stabilization of these capacities needs to be tracked as there was a delay in the past albeit due to other reasons. The company has learned from its past experience of stabilizing plants and has taken the necessary steps to avoid occurrence of the same concerns for PEIPL line. CRISIL Ratings draws comfort from the group's track record of executing projects in both modules and cells segments.

Liquidity: Adequate

Consolidated annual net cash accrual was Rs 327 crores in fiscal 2024 and is expected to be around ~Rs 571 crores in fiscal 2025 which should sufficiently cover debt and interest obligation of ~Rs 250-300 crores in fiscal 2025. This coupled with undrawn term debt line should suffice to fund incremental capex and working capital requirement.

Outlook: Positive

The group is expected to sustain the growth momentum in its operating performance amid healthy demand scenario, favourable government policies and increasing operational capacities. This is likely to result in an expansion in its scale of operations and support strong financial and liquidity profile.

Rating Sensitivity Factors

Upward Factors

- Healthy utilization rates and increasing sales volume, coupled with consolidated operating margin sustaining at or above 13-15% at group level, resulting in significant improvement in operating cash accruals from current levels
- Improvement in debt coverage indicators backed by increased accrual and/or faster-than-expected debt reduction, leading to significant improvement in capital structure and debt coverage ratios

Downward Factors

- Slower-than-expected ramp-up in operating rates or materially lower than expected realisations, resulting in consolidated operating margin sustaining below 12-14%, and thereby, significantly lower than expected cash accruals
- Substantial delays in project execution, resulting in material time and cost overruns, leading to higher than expected debt funded capex and weakening of the capital structure
- Stretched working capital cycle, leading to higher reliance on borrowing and moderation in liquidity from current levels

About the Group

Incorporated in 1995 by Mr Surender Pal Singh, PEL is one of the largest integrated (solar cell and module) manufacturing facilities (capacity-wise) in India. It has a 300 MW operating module line at its plant in Annaram, Telangana. PEPPL, a 100% subsidiary of PEL, has a 1,400 MW module and 750 MW cell line located in Raviryala, Telangana. PEIPL, a 74% subsidiary of PEL, has set up a 1.6 GW module and 1.25 GW cell line in Telangana. PEGEPL, a 100% subsidiary of PEL also has 1.1 GW module manufacturing capacity in Telangana. Cumulatively, as of June 2024, the group has total module capacity of 4.1 GW and 2 GW of cell capacity. The group derives a small portion of revenue from solar EPC business.

Key Financial Indicators – PEIPL – standalone – CRISIL Ratings-adjusted numbers

As on / for the period ended March 31		2024	2023
Operating income	Rs crore	439	NA
Reported profit after tax (PAT)	Rs crore	39	NA
PAT margin	%	8.9%	NA
Adjusted debt/adjusted networth	Times	7.5	6.6
Interest coverage	Times	3.6	NM

NA – Not applicable; NM – Not meaningful

Note – Company commenced operations in fiscal 2024

Any other information: Not Applicable

Note on complexity levels of the rated instrument:

CRISIL Ratings` complexity levels are assigned to various types of financial instruments and are included (where applicable) in the 'Annexure - Details of Instrument' in this Rating Rationale.

CRISIL Ratings will disclose complexity level for all securities - including those that are yet to be placed - based on available information. The complexity level for instruments may be updated, where required, in the rating rationale published subsequent to the issuance of the instrument when details on such features are available.

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Annexure - Details of Instrument(s)

ISIN	Name Of Instrument	Date Of Allotment	Coupon Rate (%)	Maturity Date	Issue Size (Rs.Crore)	Complexity Levels	Rating Outstanding with Outlook
NA	Bill Discounting	NA	NA	NA	32.00	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Cash Credit*	NA	NA	NA	38.00	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Cash Credit	NA	NA	NA	27.00	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Letter of Credit^	NA	NA	NA	349.00	NA	CRISIL A2+
NA	Letter of Credit#	NA	NA	NA	35.00	NA	CRISIL A2+
NA	Letter of Credit	NA	NA	NA	126.00	NA	CRISIL A2+
NA	Proposed Non Fund based limits	NA	NA	NA	53.00	NA	CRISIL A2+
NA	Working Capital Demand Loan**	NA	NA	NA	25.00	NA	CRISIL A2+
NA	Term Loan	NA	NA	30-Sep-33	361.54	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Term Loan	NA	NA	30-Sep-33	142.41	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive

*Interchangeable with working capital demand loan

**Interchangeable with cash credit

^Interchangeable between standby letter of credit and bank guarantee

#Interchangeable with standby letter of credit

Annexure – List of entities consolidated

Names of entities consolidated	Extent of consolidation	Rationale for consolidation
Premier Energies Ltd	Full	Parent entity
Premier Energies Photovoltaic Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary
Premier Energies International Pvt Ltd		Subsidiary
Premier Energies Global Environment Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary
Premier Photovoltaic Gajwel Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary
Premier Photovoltaic Zaheerabad Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary
Premier Solar Powertech Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary

Annexure - Rating History for last 3 Years

Instrument	Current			2024 (History)		2023		2022		2021		Start of 2021
	Type	Outstanding Amount	Rating	Date	Rating	Date	Rating	Date	Rating	Date	Rating	Rating
Fund Based Facilities	ST/LT	625.95	CRISIL A2+ / CRISIL A-/Positive	04-01-24	CRISIL BBB+/Stable		--		--		--	--
Non-Fund Based Facilities	ST	563.0	CRISIL A2+	04-01-24	CRISIL A2		--		--		--	--

All amounts are in Rs.Cr.

Annexure - Details of Bank Lenders & Facilities

Facility	Amount (Rs.Crore)	Name of Lender	Rating
Bill Discounting	22	The Federal Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Bill Discounting	10	YES Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Cash Credit*	8	YES Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Cash Credit*	15	Axis Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Cash Credit*	15	HDFC Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Cash Credit	15	Bandhan Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Cash Credit	6	The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Cash Credit	2	ICICI Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Cash Credit	4	The Federal Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Letter of Credit^	75	Axis Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit#	35	IndusInd Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit	54	The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit	37	ICICI Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit^	36	The Federal Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit^	75	HDFC Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit^	96	Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit^	67	YES Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit	35	Bandhan Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Proposed Non Fund based limits	53	Not Applicable	CRISIL A2+
Term Loan	224.56	Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Term Loan	142.41	Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Term Loan	136.98	Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Working Capital Demand Loan**	10	IndusInd Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Working Capital Demand Loan**	15	Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+

*Interchangeable with working capital demand loan

**Interchangeable with cash credit

^Interchangeable between standby letter of credit and bank guarantee

#Interchangeable with standby letter of credit

Criteria Details

Links to related criteria
CRISILs Approach to Financial Ratios
Rating criteria for manufacturing and service sector companies
Criteria for rating entities belonging to homogenous groups

[CRISILs Criteria for rating short term debt](#)

[CRISILs Criteria for Consolidation](#)

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Rating Rationale

November 12, 2024 | Mumbai

Premier Energies Photovoltaic Private Limited

Ratings upgraded to 'CRISIL A-/Positive/CRISIL A2+'; Rated amount enhanced for Bank Debt

Rating Action

Total Bank Loan Facilities Rated	Rs.1821.49 Crore (Enhanced from Rs.1395.01 Crore)
Long Term Rating	CRISIL A-/Positive (Upgraded from 'CRISIL BBB+/Stable')
Short Term Rating	CRISIL A2+ (Upgraded from 'CRISIL A2')

Note: None of the Directors on CRISIL Ratings Limited's Board are members of rating committee and thus do not participate in discussion or assignment of any ratings. The Board of Directors also does not discuss any ratings at its meetings.

1 crore = 10 million

Refer to Annexure for Details of Instruments & Bank Facilities

Detailed Rationale

CRISIL Ratings has upgraded its ratings on the bank loan facilities of Premier Energies Photovoltaic Pvt Ltd (PEPPL, part of the Premier Energies group) to '**CRISIL A-/Positive/CRISIL A2+**' from '**CRISIL BBB+/Stable/CRISIL A2**'. The Premier Energies group includes Premier Energies Ltd (PEL) and its subsidiaries.

The rating upgrade is driven by strong improvement in the business profile with increased scale of operations, healthy utilisation rates and operating profitability, along with material improvement in financial profile with increased operating cash accruals and significant fund raising through the initial public offer (IPO) in September 2024. The IPO resulted in fresh issuance with net proceeds of Rs 1,239 crores. This will support the group's ongoing capital expenditure (capex) and capital structure.

The utilisation rates in both cells and modules segments have ramped up significantly since last year, with effective average utilisation rates of 81% for cells and 60% for modules in fiscal 2024 (41% and 43% respectively in fiscal 2023). The effective utilisation rates have remained at similar levels in fiscal 2025 as well, indicating increased operational efficiency. The increased utilisation was driven by healthy domestic as well as export demand for cells and modules along with stabilization of new capacities added by the group over the past 1-2 years. Implementation of approved list of module manufacturers (ALMM) scheme in April 2024 and increasing share of projects with Domestic Content Requirement (DCR) are leading to healthy demand for domestic modules and cells and should support healthy utilisation rates going forward as well. At a consolidated level, the group reported an operating income of Rs 3,159 crores and earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (Ebitda) of Rs 493 crores during fiscal 2024 (15.6% EBITDA margin) as compared to revenue of Rs 1,442 crores and EBITDA of Rs 92 crores, during fiscal 2023 (6.4% EBITDA margin). Further during Q1 of fiscal 2025, the consolidated operating income and ebitda was Rs 1,657 crores and Rs 370 crores respectively (22% EBITDA margin). A healthy consolidated order book of Rs 5,474 crores as on September 30, 2024 provides good revenue visibility for this fiscal as well.

CRISIL Ratings has also taken note of the ongoing capex plans of ~ Rs 4,000 crore by the group, wherein the group plans to add 1 gigawatt (GW) of TopCon cell in PEPPL and 4 GW Module line + 4 GW TopCon Cell line in PEGEPL over the next couple of years, for which land and enabling infrastructure is understood to be in place. Further, IPO proceeds and operating cash accruals are expected to support a sizeable part of the ongoing capex, although the group has tied up adequate term loans for the said capex plans. While the planned capex will enable further increase in scale of operations with higher cell level integration, timely completion and stabilization of the planned capacity expansion without any time and cost overruns will be key monitorable.

The rating action is also supported by the group's strong financial risk profile which is likely to remain healthy despite the sizeable capex over the medium term, supported by increasing operating cash accruals, healthy network and reduced leverage. The group's net leverage (ratio of net debt to EBITDA), and interest coverage ratio stood at 2.0, and 4.2 times respectively in fiscal 2024, improved from 5.4 and 1.6 times respectively in fiscal 2023. Further, the same is expected to remain healthy over the medium term. The positive outlook reflects the expectation of CRISIL Ratings that the group will witness continued increase in scale of operations with high utilisation rates, timely commissioning and ramp up of

capacities, and sustenance of the healthy financial profile and liquidity, at or above current levels, which can result in a rating upgrade.

The ratings continue to reflect the group's established market position in the domestic solar module manufacturing industry, extensive experience of the promoter, and robust demand supported by the government's thrust on capacity addition and favourable policies in the form of ALMM, basic customs duty (BCD) and a proposed approved list of cell manufacturers (ALCM) similar to ALMM which is likely to boost demand for domestic cells. However, susceptibility to intense competition, regulatory changes, volatility in raw material prices and timely stabilization of new capacities will remain key monitorables going forward.

Analytical Approach

CRISIL Ratings has applied the parent notch-up framework to factor in support from its parent, Premier Energies Ltd (PEL). PEL and PEPPL are engaged in the same business, and under a common management with significant operational and financial linkages. Also, PEL holds 100% of stake in PEPPL. The entities, collectively referred to as the Premier Energies group, are in the same business, and have strong business and financial linkages and common promoters. Also, PEL has issued corporate guarantees for the debt facilities of its subsidiaries.

Please refer Annexure - List of Entities Consolidated, which captures the list of entities considered and their analytical treatment of consolidation.

Key Rating Drivers & Detailed Description

Strengths:

- **Established market presence and longstanding experience of the promoter in the solar industry:** The promoter's experience of over 25 years in the solar industry and strong relationships with stakeholders will continue to support the business. The group has one of the largest integrated (solar cell and module) manufacturing facilities (capacity-wise) in India and enjoys a sizeable share in the total domestic installed capacity with its current installed capacity of 2 GW of cells and 4.1 GW of modules.

While the group had a module manufacturing line of 3 megawatt (MW) in 1995, its projects ranged from installing solar lanterns to village electrification and export of solar modules. It entered the solar EPC (engineering procurement and construction) segment in 2011 but is now focused on the module and cell manufacturing business.

- **Favourable domestic demand outlook for the solar industry which should support increasing volumes:** Amid growing emphasis for solar power in India, the group is well-positioned to absorb the demand arising from the long-term plans of the government to increase generation from renewable sources. Introduction of protectionist measures by the government, such as BCD of 40% and 25% on imported solar modules and solar cells, respectively, from April 2022; and implementation of ALMM along with incentivising domestic players under the PLI scheme increase the cost competitiveness of domestic modules vis-à-vis that of imported ones. Government-approved schemes such as Kisan Urja Suraksha Utthan Mahabhiyan, Central Public Sector Undertaking and rooftop scheme are also pushing up demand. Furthermore, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) is looking to introduce an approved list of models and manufacturers for solar PV cells (ALCM). Under ALCM, all modules approved under ALMM are required to use cells from ALCM list. Further, all projects where ALMM is applicable also need to use cells from the ALCM list. This will support the demand for domestic cells.
- **Healthy order book providing revenue visibility:** The group has a cumulative order book of ~1545 MW for modules and ~2797 MW for cells (from reputed customers such as NTPC, IRCON, Shakti Pump), worth ~Rs.5,474 crores to be executed over the next 3-4 quarters. This translated to an order book to sales ratio of 1.7 (vis-à-vis fiscal 2024 operating income). The order book is expected to be delivered over the next 3-4 quarters thereby, providing ample revenue visibility and indicating a continued increase in the scale of operations.
- **Increased scale of operations with rising operating margins:** The group has witnessed increase in scale of operations by expanding capacity to 2GW cell line and 3.4GW module line in March 2024 (4.1 GW installed module capacity currently). Driven by increased capacities and better utilisation rates, revenue increased to Rs 3,159 crores in fiscal 2024 from Rs 1,442 crores in fiscal 2023. The operating margins also rose from ~6.4% in fiscal 2023 to ~15.6% during fiscal 2024 and further improved to 22.3% in the first quarter of fiscal 2025. Stabilization of operational capacities and improved supply chain dynamics have supported operating performance with higher capacity utilisation. Further, higher share of exports also boosted the margins in fiscal 2024. However, sustainability of margin in the near term will remain a key monitorable.
- **Improved financial risk profile with increasing scale and recent fund raise through IPO:** The financial profile of the group significantly improved in fiscal 2024 with its net leverage and interest coverage ratios improving to 2.0 and 4.2 times respectively from 5.4 and 1.6 times in fiscal 2023. The financial profile is likely to further improve in fiscal 2025 on account of healthy operational performance and the successful IPO funding. The group's gearing ratio is expected to witness a significant improvement from 4.4 times in fiscal 2024 to 2.3 times in fiscal 2025. Furthermore, the group's net leverage is expected to remain below 2.0 times while its interest coverage is likely to remain healthy at 3.5-4.0 times.

Weaknesses:

- **Susceptibility to intense competition, regulatory changes, and volatility in raw material prices:** The group is exposed to increasing competition from domestic and imported modules. This is on account of large capacity additions planned in the domestic market to meet increasing demand. Furthermore, Indian manufacturers face competition from Chinese imports, which have witnessed significant reduction in module and cell prices due to supply glut in China amid restrictions imposed by US on Chinese imports. However, increasing integration of operations with new cell capacities and implementation of BCD and ALMM provides the required support for the group to be cost-competitive against Chinese imports. That said, the risk of further material reduction in prices of imports impacting competitiveness of premier energy group will remain a key monitorable.

Though the group has price-variation clauses for most raw materials and undertakes order-backed procurement to mitigate this risk, any sharp rise in input cost may impact the demand levels in the domestic industry. Currently, the group has the second-largest cell manufacturing capacity at 2GW in India which supports its operating margins and enables it to cater to DCR module tenders. The capacity additions planned by other domestic players over the medium term and further intensification of competition will need to be monitored going forward.

- **Exposure to stabilisation and project execution risks:** The group is undertaking sizeable capacity expansion with addition of 1 GW of TopCon cell in PEPPL and 4 GW Module line + 4 GW TopCon Cell line in PEGEPL. This will enable it to become an almost fully-integrated player leading to economies of scale.

However, the capacity expansion poses stabilization-related risks. Resultantly, the timely completion of the project and commensurate ramp-up will remain key monitorable. The stabilization of these capacities needs to be tracked as there was a delay in the past albeit due to other reasons. The company has learned from its past experience of stabilizing plants and has taken the necessary steps to avoid occurrence of the same concerns for PEIPL line. CRISIL Ratings draws comfort from the group's track record of executing projects in both modules and cells segments.

Liquidity: Adequate

Consolidated annual net cash accrual was Rs 327 crores in fiscal 2024 and is expected to be around ~Rs 571 crores in fiscal 2025 which should sufficiently cover debt and interest obligation of ~Rs 250-300 crores in fiscal 2025. This coupled with undrawn term debt line should suffice to fund incremental capex and working capital requirement.

Outlook: Positive

The group is expected to sustain the growth momentum in its operating performance amid healthy demand scenario, favourable government policies and increasing operational capacities. This is likely to result in an expansion in its scale of operations and support strong financial and liquidity profile.

Rating sensitivity factors

Upward factors:

- Healthy utilisation rates and increasing sales volume, coupled with consolidated operating margin sustaining at or above 13-15% at group level, resulting in significant improvement in operating cash accruals from current levels
- Improvement in debt coverage indicators backed by increased accrual and/or faster-than-expected debt reduction, leading to significant improvement in capital structure and debt coverage ratios

Downward factors:

- Slower-than-expected ramp-up in operating rates or materially lower than expected realisations, resulting in consolidated operating margin sustaining below 12-14%, and thereby, significantly lower than expected cash accruals
- Substantial delays in project execution, resulting in material time and cost overruns, leading to higher than expected debt funded capex and weakening of the capital structure
- Stretched working capital cycle, leading to higher reliance on borrowing and moderation in liquidity from current levels

About the Group

Incorporated in 1995 by Mr Surender Pal Singh, PEL is one of the largest integrated (solar cell and module) manufacturing facilities (capacity-wise) in India. It has a 300 MW operating module line at its plant in Annaram, Telangana. PEPPL, a 100% subsidiary of PEL, has a 1,400 MW module and 750 MW cell line located in Raviryala, Telangana. PEIPL, a 74% subsidiary of PEL, has set up a 1.6 GW module and 1.25 GW cell line in Telangana. PEGEPL, a 100% subsidiary of PEL also has 1.1 GW module manufacturing capacity. Cumulatively, as of June 2024, the group has total module capacity of 4.1 GW and 2 GW of cell capacity. The group derives a small portion of revenue from solar EPC business.

Key Financial Indicators – PEPPL – standalone – CRISIL Ratings-adjusted numbers

As on / for the period ended March 31	Unit	2024	2023
Operating income	Rs crore	3117	1210
Reported profit after tax (PAT)	Rs crore	252	-29
PAT margin	%	8.1%	NM
Adjusted debt/adjusted networkth	Times	2.0	5.2
Interest coverage	Times	5.3	1.2

Any other information: Not Applicable

Note on complexity levels of the rated instrument:

CRISIL Ratings` complexity levels are assigned to various types of financial instruments and are included (where applicable) in the 'Annexure - Details of Instrument' in this Rating Rationale.

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Annexure - Details of Instrument(s)

ISIN	Name of the instrument	Date of Allotment	Coupon Rate (%)	Maturity Date	Issue size (Rs. Crore)	Complexity Level	Rating assigned with outlook
NA	Cash Credit*	NA	NA	NA	22	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Cash Credit*	NA	NA	NA	15	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Cash Credit*	NA	NA	NA	40	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Cash Credit*	NA	NA	NA	40	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Cash Credit*	NA	NA	NA	37	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Cash Credit*	NA	NA	NA	25	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Working Capital Loan#	NA	NA	NA	6	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Working Capital Loan^	NA	NA	NA	25	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Working Capital Loan#	NA	NA	NA	8	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Letter of Credit&	NA	NA	NA	78	NA	CRISIL A2+
NA	Letter of Credit~	NA	NA	NA	100	NA	CRISIL A2+
NA	Letter of Credit&	NA	NA	NA	45	NA	CRISIL A2+
NA	Letter of Credit!	NA	NA	NA	65	NA	CRISIL A2+
NA	Letter of Credit&	NA	NA	NA	43	NA	CRISIL A2+
NA	Letter of Credit~	NA	NA	NA	85	NA	CRISIL A2+
NA	Letter of Credit!	NA	NA	NA	32	NA	CRISIL A2+
NA	Letter of Credit!	NA	NA	NA	25	NA	CRISIL A2+
NA	Letter of Credit~	NA	NA	NA	54	NA	CRISIL A2+
NA	Proposed Fund-Based Bank Limits	NA	NA	NA	22	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Proposed Non Fund Based Limits	NA	NA	NA	223	NA	CRISIL A2+
NA	Bill Discounting@	NA	NA	NA	15	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Bill Discounting@	NA	NA	NA	10	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Term Loan	NA	NA	31-Mar-32	138.75	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Term Loan	NA	NA	31-Mar-32	87.15	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Term Loan	NA	NA	31-Mar-26	3.45	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Term Loan	NA	NA	31-Mar-30	37.79	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Term Loan	NA	NA	31-Mar-25	0.87	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Term Loan	NA	NA	30-Jun-33	19.93	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Term Loan	NA	NA	31-Mar-34	250	NA	CRISIL A-/Positive
NA	Non fund based limit ^^	NA	NA	NA	42	NA	CRISIL A2+
NA	Non fund based limit ^^	NA	NA	NA	31.49	NA	CRISIL A2+
NA	Non fund based limit !!!	NA	NA	NA	195.06	NA	CRISIL A2+

* - Interchangeable with Working Capital Demand Loan

^ - Interchangeable with Working Capital Demand Loan and Packing credit in Foreign Currency

- Interchangeable with Cash Credit

& - Interchangeable with Standby Letter of Credit and Bank Guarantee

! - Interchangeable with Bank Guarantee

~ - Interchangeable with Letter of credit

@ - Pre acceptance limit

^^^ - Counter Guarantee in favor of ICICI Bank for issuance of Performance bank guarantee
 !!! - Counter Guarantee in favor of Yes Bank for issuance of Performance bank guarantee

Annexure – List of entities consolidated

Names of entities consolidated	Extent of consolidation	Rationale for consolidation
Premier Energies Ltd	Full	Parent entity
Premier Energies Photovoltaic Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary
Premier Energies International Pvt Ltd		Subsidiary
Premier Energies Global Environment Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary
Premier Photovoltaic Gajwel Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary
Premier Photovoltaic Zaheerabad Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary
Premier Solar Powertech Pvt Ltd		Wholly owned subsidiary

Annexure - Rating History for last 3 Years

Instrument	Current			2024 (History)		2023		2022		2021		Start of 2021
	Type	Outstanding Amount	Rating	Date	Rating	Date	Rating	Date	Rating	Date	Rating	Rating
Fund Based Facilities	LT	802.94	CRISIL A-/Positive	08-05-24	CRISIL BBB+/Stable / CRISIL A2		--	13-12-22	CRISIL BBB+/Negative	26-11-21	CRISIL BBB+/Positive / CRISIL A2	--
			--	03-01-24	CRISIL BBB+/Stable / CRISIL A2		--		--		--	--
Non-Fund Based Facilities	ST	1018.55	CRISIL A2+	08-05-24	CRISIL A2		--	13-12-22	CRISIL A2	26-11-21	CRISIL A2	--
			--	03-01-24	CRISIL A2		--		--		--	--

All amounts are in Rs.Cr.

Annexure - Details of Bank Lenders & Facilities

Facility	Amount (Rs.Crore)	Name of Lender	Rating
Bill Discounting ^{&}	15	YES Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Bill Discounting ^{&}	10	The Federal Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Cash Credit [%]	15	Canara Bank	CRISIL A-/Positive
Cash Credit [%]	37	YES Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Cash Credit [%]	25	Bandhan Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Cash Credit [%]	40	ICICI Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Cash Credit [%]	22	Axis Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Cash Credit [%]	40	HDFC Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Letter of Credit ^{<}	43	YES Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit ^{>}	25	Bandhan Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit ^{&&}	54	The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit ^{&&}	100	IndusInd Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit ^{<}	78	Axis Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit ^{<}	45	HDFC Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit ^{>}	65	ICICI Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit ^{>}	32	The Federal Bank Limited	CRISIL A2+
Letter of Credit ^{&&}	85	Canara Bank	CRISIL A2+
Non-Fund Based Limit ^{~~}	195.06	Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited	CRISIL A2+

Non-Fund Based Limit<<	42	Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited	CRISIL A2+
Non-Fund Based Limit<<	31.49	Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited	CRISIL A2+
Proposed Fund-Based Bank Limits	22	Not Applicable	CRISIL A-/Positive
Proposed Non Fund based limits	223	Not Applicable	CRISIL A2+
Term Loan	3.45	Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Term Loan	37.79	Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Term Loan	157.93	Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Term Loan	92.07	Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Term Loan	87.15	Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Term Loan	0.87	Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Term Loan	19.93	Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Term Loan	138.75	Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Working Capital Loan&&&	25	IndusInd Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Working Capital Loan^^^	8	The Federal Bank Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive
Working Capital Loan^^^	6	The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited	CRISIL A-/Positive

& - Pre acceptance limit

% - Interchangeable with Working Capital Demand Loan

< - Interchangeable with Standby Letter of Credit and Bank Guarantee

> - Interchangeable with Bank Guarantee

&& - Interchangeable with Letter of credit

~~ - Counter Guarantee in favor of Yes Bank for issuance of Performance bank guarantee

<< - Counter Guarantee in favor of ICICI Bank for issuance of Performance bank guarantee

&&& - Interchangeable with Working Capital Demand Loan and Packing credit in Foreign Currency

^^^ - Interchangeable with Cash Credit

Criteria Details

Links to related criteria

[CRISILs Approach to Financial Ratios](#)

[Rating criteria for manufacturing and service sector companies](#)

[Criteria for rating entities belonging to homogenous groups](#)

[CRISILs Criteria for rating short term debt](#)

[CRISILs Criteria for Consolidation](#)

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