

The Pakistan Credit Rating Agency Limited

Rating Report

Airlink Communication Limited - PPSTS-III - PKR 4.0bln - TBI

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Rating History							
Dissemination Date	Long Term Rating	Short Term Rating	Outlook	Action	Rating Watch		
19-Sep-2024	A+	A1	Stable	Preliminary	-		

Rating Rationale and Key Rating Drivers

Airlink Communication Limited ("Airlink" or "the Company") operates primarily in two business verticals: i) mobile phone distribution and retail, and ii) assembly of smartphones and related products in Pakistan. The Company's ratings reflect strong business fundamentals in both business verticals, further supported by its improving market position and partnerships with multiple leading global brands, which ensure a diversified earnings portfolio. As per the data published by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), during 7MCY24, 18.95mln mobile devices have been manufactured compared to 21.28mln devices manufactured during CY23 reflecting a substantial growth of ~53% on an annualized basis. According to management, Airlink holds approximately 22% market share in mobile phone distribution. During FY24, the Company achieved substantial consolidated revenue growth, reaching total sales of PKR 129,742 million, primarily driven by higher volumes alongside rising mobile device prices. Revenue from the assembly segment increased significantly due to Airlink's partnership with Xiaomi Pakistan (Pvt) Limited through its subsidiary, Select Technologies (Pvt) Limited, which focuses on assembling Xiaomi mobile phones in Pakistan. Moving forward, Airlink intends to enhance its focus on the assembly and distribution segments simultaneously. The financial risk profile demonstrates an improved working capital cycle, comfortable coverage ratios, and healthy cash flows. The company's growth requires additional working capital, which is being provided through a combination of short-term borrowings and internally generated cash flows, all while maintaining the integrity of the financial risk matrix. Going forward, the company has secured an exclusive partnership with Acer Gadget Inc. to assemble and introduce their product line comprising laptops, tablets, etc to the local market by leveraging Airlink's already established nationwide distribution network.

The Company's ratings depend on its ability to maintain its market position in a rapidly changing industry environment. As business grows, prudent financial discipline—especially regarding the working capital structure—is essential to uphold these ratings, a principle to which management is fully committed.

Disclosure				
Name of Rated Entity	Airlink Communication Limited - PPSTS-III - PKR 4.0bln - TBI			
Type of Relationship	Solicited			
Purpose of the Rating	Debt Instrument Rating			
Applicable Criteria	Methodology Debt Instrument Rating(Dec-23),Methodology Rating Modifiers(Apr-24),Methodology Corporate Rating(Jul-24),Methodology Correlation Between Long-term & Short-term Rating Scales(Jul-24)			
Related Research	Sector Study Mobile Phone and Allied Products(Dec-23)			
Rating Analysts	Sohail Ahmed Qureshi sohail.ahmed@pacra.com +92-42-35869504			



Mobile Phone and Allied Products

The Pakistan Credit Rating Agency Limited

Issuer Profile

therefore, considered adequate.

Profile Airlink Communication Limited ('Airlink' or 'the Company') is a public listed entity with a free float of ~25% shares as to date Jan'24. The Company got listed on PSX during September 2021. In 2010, Airlink was formed as a partnership firm for the import & distribution of IT products, particularly mobile phones, & related services. In 2014, a new private company was incorporated to take over the business of the partnership firm running as a family business. Following July 2018, the entire business transferred to the Company's books. Airlink converted its status to Public Unlisted in Apr'19. Later, the Company got listed on PSX during Sep'21. Airlink is principally involved in the distribution of mobile phones and allied products of the leading brands in the mobile industry; Samsung, Huawei, Techno, iPhone, Itel, Xiaomi, TCL, Realme, and Q-Mobile. The Company signed agreements with different globally renowned mobile phone brands for distribution services. Further, Airlink partnered with Xiaomi to manufacture and distribute Xiaomi mobile phones & accessories in Pakistan through its wholly-owned subsidiary "Select Technologies (Private) Limited."

Ownership The Company is owned by the sponsoring family; formerly by the brothers - Mr. Muazzam Hayat Piracha (Late) & Muzaffar Hayat Piracha (24.97%). After the death of Mr. Muazzam Hayat, his shares transferred to his wife, Ms. Saliha Basit (3.67%), and his four daughters (5.14% each). Mr. Shaukat Hayat Piracha, paternal uncle of the two owners, has lately transferred his stake to his son, Mr. Yasir Hayat Piracha, who now owns 24.23% shares in the Company. Other shareholders include Insurance Companies, banks, DFIs, NBFIs cumulatively hold (5.91%), foreign companies & others (10.58%), and General Public (8.07%). The ownership structure of the Company is considered stable as no major changes are expected in the near future. The prime stake is held by the CEO of Airlink and his family. Mr. Muzzaffar Hayat - the main sponsor, has been leading the Company since its

Governance The board comprises seven members including two nonexecutive directors (including the chairman), two executive directors (including the CEO), and three independent directors. Board member's business acumen is considered good as they have vast experience in the relevant industry. Mr. Aslam Hayat has extensive experience in the relevant field. He is the Chairman of the Board. The board has two sub-committees; Audit and HR & Remuneration Committee, enabling the Board to keep an oversight of the business more closely. An internal audit department is in place, reporting independently to the Audit Committee. M/s BDO Ebrahim & Co-Chartered Accountants are the external auditors of the Company, categorized as an 'A' rated firm by the SBP. They have expressed an unqualified opinion on the Company's financial statements for the period ended June 30th, 2023.

Management The Company has a well-defined organizational structure. Operational activities are properly segregated and managed through different departments. The HODs report to the CEO. Mr. Muzaffar Hayat Piracha, CEO of the Company, is an MBA and has been associated with the company since its inception. He is involved in all strategic and key decisions of the business. Mr. Amir Mehmood, a fellow Chartered Accountant, is the Group CFO and possesses over 2 decades of diversified experience. Furthermore, Mr. Nusrat Mehmood is the CFO of Airlink Communication Ltd. He is a Management Accountant with extensive experience of over 2 decades across multiple industries Six management committees are operating namely; i) Credit Committee, ii) Risk Management Committee, iii) Sale Control Committee, iv) Cash Management Committee, v) Operational Control Committee, and vi) Business Plan Committee, which help to ensure overall operational efficacy. The Company has installed SAP - an ERP solution as its information system, which provides adherence to a sound reporting system within the Company. MIS reports for senior management are generated frequently and are detailed. Many reports, including the following, are generated frequently of each business unit: i) region-wise business partner report including adjustments, ii) daily stock report for all warehouses, iii) product-wise report of region & corporate limits.

Business Risk Pakistan has been one of the fastest-growing cellular markets. The country's tele density increased from 6% in FY04 to a high of 80% as of FY24. The devaluation of currency against the USD during the preceding year and the rise in duty structure amplified the prices of imported phones, hence putting pressure on the demand for high-end range mobile phones. During CY23, the local production of mobile phones was recorded at 21.28mln units comprising 13mln 2G devices and 8.28mln smartphones while commercial imports were recorded at 1.58mln units. Moreover, during 7MCY24, the local industry produced 18.958mln units comprising 6.85mln 2G devices and 12.1mln smartphones while imports were recorded at 1mln units. Currently, there are 4 top distributor chains in the country (Airlink ranks number one on the list & owns approx. 22% of the market share) with other small distributors for lower volumes. Airlink is among the top 4 mobile phone distributors in the country. The company is working with the world's top brands of mobile phones. In 9MFY24, Xiaomi (54%), Techno (42%) and Samsung (4%) contributed highest to the company's distribution volume, followed by Apple, Realme, QMobile, Itel, Alcatel, and Huawei with a nominal contribution to the company's volumes during that period. In FY24, Airlink recorded a topline of PKR~129,742mln (FY23: 36,934mln) depicting an impressive growth of 251% on account of ease in import restrictions on CKDs of mobile phones resulting in improved volumes in the mobile phones assembling segment Moreover, the Company's diversity with the distribution of Samsung, Huawei, Tecno, Itel, Xiaomi, TCL/Alcatel, iPhone and now Realme & QMobile also augment the revenue stream to keep the business volumes intact and safeguard against any uncertain conditions in future.. A slight decline in the margins was noted during the period. In 9MFY24, the gross profit margin decreased to 8.1% from 9.6% in FY23, mainly as a result of the effect of higher pricing of the imported components/parts. However,

Financial Risk Average gross working capital days have significantly decreased in the recent period (FY24: 30 days, FY23: 94 days, FY22: 81 days) primarily attributable to robust credit management. This also decreased the average net working capital days of the Company when compared with last year (FY24: 18 days, FY23: 70 days, FY22: 77 days). Free cash flow from operations (FCFO) increased to PKR ~8,578mln in FY24 (FY23: PKR ~2,874mln, FY22: PKR ~3,231mln) on account of an increase in profitability before tax. Core operating coverages of the Company have also increased during the review period (FY24:2.4x, FY23: 1.3x, FY22: 2.3x). Debt payment capacity currently remains comfortable as reflected by the Debt payback ratio of 0.5s (FY23: 2.1x) The total debt of Airlink increased during 9MFY24. At end March-24, it clocked at PKR ~14,525mln (FY23: PKR ~8,302mln FY22: PKR ~8,021mln). The Company has a leveraged capital structure as reflected by the leverage ratio of ~52% as of March-24. (FY23: 40.4%, FY22: 40.8%, FY21: 53.3%). The debt book is dominated by short-term loans to fund the growing working capital needs. A cautious management approach is necessitated. Airlink's debt book increased to PKR 14,525mln at end March-24.

Instrument Rating Considerations

About The Instrument Airlink Communication Limited is set to issue Rated, Secured, Privately Placed, Short-Term Sukuk-III, marking a strategic financial move for the Company. The Sukuk carries a markup of 6MK+1.75% with a tenor of six months.

Relative Seniority/Subordination Of Instrument The claims of the Sukuk holders will rank superior to the claims of ordinary shareholders.

Credit Enhancement The underlying instrument will be secured by ranking charge over the current assets of the Company. The Issuer shall maintain and efficiently manage Debt Payment Account ("DPA") under lien of the Investment Agent whereby the payment equivalent to PKR 1,000 million shall be made starting from 45 days before the maturity date, and every fortnight thereafter, such that amount equivalent to full issue amount is available in the DPA five days before the maturitydate. The principal and profit would be made in bullet payment.



The Pakistan	Credit	Rating A	Agency	Limited

Air Link Communication Limited	Jun-24	Jun-23	Jun-22
Communication	12M	12M	12M
A BALANCE SHEET			
1 Non-Current Assets	8,571	6,186	6,172
2 Investments	4,202	3,484	1,010
3 Related Party Exposure	-	-	-
4 Current Assets a Inventories	27,745	18,964	14,479
a inveniories b Trade Receivables	8,109 3,527	7,175 2,714	5,334 3,753
5 Total Assets	40,518	28,635	21,660
6 Current Liabilities	8,604	7,796	1,725
a Trade Payables	3,899	4,715	47
7 Borrowings	16,419	8,302	8,021
8 Related Party Exposure	-	-	-
9 Non-Current Liabilities	426	312	258
10 Net Assets	15,069	12,225	11,656
11 Shareholders' Equity	15,069	12,225	11,656
B INCOME STATEMENT			
1 Sales	129,742	36,934	49,166
a Cost of Good Sold	(119,937)	(33,399)	(43,968)
2 Gross Profit	9,806	3,535	5,198
a Operating Expenses	(1,312)	(1,105)	(1,548)
3 Operating Profit	8,493	2,430	3,649
a Non Operating Income or (Expense)	83	266	132
4 Profit or (Loss) before Interest and Tax a Total Finance Cost	8,577	2,696	3,781 <i>(1,175)</i>
a Total Finance Cost b Taxation	(2,974) (977)	(1,828) 93	(1,076)
6 Net Income Or (Loss)	4,625	961	1,530
o Net income of (2008)	7,023	701	1,330
C CASH FLOW STATEMENT			
a Free Cash Flows from Operations (FCFO)	8,578	2,874	3,231
b Net Cash from Operating Activities before Working Capital Changes	6,217	2,546	2,567
c Changes in Working Capital	(9,041)	51	(970)
1 Net Cash provided by Operating Activities	(2,824)	2,597	1,597
2 Net Cash (Used in) or Available From Investing Activities	(2,711)	(2,793)	(5,947)
3 Net Cash (Used in) or Available From Financing Activities	6,803	115	4,620
4 Net Cash generated or (Used) during the period	1,267	(81)	269
D DATE ANALYZIO			
D RATIO ANALYSIS 1 Performance			
a Sales Growth (for the period)	251.3%	-24.9%	3.8%
b Gross Profit Margin	7.6%	9.6%	10.6%
c Net Profit Margin	3.6%	2.6%	3.1%
d Cash Conversion Efficiency (FCFO adjusted for Working Capital/Sales)	-0.4%	7.9%	4.6%
e Return on Equity [Net Profit Margin * Asset Turnover * (Total Assets/Sh		8.0%	16.9%
2 Working Capital Management	33.770	0.070	10.570
a Gross Working Capital (Average Days)	30	94	81
b Net Working Capital (Average Days)	18	70	77
c Current Ratio (Current Assets / Current Liabilities)	3.2	2.4	8.4
3 Coverages			
a EBITDA / Finance Cost	3.3	2.1	4.3
b FCFO / Finance Cost+CMLTB+Excess STB	2.4	1.3	2.3
c Debt Payback (Total Borrowings+Excess STB) / (FCFO-Finance Cost)	0.5	2.1	1.0
4 Capital Structure			
a Total Borrowings / (Total Borrowings+Shareholders' Equity)	52.1%	40.4%	40.8%
b Interest or Markup Payable (Days)	70.1	48.8	89.5
c Entity Average Borrowing Rate	21.3%	18.1%	12.7%



Corporate Rating Criteria

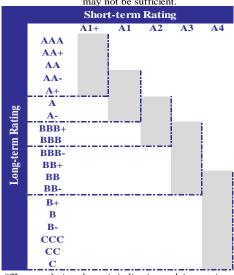
Scale

Credit Rating

Credit rating reflects forward-looking opinion on credit worthiness of underlying entity or instrument; more specifically it covers relative ability to honor financial obligations. The primary factor being captured on the rating scale is relative likelihood of default.

	Long-term Rating
Scale	Definition
AAA	Highest credit quality. Lowest expectation of credit risk. Indicate exceptionally strong capacity for timely payment of financial commitments
AA+	
AA	Very high credit quality. Very low expectation of credit risk. Indicate very strong capacity for timely payment of financial commitments. This capacity is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.
AA-	
A +	
A	High credit quality. Low expectation of credit risk. The capacity for timely payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be vulnerable to changes in circumstances or in economic conditions.
<u>A-</u>	
BBB+	
BBB	Good credit quality. Currently a low expectation of credit risk. The capacity for timely payment of financial commitments is considered adequate, but adverse changes in circumstances and in economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.
BBB-	
BB+	Moderate risk. Possibility of credit risk developing. There is a possibility of credit risk
ВВ	developing, particularly as a result of adverse economic or business changes over time; however, business or financial alternatives may be available to allow financial commitments to be met.
BB-	
\mathbf{B} +	
В	High credit risk. A limited margin of safety remains against credit risk. Financial commitments are currently being met; however, capacity for continued payment is contingent upon a sustained, favorable business and economic environment.
B-	
CCC	Very high credit risk. Substantial credit risk "CCC" Default is a real possibility.
CC	Capacity for meeting financial commitments is solely reliant upon sustained, favorable business or economic developments. "CC" Rating indicates that default of some kind appears probable. "C" Ratings signal imminent default.
C	appears probable. C. Ratings signal infinitient default.
D	Obligations are currently in default.

Short-term Rating Scale **Definition** The highest capacity for timely repayment. A1+ A strong capacity for timely **A1** repayment. A satisfactory capacity for timely repayment. This may be susceptible to **A2** adverse changes in business. economic, or financial conditions An adequate capacity for timely repayment. **A3** Such capacity is susceptible to adverse changes in business, economic, or financial The capacity for timely repayment is more susceptible to adverse changes in business, economic, or financial conditions. Liquidity may not be sufficient.



*The correlation shown is indicative and, in certain cases, may not hold.

Outlook (Stable, Positive, Negative, Developing) Indicates the potential and direction of a rating over the intermediate term in response to trends in economic and/or fundamental business/financial conditions. It is not necessarily a precursor to a rating change. 'Stable' outlook means a rating is not likely to change. 'Positive' means it may be raised. 'Negative' means it may be lowered. Where the trends have conflicting elements, the outlook may be described as 'Developing'.

Rating Watch Alerts to the possibility of a rating change subsequent to, or, in anticipation of some material identifiable event with indeterminable rating implications. But it does not mean that a rating change is inevitable. A watch should be resolved within foreseeable future, but may continue if underlying circumstances are not settled. Rating watch may accompany rating outlook of the respective opinion.

Suspension It is not possible to update an opinion due to lack of requisite information. Opinion should be resumed in foreseeable future. However, if this does not happen within six (6) months, the rating should be considered withdrawn.

Withdrawn A rating is withdrawn on a) termination of rating mandate, b) the debt instrument is redeemed, c) the rating remains suspended for six months, d) the entity/issuer defaults., or/and e) PACRA finds it impractical to surveill the opinion due to lack of requisite information.

Harmonization A change in rating due to revision in applicable methodology or underlying scale.

Surveillance. Surveillance on a publicly disseminated rating opinion is carried out on an ongoing basis till it is formally suspended or withdrawn. A comprehensive surveillance of rating opinion is carried out at least once every six months. However, a rating opinion may be reviewed in the intervening period if it is necessitated by any material happening.

Note. This scale is applicable to the following methodology(s):

- a) Broker Entity Rating
- b) Corporate Rating
- c) Debt Instrument Ratingd) Financial Institution Rating
- e) Holding Company Rating
- f) Independent Power Producer Rating
- g) Microfinance Institution Rating
- h) Non-Banking Finance Companies Rating

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Regulatory and Supplementary Disclosure

(Credit Rating Companies Regulations, 2016)

Rating Team Statements

(1) Rating is just an opinion about the creditworthiness of the entity and does not constitute recommendation to buy, hold or sell any security of the entity rated or to buy, hold or sell the security rated, as the case may be | Chapter III; 14-3-(x)

2) Conflict of Interest

- i. The Rating Team or any of their family members have no interest in this rating | Chapter III; 12-2-(j)
- ii. PACRA, the analysts involved in the rating process and members of its rating committee, and their family members, do not have any conflict of interest relating to the rating done by them | Chapter III; 12-2-(e) & (k)
- iii. The analyst is not a substantial shareholder of the customer being rated by PACRA [Annexure F; d-(ii)] Explanation: for the purpose of above clause, the term "family members" shall include only those family members who are dependent on the analyst and members of the rating committee

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- (4) PACRA does not disclose or discuss with outside parties or make improper use of the non-public information which has come to its knowledge during business relationship with the customer | Chapter III; 10-7-(d)
- (5) PACRA does not make proposals or recommendations regarding the activities of rated entities that could impact a credit rating of entity subject to rating | Chapter III; 10-7-(k)

Conduct of Business

- (6) PACRA fulfills its obligations in a fair, efficient, transparent and ethical manner and renders high standards of services in performing its functions and obligations; | Chapter III; 11-A-(a)
- (7) PACRA uses due care in preparation of this Rating Report. Our information has been obtained from sources we consider to be reliable but its accuracy or completeness is not guaranteed. PACRA does not, in every instance, independently verifies or validates information received in the rating process or in preparing this Rating Report | Clause 11-(A)(p).
- (8) PACRA prohibits its employees and analysts from soliciting money, gifts or favors from anyone with whom PACRA conducts business | Chapter III; 11-A-(q)
- (9) PACRA ensures before commencement of the rating process that an analyst or employee has not had a recent employment or other significant business or personal relationship with the rated entity that may cause or may be perceived as causing a conflict of interest; | Chapter III; 11-A-(r) (10) PACRA maintains principal of integrity in seeking rating business | Chapter III; 11-A-(u)
- (11) PACRA promptly investigates, in the event of a misconduct or a breach of the policies, procedures and controls, and takes appropriate steps to rectify any weaknesses to prevent any recurrence along with suitable punitive action against the responsible employee(s) | Chapter III; 11-B-(m)

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- (12) PACRA receives compensation from the entity being rated or any third party for the rating services it offers. The receipt of this compensation has no influence on PACRA's opinions or other analytical processes. In all instances, PACRA is committed to preserving the objectivity, integrity and independence of its ratings. Our relationship is governed by two distinct mandates i) rating mandate signed with the entity being rated or issuer of the debt instrument, and fee mandate signed with the payer, which can be different from the entity
- (13) PACRA does not provide consultancy/advisory services or other services to any of its customers or to any of its customers' associated companies and associated undertakings that is being rated or has been rated by it during the preceding three years unless it has adequate mechanism in place ensuring that provision of such services does not lead to a conflict of interest situation with its rating activities; | Chapter III; 12-2-(d)
- (14) PACRA discloses that no shareholder directly or indirectly holding 10% or more of the share capital of PACRA also holds directly or indirectly 10% or more of the share capital of the entity which is subject to rating or the entity which issued the instrument subject to rating by PACRA; | Reference Chapter III; 12-2-(f)
- (15) PACRA ensures that the rating assigned to an entity or instrument is not be affected by the existence of a business relationship between PACRA and the entity or any other party, or the non-existence of such a relationship | Chapter III; 12-2-(i)
- (16) PACRA ensures that the analysts or any of their family members shall not buy or sell or engage in any transaction in any security which falls in the analyst's area of primary analytical responsibility. This clause shall, however, not be applicable on investment in securities through collective investment schemes. | Chapter III; 12-2-(l)
- (17) PACRA has established policies and procedure governing investments and trading in securities by its employees and for monitoring the same to prevent insider trading, market manipulation or any other market abuse | Chapter III; 11-B-(g)

Monitoring and review

- (18) PACRA monitors all the outstanding ratings continuously and any potential change therein due to any event associated with the issuer, the security arrangement, the industry etc., is disseminated to the market, immediately and in effective manner, after appropriate consultation with the entity/issuer; | Chapter III | 17-(a)
- (19) PACRA reviews all the outstanding ratings periodically, on annual basis; Provided that public dissemination of annual review and, in an instance of change in rating will be made; | Chapter III | 17-(b)
- (20) PACRA initiates immediate review of the outstanding rating upon becoming aware of any information that may reasonably be expected to result in downgrading of the rating; | Chapter III | 17-(c)
- (21) PACRA engages with the issuer and the debt securities trustee, to remain updated on all information pertaining to the rating of the entity/instrument; Chapter III | 17-(d)

Probability of Default

(22) PACRA's Rating Scale reflects the expectation of credit risk. The highest rating has the lowest relative likelihood of default (i.e., probability). PACRA's transition studies capture the historical performance behavior of a specific rating notch. Transition behavior of the assigned rating can be obtained from PACRA's Transition Study available at our website. (www.pacra.com). However, actual transition of rating may not follow the pattern observed in the past; | Chapter III | 14-3(f)(vii)

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Regulatory and Supplementary Disclosure

Nature of Instrument	Instrument Size of Issue (PKR) Tenor		Security	Book Value of Assets (PKR mln)	Nature of Assets	Trustee	
Rated, Secured, Privately Placed Short Term Sukuk ("PPSTS" or the "Issue")	t Up to PKR 4,000 Million Up to 6 months from the date of Drawdown tit dib		The underlying instrument will be secured by ranking charge over the Current Assets of the company. The Issuer shall maintain and efficiently manage Debt Payment Account ("DPA") under the lien of the Investment Agent whereby the payment equivalent to PKR 1,000 million shall be made starting from 45 days before the maturity date, and every fortnight thereafter, such that the amount equivalent to the full issue amount is available in DPA 05 days before the maturity date.	-	Current Assets	Pak Oman Investment Company Limited	
Name of Issuer	Airlink Communication Ltd						
Issue Date	TBI						
Maturity	6-Months from Issue Date						
Profit Rate	6MK+1.75%						

Airlink Pakistan Limited PPSukuk	Repayment Schedule	Estimated
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Sr.	Due Date Principal/markup	Opening Principal	6M Kibor	Markup/Profit Rate (6MK + 1.75%)	Markup/Profit Payment	Principal Payment	Total	Principal Outstanding
		PKR				PKR		
Tentative Issue Date	20-Sep-24	4,000,000,000				-	-	4,000,000,000
1	22-Mar-25	4,000,000,000	18.50%	20.25%	406,109,589	4,000,000,000	4,406,109,589	-
					406,109,589	4,000,000,000	4,406,109,589	