# **BUY** (Maintained)

CMP: INR 1,100 Target Price: INR 1,495 🔺 36%

#### 12 May 2024

# **TCI Express**

## Logistics

## Subdued Q4 performance; co expects 10-12% revenue growth in FY25

TCI Express' (TCIE) Q4FY24 EBITDA undershot our estimates by 12.1%, mainly on account of underutilised capacity due to volume decline. Key points: 1) Volume declined 1.9% YoY on subdued macro environment, 2) EBITDA margin declined to 14.1% (14.6% Q3FY24), lowest since Q2FY21, 3) 25 new branches were added in FY24 (10 branches in Q4FY24), 4) new services contributed ~17.5-18% of revenue, 5) company incurred capex of INR 460mn in FY24, 6) Board has recommended a final dividend of INR 2/share, and 6) management expects 10-12% revenue growth with 50-100bps improvement in the margin in FY25. TCIE is our top pick in the logistics space and we maintain **BUY** on the stock with TP of INR 1,495 at an unchanged 34x FY26E EPS.

## EBITDA misses estimates

TCIE's Q4FY24 performance was below estimates, mainly due to subdued industry demand, decline in volumes which led to underutilisation of capacity. Key points: 1) EBITDA of INR 448mn (down 17.2% YoY) was mainly because of decline in volumes YoY, lower realisation/te and low gross margin/te; 2) truck utilisation was 83.5%, however, current utilisation declined to ~83%; 3) EBITDA margin declined to 14.1%, lowest since Q2FY21 as lower utilisation led to high unabsorbed costs; 4) incurred capex of INR 460mn in FY24; 5) added 25 new branches in FY24, 6) new services contributed ~17.5-18% of revenue, 7) customer mix for the quarter stood at ~51% for non-SMEs and 49% for SMEs. Going forward, we believe volume growth in H1FY25 is likely to remain muted due to election led demand slowdown.

## Key positives: Sound balance sheet and focus on new services

In Q4FY24 earnings concall, the management has mentioned: i) 10-12% revenue growth for FY25, ii) initiating an annual price hike of 1-2% and iii) margin improvement of 100bps. However, we believe, price hikes are difficult due to subdued demand. Yet, we believe TCIE's sound balance sheet, returns in excess of 20% and cash conversion of 50%, may aid the company in these turbulent times. Besides, management is focused on expanding its footprint in new services and efforts are underway to increase it to ~20% by FY25, which is likely to be earning accretive.

# **Financial Summary**

Y/E March (INR mn)	FY23A	FY24A	FY25E	FY26E
Net Revenue	12,410	12,538	14,005	15,560
EBITDA	1,945	1,872	2,144	2,431
EBITDA Margin (%)	15.7	14.9	15.3	15.6
Net Profit	1,393	1,317	1,483	1,670
EPS (INR)	36.4	34.3	38.7	43.6
EPS % Chg YoY	8.6	(5.6)	12.6	12.6
P/E (x)	30.2	32.0	28.4	25.3
EV/EBITDA (x)	21.4	21.9	19.0	16.6
RoCE (%)	25.9	20.8	20.3	19.6
RoE (%)	26.7	21.5	21.0	20.2

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**CICI** Securities

### India | Equity Research | Q4FY24 results review

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#### Market Data

Market Cap (INR)	42bn
Market Cap (USD)	505mn
Bloomberg Code	TCIEXP IN
Reuters Code	TCIE BO
52-week Range (INR)	1,701/998
Free Float (%)	30.0
ADTV-3M (mn) (USD)	1.0

Price Performance (%)	3m	6m	12m
Absolute	(16.8)	(17.9)	(26.9)
<b>Relative to Sensex</b>	(18.3)	(29.8)	(44.1)

#### **Previous Reports**

13-02-2024: <u>Q3FY24 results review</u> 19-10-2023: Q2FY24 results review



# Outlook: Performance is likely to improve in FY25

We believe TCIE is best placed among peers in the times of lacklustre demand owing to its strong balance sheet, focus on other revenue streams and possibility of further cost efficiencies from Pune automatic sorting centre. Further, we believe volume growth in H1FY25 is likely to remain muted due to election led demand slowdown; however, the management has mentioned ~10-12% revenue growth for FY25, along with margin improvement of 100bps due to annual price hike and cost efficiencies measures undertaken by the company. TCIE is our top pick in logistics space and we maintain **BUY** on the stock with TP of INR 1,495 at an unchanged 34x FY26E EPS.

# Key risks

**Upside risks:** 1) Increased tonnage with improvement in domestic manufacturing; and 2) retention of cost efficiencies obtained in FY21 as volume returns.

**Downside risks:** 1) Increased rail share leading to a shift in business model for express players like TCIE; 2) more omni-channel developments requiring higher technology investments, and 3) a business disruption favouring startups in the space.

# Q4FY24 concall takeaways

- Despite the challenges in operational environment, the company demonstrated resilience and adaptability in navigating the market dynamics. It maintained stable gross margin and consistent capacity utilisation led by: i) Strong customer base; ii) robust network; and iii) operational efficiency.
- In Q4FY24, volume was ~2.58kte and for FY24 it was 1mnte.
- Management expects 10-12% topline growth in FY25 with profitability margin being maintained but targets to increase it by 100bps.
- Revenue segmentation: ~97% from B2B customers and rest from B2C customers.
- Capacity utilisation for Q4 was ~83.5% and for FY24 it was ~84%. Going forward, once volumes return, capacity utilisation will be in the range of 85-86% in the near term. In the longer term, it will have a range of 88-89%. Current utilisation level of trucks is ~83%.
- Capex breakup: ~INR 250mn in machinery, which is machineries and other related construction and ~INR 150mn in expansion of branch and other related construction and ~INR 50mn in technology.
- Top five sectors contribute 55% of volume which includes pharma, electronics engineering, lifestyle products and auto, remaining are with other sectors. Auto sector had reported significant growth in FY24 with lowest growth in lifestyle products.
- The company will be initiating annual price hike of 1-2%.
- Customer mix for Q4 :  ${\sim}51\%$  for non-SMEs and 49% for SMEs, while for FY24, customer mix had been 50:50.
- The Board of Directors has recommended a final dividend of INR 2/share, this brings the total dividend for FY24 to INR 8/share.
- Rail Express segment has grown significantly in terms of customers. Its customer base has grown considerably with over 4,500 customers and over 125 routes to cater to the growing demand.



- A big chunk of air cargo business has moved towards rail cargo segment, as observed by the company. It targets to convert air business into rail business with one-third cost. Margins in rail and air are slightly higher than surface express.
- Successful implementation of automation in Pune sorting centre, which is a 1,40,000 sqft facility now equipped with AI enabled automated cross belt sorter enhancing operational efficiency, streamlining sorting processes and minimising errors.
- Focus remains on investing in technology and automation to boost operational efficiency and deliver exceptional customer service.
- In FY24, the company incurred total capex of INR 460mn towards: i) Expanding branch network, ii) advancing automation initiatives; and iii) fortifying IT infrastructure.
- Established 25 new branches, supporting its multimodal express business and enhancing market reach and customer accessibility.
- Cold chain express will focus only on pharma and not on other fields like food and other related products so that it keeps the same business philosophy of being asset light and hire the assets on outsource model.
- According to the management, manufacturing has been growing but consumption is not due to the pricing increase. Except auto, no other sector is growing. After Covid-19, pharma has been reporting flat growth.
- According to industry numbers (9MFY24), it has been an industry-wise phenomenon with no growth. On pricing, this industry is really not price hungry as sometimes freight charges are less than ~1% of the product.
- Railways contributed ~17-18% of total freight revenue in FY24; it had been hovering around the same levels in FY23 as well.
- TCIE's strategy is to grow at 2x of GDP, and on margin side once volume is back, it targets to further improve by 50-100bps.
- Even at low volume, TCI has maintained gross margin of ~32% over FY24.
- The management expects engineering goods, pharma, and auto to continue growing, but is not so optimistic on lifestyle products/ textile products.
- After the automation of two sorting centres, the company has a pipeline to automate sorting centres in Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Mumbai.
- The company is focusing on e-commerce side of the market in B2B where goods are sent to e-commerce players.

# Exhibit 1: TCI Express Q4FY24 performance review

(INR mn)	Q4FY24	Q4FY23	Chg. YoY (%)	Q3FY24	Chg. QoQ (%)	FY24	FY23	Chg. YoY (%)
Net income from operations	3,171	3,263	(2.8)	3,119	1.7	12,538	12,410	1.0
Total income from operations	3,171	3,263	(2.8)	3,119	1.7	12,538	12,410	1.0
Operating expenses	2,170	2,192	(1.0)	2,143	1.3	8,586	8,497	1.0
Gross Margin	1,001	1,071	(6.5)	976	2.5	3,953	3,913	1.0
Gross Margin (%)	31.6	32.8		31.3		31.5	31.5	
Employee wages	336	314	7.0	336	0.0	1,339	1,243	7.7
Other expenses	217	216	0.6	185	17.4	741	725	2.2
Total expenses	2,723	2,721	0.1	2,663	2.2	10,666	10,465	1.9
EBITDA	448	541	(17.2)	456	(1.6)	1,872	1,945	(3.7)
EBITDA Margin (%)	14.1	16.6		14.6		14.9	15.7	
Depreciation	49	42	15.7	48	1.9	190	153	23.8
Other Income	19	17	15.6	20	(2.0)	72	72	(0.3)
Finance Cost	4	7	(45.9)	3	21.2	15	18	(18.8)
PBT	415	509	(18.4)	424	(2.2)	1,740	1,845	(5.7)
Tax	99	124	(20.1)	103		423	453	(6.6)
PAT	316	385	(17.8)	322	(1.9)	1,317	1,393	(5.4)

Source: I-Sec research, Company data

# Exhibit 2: TCI Express operational review

	Q4FY24	Q4FY23	Chg. YoY (%)	Q3FY24	Chg. QoQ (%)
Volumes (mnte)	0.258	0.263	(1.9)	0.250	3.2
Realisation/te growth (%)	(0.9)	(0.6)		0.4	
Tonnage growth (%)	(1.9)	10.0		(1.2)	
Realisation/te (INR)	12,291	12,405	(0.9)	12,474	(1.5)
Gross Margin/te (INR)	3,879	4,071	(4.7)	3,904	(0.6)
EBITDA/te (INR)	1,738	2,059	(15.6)	1,823	(4.7)

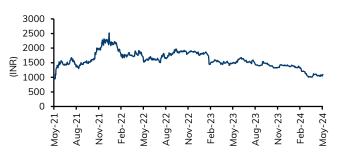
Source: Company data, I-Sec research

### **Exhibit 3: Shareholding pattern**

%	Sep'23	Dec'23	Mar'24
Promoters	69.6	69.6	69.6
Institutional investors	11.9	11.3	11.3
MFs and others	8.0	7.6	8.3
Fls/Banks	0.7	-	-
Insurance	0.1	0.1	0.1
FIIs	3.0	3.6	2.9
Others	18.5	19.1	19.1

Source: Bloomberg

#### **Exhibit 4: Price chart**



*PICICI* Securities

Source: Bloomberg



# **Financial Summary**

### Exhibit 5: Profit & Loss

#### (INR mn, year ending March)

	FY23A	FY24A	FY25E	FY26E
Net Sales	12,410	12,538	14,005	15,560
Operating Expenses	1,968	2,080	2,267	2,470
EBITDA	1,945	1,872	2,144	2,431
EBITDA Margin (%)	15.7	14.9	15.3	15.6
Depreciation & Amortization	153	190	222	259
EBIT	1,792	1,683	1,923	2,173
Interest expenditure	18	15	15	15
Other Non-operating Income	72	72	75	75
Recurring PBT	1,845	1,740	1,983	2,233
Profit / (Loss) from Associates	-	-	-	-
Less: Taxes	453	423	500	563
PAT	1,393	1,317	1,483	1,670
Less: Minority Interest	-	-	-	-
Extraordinaries (Net)	-	-	-	-
Net Income (Reported) Net Income (Adjusted)	1,393 1,393	1,317 1,317	1,483 1,483	1,670 1,670

Source Company data, I-Sec research

# Exhibit 6: Balance sheet

### (INR mn, year ending March)

	FY23A	FY24A	FY25E	FY26E
Total Current Assets	2,666	2,921	3,366	4,095
of which cash & cash eqv.	164	204	512	969
Total Current Liabilities & Provisions	1,274	1,300	1,348	1,455
Net Current Assets	1,392	1,621	2,019	2,640
Investments	321	900	900	900
Net Fixed Assets	3,439	4,185	4,964	5,707
ROU Assets	-	-	-	-
Capital Work-in-Progress	611	161	161	161
Total Intangible Assets	30	46	46	46
Other assets	282	292	292	292
Deferred Tax Assets	-	-	-	-
Total Assets	6,076	7,205	8,381	9,745
Liabilities				
Borrowings	7	30	30	30
Deferred Tax Liability	105	135	135	135
provisions	-	-	-	-
other Liabilities	-	-	-	-
Equity Share Capital	77	77	77	77
Reserves & Surplus	5,887	6,963	8,140	9,504
Total Net Worth	5,964	7,040	8,217	9,581
Minority Interest	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	6,076	7,205	8,381	9,745

Source Company data, I-Sec research

# Exhibit 7: Quarterly trend

#### (INR mn, year ending March)

	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24
Net Sales	3,049	3,200	3,119	3,171
% growth (YOY)	5.0	3.3	(0.8)	(2.8)
EBITDA	464	505	456	448
Margin %	15.2	15.8	14.6	14.1
Other Income	15	18	20	19
Extraordinaries	-	-	-	-
Adjusted Net Profit	323	356	322	316

Source Company data, I-Sec research

### **Exhibit 8: Cashflow statement**

#### (INR mn, year ending March)

	FY23A	FY24A	FY25E	FY26E
Operating Cashflow	1,468	1,361	1,619	1,767
Working Capital Changes	(107)	(174)	(89)	(165)
Capital Commitments	(1,063)	(460)	(1,001)	(1,001)
Free Cashflow	406	900	618	766
Other investing cashflow	409	(590)	-	-
Cashflow from Investing Activities	(653)	(1,050)	(1,001)	(1,001)
Issue of Share Capital	(509)	22	-	-
Interest Cost	(18)	(15)	(3)	(3)
Inc (Dec) in Borrowings	(3)	22	-	-
Dividend paid	(308)	(307)	(306)	(306)
Others	-	-	-	-
Cash flow from Financing Activities	(837)	(278)	(309)	(309)
Chg. in Cash & Bank balance	(23)	33	309	456
Closing cash & balance	157	171	512	969

Source Company data, I-Sec research

# Exhibit 9: Key ratios

(Year ending March)

(				
	FY23A	FY24A	FY25E	FY26E
Per Share Data (INR)				
Reported EPS	36.4	34.3	38.7	43.6
Adjusted EPS (Diluted)	36.4	34.3	38.7	43.6
Cash EPS	40.4	39.3	44.5	50.3
Dividend per share (DPS)	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0
Book Value per share (BV)	155.7	183.6	214.3	249.8
Dividend Payout (%)	22.0	23.3	20.7	18.3
Growth (%)				
Net Sales	14.8	1.0	11.7	11.1
EBITDA	11.3	(3.7)	14.5	13.4
EPS (INR)	8.6	(5.6)	12.6	12.6
Valuation Ratios (x)				
P/E	30.2	32.0	28.4	25.3
P/CEPS	27.3	28.0	24.7	21.9
P/BV	7.1	6.0	5.1	4.4
EV / EBITDA	21.4	21.9	19.0	16.6
Dividend Yield (%)	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Operating Ratios				
Gross Profit Margins (%)	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5
EBITDA Margins (%)	15.7	14.9	15.3	15.6
Effective Tax Rate (%)	24.5	24.3	25.2	25.2
Net Profit Margins (%)	11.2	10.5	10.6	10.7
Net Debt / Equity (x)	(0.1)	(0.2)	(0.2)	(0.2)
Net Debt / EBITDA (x)	(0.2)	(0.6)	(0.6)	(0.8)
Total Asset Turnover (x)	2.3	2.0	1.9	1.8
Inventory Turnover Days	-	-	-	-
Receivables Days	73	71	69	71
Payables Days	31	28	27	28
Profitability Ratios				
RoE (%)	26.7	21.5	21.0	20.2
RoCE (%)	25.9	20.8	20.3	19.6
RoIC (%)	30.5	24.2	23.6	23.7
Source Company data   Sec record				

Source Company data, I-Sec research



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