INDIA'S BEST B SCHOOLS

Steady Riser

STILL TO HIT HIS MID-40s, PARANJPE rocked to fame as the youngest-ever CEO of India's largest FMCG company when he took over the reins of Hindustan Unilever this April. His relative youth hides the fact that he has clocked up more than two decades in the company to reach the peak.

Route to the Top: Paranjpe has worked his way up the rungs of HUL, earlier Hindustan Lever, from a management trainee to the head of HUL's different divisions. He was also part of Project Millennium, an ambitious plan to identify and diversify into newly emerging consumer goods categories in the new millennium. A stint with Unilever in London saw him involved closely in a review of the group's structure. Paranjpe also did a stint as an understudy to the Unilever Chairman in London, a precursor to his eventual takeover as CEO and MD of HUL this year. In between—since his return from London and his eventual crowning—Paranjpe dabbled as profit centre head for HUL's home and personal care division, before being inducted into the company's management committee and later, to its board of directors. He takes over at a time when the economy is in a slowdown mode, which means his key challenge will be to put HUL back on the growth track that it enjoyed till a few years ago.

HUL's Paranjpe: Unleashing growth

Nitin Paranjpe, 44

DESIGNATION & COMPANY: CEO and Managing Director, HUL

EDUCATION: BE (Mechanical) from Engineering College, Pune in 1985; MBA in marketing from JBIMS in 1987

CAREER TRACK: Management Trainee, HLL, 1987; Branch Manager, Chennai, HLL, 1996; Member, Millennium Team, HLL, 1999; Executive Assistant to Unilever Chairman, London, 2000; Category Head, Fabric Wash & Regional Head (Asia), Laundry & Household Cleaning Brands, 2002; Vice President, Home Care, India, HLL, 2004; Executive Director, Home & Personal Care, HUL, 2006; CEO and Managing Director, HUL, 2008