

On a fast track

Having worked his way up the ranks, today Paranjpe looks forward to his position as CEO, HUL

Nitin Paranjpe might be ham-fisted when it comes to playing the Casio, but the newly appointed CEO of Hindustan Unilever, has never let that prevent him from keeping at it. After two years of conscientiously striving to learn the art, he can safely classify himself as an 'enthusiastic player' at best. "Enthusiastic, not accomplished," he emphasises. His tryst with HUL, however, has followed quite a different trajectory. After toiling through the ranks, Paranjpe has

big responsibility," he reminisces. But with strong support from the board, Paranjpe emerged victorious, and has since been on the fast track to growth.

Lever's talent management programme, which identifies employees with potential and provides them with opportunities to rise, shortlisted Paranjpe as a potential CEO a few years ago. Since then, Paranjpe was selected as a member on the high profile Project Millennium, which assessed future growth opportunities for the

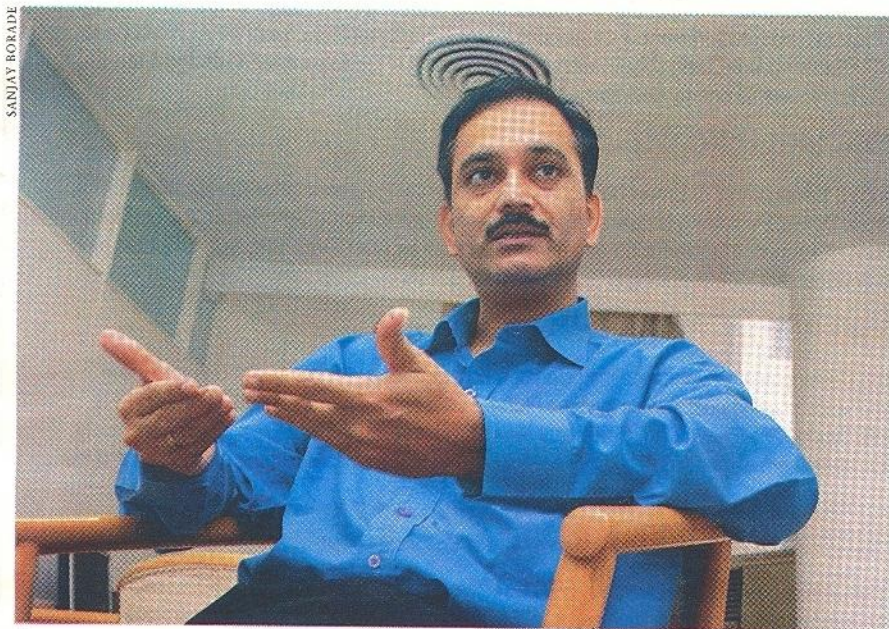
by my predecessors and taking this company to greater heights," he says. According to industry insiders, his greatest strength lies in his stability. He's young, understands the processes having spent 20 years in the company and shares a good rapport with the team. "Maintaining internal team morale, especially in difficult times is important," stresses Paranjpe.

Much of his steadfastness, Paranjpe picked up while pursuing sports. As a young boy, he played table tennis at the state level. As he grew older, table tennis gave way to squash. Then the Mumbai marathon came along, inspiring him to train and run the half marathon. But more than a learning ground for teamwork and corporate values, sports is Paranjpe's timeout. "I need some time for myself everyday. It helps me switch off from work-related thoughts." Even in his crazy, 17 hour day, he makes it a point to squeeze in a quick game of squash or a 20-30 minute jog every morning.

Off the courts and on the job, Paranjpe is just as diligent. He is known amongst his colleagues to have a flair for business. "He knows how to make money," says an old HUL hand. "He's good at numbers, knows his business and is a quick learner." However, an industry source points out, he isn't as adept at marketing. "He doesn't have the flair for it," says the source. As head of one of the fastest growing economies in Unilever's portfolio, Paranjpe is going to need it all.

The erstwhile CEO of HUL, Douglas Baillie, who was posted in India for two years to set the company on track, has been appointed to the Unilever executive team as president of western Europe. Harish Manwani, who was president of Asia and Africa, has been given the additional responsibility of overseeing central and eastern Europe as well and M.S. Vindi Banga, who was overseeing the foods division, has been given the added charge of home and personalcare.

With HUL A-listers climbing Unilever's ranks, Paranjpe has a lot to look forward to. If he continues to persevere like he has done so far, he's bound to be classified as both enthusiastic and accomplished.



SANJAY BORADE

Paranjpe: new man at the helm

finally cleared the decks to become the top player at HUL.

According to Ashok Ganguly, former chairman of HUL, it was apparent that Paranjpe was going to be a star. "He's bright, polite, cool under crises and a great performer," says Ganguly. Paranjpe began his career at HUL as a management trainee in 1987, and has worked in sales, brand management and executive positions. The most trying period in his career was as a branch manager in Chennai and there was a trade boycott in Kerala. "I was fairly young at the time and I had this

company and was later even given the opportunity to assist the then Unilever chairman N.W.A. FitzGerald in working on fundamental organisational changes at Unilever. "I got to see how decisions are taken at close quarters," says Paranjpe. Experience he's going to need in the executive's chair.

At the top

AS CEO, his mandate is to continue the job Doug Baillie, the erstwhile CEO of HUL, was doing. "I look forward to building on the wonderful job done