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After over three decades, HUL set to launch new detergent brand

Hindustan Unilever, India's largest packaged goods firm by sales, is set to roll out detergent brand Love & Care, a new India-focused product, said a top executive at the company. **See Page 5**

HUL eyes premium splash with Love & Care detergent

Launch is part of HUL's ongoing 'premiumization' strategy in the laundry category

Bidya Sapam
bidya.s@livemint.com
MUMBAI

The last time Hindustan Unilever (HUL) launched a new detergent was 32 years ago, when its market-leading brand Surf was unseated by low-cost rival Nirma. Now it's ready with another, this time in the premium segment.

HUL, India's largest packaged goods firm by sales, is set to roll out detergent brand 'Love & Care', a new India-focused product, a top company executive said. It will be launched across top 30 cities in India this week. The new brand is created for washing premium fabrics like silk, fine cottons and chiffon among others, and would be positioned in the premium category, Priya Nair, executive director, HUL said.

The new launch is also part of the company's ongoing 'premiumization' strategy in the laundry category that already has brands such as Wheel, Surf, Sunlight, Rin and Comfort. HUL's last new detergent product was Wheel to take on Nirma.

"We have delivered both volume-led and profitable growth (detergent business). We are well-placed in the country with the kind of portfolio we have. Therefore, our focus now is how do we create a new segment that caters to consumer needs. The launch of Love & Care expert fabric care is one part of the strategy to continue to drive premium brands," Nair said in an interview. HUL's other detergent brands are Rin, Surf Excel and Sunlight.

Home care—comprising deter-



Priya Nair, executive director, Hindustan Unilever Ltd

ANIRUDDHA CHOWDHURY/ MINT

gents and household care products like Domex and Vim—is HUL's second-largest business segment, generating around 35% of its overall sales. In the quarter ended 30 June, the home care business posted 10% sales growth.

India's laundry care market continues to be dominated by HUL and rival Procter & Gamble, despite stiff competition from regional and local FMCG firms. HUL is the market leader in the laundry care segment and its three brands - Surf Excel, Rin and Wheel—together generate sales of over ₹1,000 crore,

according to data provided by the company.

However, in the lower end of the market, local brands such as Ghari, owned by Rohit Surfactants Ltd, has remained a dominant player.

Targeted at affluent Indians, Love & Care will be available at modern retail outlets and on e-commerce platforms. The company has already roped in fashion designer Manish Malhotra as the

brand ambassador.

"We are continuously looking at how we can evolve our portfolio. India has immense potential for the laundry category and is still an underdeveloped market. So, the opportunity is quite substantial. We will keep innovating as we see emerging consumer needs," Nair said.

GROWTH MARKET

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This year, Future Retail introduced an affordable liquid detergent brand Voom with an eye to take on HUL and P&G in the low-end segment.

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