India I Equities

FMCG

Company update

Change in Estimates ☑ Target ☑ Reco □

24 October 2025

Hindustan Unilever

Q2 blip amid GST rate cut; sharper volume focus seen ahead; Buy

Broadly as estimated amid the GST rate-cut transition and a prolonged monsoon, HUL's Q2 FY26 performance was weak. Revenue inched up ~1% y/y to Rs155bn (vs. the Street's Rs158bn estimate) with flat volumes and a 22.9% EBITDA margin (vs. 22.2%). The new CEO Priya Nair iterated the focus on volume-led growth through sharper consumer segmentation, premiumisation, brand modernisation and acceleration in digital and quick comm. 40% of the company's portfolio now falls under the 5% GST rate and, despite near-term trade disruptions, management was optimistic of a stronger H2 FY26, driven by festival demand, GST normalisation and greater rural/urban demand. Management retained its 22–23% near-term EBITDA margin guidance (ice cream de-merger to add 50bps) and 23–24% in the medium term. To factor in all this, we lower our FY26e/27e EPS 2% each and introduce FY28e. We retain our Buy, with a higher 12-mth TP of Rs2,910, 53x Sep'27e EPS (earlier Rs2,840, 53x FY27e EPS).

Q2 volumes flat y/y, dragged by GST rate-cut transitions. Homecare volumes grew in mid-single digits; beauty & wellbeing volumes came flat. Personal care fell by high-single digits; food & refreshments grew by low-single digits. Homecare revenue grew 1% y/y, the EBIT margin slipping 40bps y/y; B&W revenue grew 2% y/y, the EBIT margin falling 330bps y/y. Personal care revenue rose 1% y/y, the margin up 350bps y/y. F&R grew 2% y/y, the margin falling 190bps y/y. We build in a 7% revenue CAGR over FY25-28, led by a 5.5% volume CAGR.

The EBITDA margin dipped 70bps to 22.9%, on the 70bp y/y compression in the gross margin on higher palm oil and tea prices. The benefit of staff cost down 60bps y/y was offset by other expenses up 20bps and ad spends up 40bps. Management anticipates low single-digit price hikes in H2 and retained its 22-23% EBITDA margin guidance with the ice cream de-merger adding 50-60bps. We build in an 80bp EBITDA-margin gain over FY25-28, driven by operating leverage, cost-saving initiatives and the hived off low-margin ice-cream business.

Valuations. At the CMP, the stock trades at 54x/48x/44x FY26e/27e/28e EPS of Rs47/52.2/57.6. **Key risks:** A sharp rise in input cost, price-based competition, loss of market share to new/smaller manufacturers.

FY24	FY25	FY26e	FY27e	FY28e
6,18,960	6,31,210	6,68,017	7,24,602	7,80,068
1,02,750	1,03,520	1,10,525	1,22,741	1,35,477
43.7	44.1	47.0	52.2	57.6
57.6	57.1	53.5	48.2	43.7
39.5	39.0	37.6	33.8	30.9
11.5	12.0	11.8	11.6	11.4
20.1	21.0	22.0	24.1	26.2
18.3	18.7	20.2	22.1	23.9
1.7	2.1	1.7	1.9	2.1
-0.1	-0.2	-0.0	-0.0	-0.0
	6,18,960 1,02,750 43.7 57.6 39.5 11.5 20.1 18.3 1.7	6,18,960 6,31,210 1,02,750 1,03,520 43.7 44.1 57.6 57.1 39.5 39.0 11.5 12.0 20.1 21.0 18.3 18.7 1.7 2.1	6,18,960 6,31,210 6,68,017 1,02,750 1,03,520 1,10,525 43.7 44.1 47.0 57.6 57.1 53.5 39.5 39.0 37.6 11.5 12.0 11.8 20.1 21.0 22.0 18.3 18.7 20.2 1.7 2.1 1.7	6,18,960 6,31,210 6,68,017 7,24,602 1,02,750 1,03,520 1,10,525 1,22,741 43.7 44.1 47.0 52.2 57.6 57.1 53.5 48.2 39.5 39.0 37.6 33.8 11.5 12.0 11.8 11.6 20.1 21.0 22.0 24.1 18.3 18.7 20.2 22.1 1.7 2.1 1.7 1.9

Rating: **Buy**Target price (12-mth): Rs.2,910
Share price: Rs.2,517

Key data	HUVR IN / HLL.BO
52-week high / low	Rs2750 / 2136
Sensex / Nifty	84212 / 25795
Market cap	Rs6089bn
Shares outstanding	2350m

Shareholding pattern (%)	Sep'25	Jun'25	Mar'25
Promoters	61.9	61.9	61.9
- of which, Pledged			
Free Float	38.1	38.1	38.1
- Foreign Institutions	10.8	10.2	10.6
- Domestic Institutions	15.6	16.0	15.5
- Public	11.6	11.9	11.9

Estimates revision (%)	FY26e	FY27e
Sales	-1.1	-1.1
EBITDA	-1.8	-1.5
PAT	-2.3	-2.4



Source: Bloomberg

Ajay Thakur Research Analyst

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Anand Rathi Research India Equities

FDEPS (Rs)

Quick Glance – Financials and Valuations

52.2

57.6

47.0

Fig 1 – Income stater	nent (Rs	m)			
Year-end: Mar	FY24	FY25	FY26e	FY27e	FY28e
Net revenues	6,18,960	6,31,210	6,68,017	7,24,602	7,80,068
Growth (%)	2	2	6	8	8
Direct costs	2,97,600	3,05,780	3,21,760	3,46,342	3,71,128
Gross profit	3,21,360	3,25,430	3,46,256	3,78,261	4,08,940
Gross margins (%)	51.9	51.6	51.8	52.2	52.4
Other expenses	1,74,730	1,76,920	1,90,002	2,04,922	2,19,344
EBITDA	1,46,630	1,48,510	1,56,255	1,73,339	1,89,596
EBITDA margins (%)	23.7	23.5	23.4	23.9	24.3
- Depreciation	12,160	13,550	13,944	14,440	14,812
Other income	8,110	10,170	9,050	9,800	10,600
Interest expenses	3,340	3,950	4,120	3,610	3,200
PBT	1,39,240	1,41,180	1,47,241	1,65,089	1,82,184
Effective tax rates (%)	26.2	26.5	24.8	25.5	25.5
+ Associates / (Minorities)	50	220	200	250	250
Net income	1,02,750	1,03,520	1,10,525	1,22,741	1,35,477
WANS	2,350	2,350	2,350	2,350	2,350

44.1

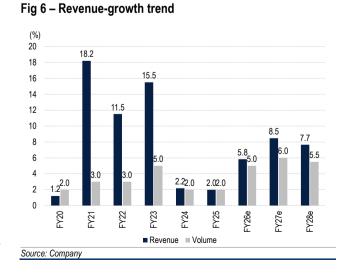
43.7

Year-end: Mar	FY24	FY25	FY26e	FY27e	FY28e
PBT	1,39,260	1,44,150	1,47,241	1,65,089	1,82,184
+ Non-cash items	-6,110	-5,270	-9,014	-8,250	-7,412
Oper. prof. before WC	1,45,370	1,49,420	1,56,255	1,73,339	1,89,596
- Incr. / (decr.) in WC	13,130	-7,880	-50,150	5,559	2,872
Others incl. taxes	3,810	22,680	36,516	42,098	46,457
Operating cash-flow	1,54,690	1,18,860	69,589	1,36,801	1,46,010
- Capex (tang. + intang.)	-14,570	-6,670	-39,910	-15,500	-18,000
Free cash-flow	1,40,120	1,12,190	29,679	1,21,301	1,28,010
Acquisitions					
- Div. (incl. buyback & taxes)	94,160	1,24,730	1,03,400	1,15,150	1,26,900
+ Equity raised	-	-	-	-	
+ Debt raised	-850	-	-	-	
- Fin investments	42,920	-63,050	-	-	
- Misc. (CFI + CFF)	1,080	-2,070	60	-6,354	-7,564
Net cash-flow	1,110	52,580	-73,781	12,504	8,674

Fig	5 –	Pri	ce r	no۱	/em	ent	t											
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	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-	Oct-	Nov-24	Dec-	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-	Apr-25	May-	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	
Sourc	e: Bl	oomb	erg															

Fig 2 – Balance shee	t (Rs m)				
Year-end: Mar	FY24	FY25	FY26e	FY27e	FY28e
Share capital	2,350	2,350	2,350	2,350	2,350
Net worth	5,12,180	4,94,020	5,01,285	5,09,040	5,17,781
Debt	130	10	10	10	10
Minority interest	2,050	2,070	2,270	2,520	2,770
TL / (Assets)	65,470	66,680	61,550	61,550	61,550
Lease liabilities	-	-	-	-	-
Capital employed	5,79,830	5,62,780	5,65,115	5,73,120	5,82,111
Net tangible assets	84,550	90,460	1,21,516	1,22,076	1,24,764
Net intangible assets	2,78,230	2,78,230	2,78,230	2,78,230	2,78,230
Goodwill	1,74,660	1,74,660	1,74,660	1,74,660	1,74,660
CWIP (tang. & intang.)	10,250	10,090	5,000	5,500	6,000
Investments (strategic)	-1,340	-2,390	-2,390	-2,390	-2,390
Investments (financial)	47,590	40,490	40,490	40,490	40,490
Current assets (excl. cash)	1,15,360	1,31,550	1,34,187	1,45,561	1,56,326
Cash	75,590	75,540	1,759	14,264	22,938
Current liabilities	2,05,060	2,35,850	1,88,337	2,05,270	2,18,907
Working capital	-89,700	-1,04,300	-54,150	-59,709	-62,581
Capital deployed	5,79,830	5,62,780	5,65,115	5,73,120	5,82,111

Fig 4 – Ratio analysis					
Year-end: Mar	FY24	FY25	FY26e	FY27e	FY28e
P/E (x)	57.6	57.1	53.5	48.2	43.7
EV / EBITDA (x)	39.5	39.0	37.6	33.8	30.9
EV / Sales (x)	9.4	9.2	8.8	8.1	7.5
P/B (x)	11.5	12.0	11.8	11.6	11.4
RoE (%)	20.1	21.0	22.0	24.1	26.2
RoCE (%) - after tax	18.3	18.7	20.2	22.1	23.9
RoIC (%) - after tax	22.2	23.6	23.5	24.1	26.6
DPS (Rs)	42.0	53.0	44.0	49.0	54.0
Dividend yield (%)	1.7	2.1	1.7	1.9	2.1
Dividend payout (%) - incl. DDT	96.1	120.3	93.6	93.8	93.7
Net debt / equity (x)	-0.1	-0.2	-0.0	-0.0	-0.0
Receivables (days)	17.7	22.1	20.8	20.5	20.5
Inventory (days)	23.7	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.3
Payables (days)	73.8	80.7	73.7	74.5	74.1
CFO: PAT %	150.5	114.8	63.0	111.5	107.8
Source: Company, Anand Rathi Resea	rch				



Result highlights

(Rs m)	Q3 FY23	Q4 FY23	Q1 FY24	Q2 FY24	Q3 FY24	Q4 FY24	Q1 FY25	Q2 FY25	Q3 FY25	Q4 FY25	Q1 FY26	Q2 FY2
Volume growth (%)	5	4	3	2	2	2	4	3	-	2	4	
Net sales	1,52,280	1,48,930	1,51,480	1,52,760	1,51,880	1,48,570	1,53,390	1,55,080	1,54,080	1,52,140	1,59,310	1,55,850
Y/Y	17.2	10.6	6.1	3.6	-0.3	-0.2	1.3	1.5	1.4	2.4	3.9	0.8
Gross Profit	72,310	72,540	75,600	80,550	78,210	77,060	78,910	79,150	78,070	76,800	78,420	78,520
Gross margins (%)	47.5	48.7	49.9	52.7	51.5	51.9	51.4	51.0	50.7	50.5	49.2	50.4
Staff expenses	6,760	6,830	6,510	7,080	6,490	7,740	6,020	7,650	6,840	7,890	6,570	6,770
Advertising spends	12,000	12,900	14,810	17,200	15,930	15,860	16,440	14,640	14,660	14,540	15,560	15,270
Other expenses	18,180	18,100	19,070	19,330	20,390	19,110	20,390	20,390	20,870	19,710	20,710	20,850
EBITDA	35,370	34,710	35,210	36,940	35,400	34,350	36,060	36,470	35,700	34,660	35,580	35,630
Y/Y	11.3	7.0	8.4	9.4	0.1	-1.0	2.4	-1.3	0.8	0.9	-1.3	-2.3
EBITDA margins	23.2	23.3	23.2	24.2	23.3	23.1	23.5	23.5	23.2	22.8	22.3	22.9
PBT	34,790	33,450	34,020	36,360	34,620	32,640	34,800	35,520	34,690	33,770	33,710	33,560
Y/Y	16.4	9.0	9.8	13.0	-0.5	-2.4	2.3	-2.3	0.2	3.5	-3.1	-5.8
PAT	26,070	24,720	25,090	27,220	25,490	24,230	25,860	26,280	24,920	25,160	28,590	25,060
Y/Y	18.1	8.9	9.0	3.0	-2.2	-2.0	3.1	-3.5	-2.2	3.8	10.6	-4.6
	10.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	2.0	0.1	0.0	L.L	0.0	10.0	-7.0
% to sales												
Staff cost	4.4	4.6	4.3	4.6	4.3	5.2	3.9	4.9	4.4	5.2	4.1	4.3
Advertising Spends	7.9	8.7	9.8	11.3	10.5	10.7	10.7	9.4	9.5	9.6	9.8	9.8
Other expenses	11.9	12.2	12.6	12.7	13.4	12.9	13.3	13.1	13.5	13.0	13.0	13.4
Segment revenue			_,									
Home Care	55,180	56,380	54,250	53,120	54,480	57,150	56,750	57,370	57,420	58,180	57,830	56,670
Y/Y	31.6	18.7	10.0	3.3	-1.3	1.4	4.6	8.0	5.4	1.8	1.9	-1.2
Personal Care	57,180	51,880	24,980	25,350	23,150	20,630	23,860	24,120	22,460	21,240	25,410	24,260
Y/Y	10.5	10.1	-53.4	-54.4	-59.5	-60.2	-4.5	-4.9	-3.0	3.0	6.5	0.6
Beauty & Wellbeing	-	-	31,030	32,740	33,900	29,870	31,990	33,230	34,380	31,130	33,490	33,890
Y/Y							3.1	1.5	1.4	4.2	4.7	2.0
Food & Refreshment	37,000	37,940	37,970	38,510	37,330	39,110	38,500	38,030	37,450	38,960	40,160	38,690
Y/Y	6.8	2.6	4.7	2.6	0.9	3.1	1.4	-1.2	0.3	-0.4	4.3	1.7
Others	2,920	2,730	3,250	3,040	3,020	1,810	2,290	2,330	2,370	2,630	2,420	2,340
Y/Y	13.2	-9.6	-7.1	4.1	3.4	-33.7	-29.5	-23.4	-21.5	45.3	5.7	0.4
Segment EBIT												
Home Care	10,610	10,560	9,910	9,950	9,660	10,810	11,090	10,870	10,540	10,560	10,930	10,500
Y/Y	22.8	12.5	14.0	11.9	-9.0	2.4	11.9	9.2	9.1	-2.3	-1.4	-3.4
Personal Care	14,370	13,530	4,460	4,560	3,640	3,710	4,180	4,010	3,950	3,920	4,700	4,870
Y/Y	-0.3	9.5	-68.4	-67.3	-74.7	-72.6	-6.3	-12.1	8.5	5.7	12.4	21.4
Beauty & Wellbeing	-0.0	-	10,260	11,250	10,970	9,170	10,060	11,210	10,120	10,370	9,770	10,310
Y/Y			10,200	11,200	10,570	3,170	-1.9	-0.4	-7.7	13.1	-2.9	-8.0
Food & Refreshment	6,610	6,790	6,810	7,200	7,110	7,390		6,900			6,520	
Y/Y	2.3	-4.8	17.8		7,110	8.8	7,360	-4.2	7,550 6.2	6,270	-11.4	6,290
			1,200	-3.2		380	390	430	460	410	420	-o.c
Others Y/Y	1,180 <i>61.6</i>	1,210	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	1,290	1,200		-67.5	-66.7	-61.7	7.9		
1/1	01.0	20.0	-7.0	29.0	1.7	-68.6	-07.3	-00.7	-01.7	7.9	7.7	-2.3
Segment EBIT margin (%)												
Home Care	19.2	18.7	18.3	18.7	17.7	18.9	19.5	18.9	18.4	18.2	18.9	18.
Personal Care	25.1	26.1	17.9	18.0	15.7	18.0	17.5	16.6	17.6	18.5	18.5	20.
Beauty & Wellbeing			33.1	34.4	32.4	30.7	31.4	33.7	29.4	33.3	29.2	30.4
Food & Refreshment	17.9	17.9	17.9	18.7	19.0	18.9	19.1	18.1	20.2	16.1	16.2	16.
	11.0		77.0	10.1	, , , ,	10.0	10.1	10.1	20.2	, 0. 1	10.2	, 0.0

Key takeaways from Q2 earnings call

Demand trend

- The quarter was shaped by three major factors: GST reforms, a prolonged monsoon and divergent commodity trends. The prolonged and intense monsoon disrupted supply chains and temporarily dampened demand, especially for ice cream.
- Demand was stable at MAT level, backed by rural/urban consumption.
- The GST rate reduction and tax simplification are expected to increase disposable income and boost consumption in the long term. However, the transition to the new GST rates led to short-term trade disruptions and orders postponed.
- Normal trading conditions are expected to resume from early Nov'25 once prices stabilise.
- <u>Management expects H2 FY26 growth to be better than H1</u>, supported by normalization of trade and demand recovering (festivals).
- HUL implemented pricing and grammage interventions across 1,200+ SKUs to fully pass on GST benefits to consumers. For low-unit packs (Rs1, Rs2, Rs5), it increased grammage rather than cutting prices.
- Growth in Q2 was price-led, driven by carry-forward pricing in skin cleansing, beverages and skin care. Home care saw price reductions in line with >10% lower crude-oil prices.
- Management expects low single-digit price growth ahead if commodity prices hold stable.

Segment-wise performance

Home care

- Mid-single-digit volume growth on a strong base. Overall, USG was flat due to price reductions earlier to retain value competitiveness.
- Fabric wash saw double-digit volume growth in liquids and mid-singledigit UVG overall.
- Fabric conditioners continued double-digit growth led by premium innovations such as the Comfort Perfume Deluxe range.
- Household care maintained double-digit UVG, driven by liquids; dishwash bars saw high single-digit volume growth.

Beauty & wellbeing

- Reported 5% USG, driven by skin care and health & well-being.
- Hair care turnover declined due to GST rate rationalization across 90% of the portfolio, though market leadership widened.
- Complete relaunch of Sunsilk: refreshed identity, holographic packaging.
- Skin care and color cosmetics grew in high single digits, led by *Vaseline* and *Lakme*.
- The six big bets portfolio delivered strong double-digit growth.
- Health & Well-being maintained triple-digit growth, supported by innovations such as OZiva Phyto Ceramides and Collagen Builder for ingestible skincare.

Personal Care

- More than 90% of the portfolio underwent a GST rate transition, leading to temporary volume pressure.
- Turnover growth was flat due to short-term market disruptions and many price points.
- Premium soap brands such as Dove, Pears and Lux International, saw strong growth and premiumisation-led gains.
- The company launched a Lux International Range infused with glutathione and vitamin E aimed at premiumising its offering.
- Overall, the company strengthened its competitive position in skin cleansing and continued double-digit growth in premium soaps

Foods & refreshment

- Reported 3% USG with low single-digit UVG.
- Tea and coffee delivered double-digit growth, driven by pricing and led by channels of the future; tea grew in high single digits.
- Lifestyle nutrition showed positive UVG due to improved price architecture, but overall turnover declined due to negative pricing.
- The company launched Horlicks Pro Fitness, a meal replacement solution with 60% fewer calories than an average Indian meal.
- Packaged foods were muted; mayonnaise and sausages delivered double-digit growth, offset by the GST transition.
- Ice cream declined y/y due to the prolonged monsoon and GST impact. The ice-cream de-merger is expected to be complete by Dec'25, with listing targeted for Q4 FY26.

Channel & execution excellence

- De-stocking occurred during Sep & Oct'25 as trade partners liquidated inventory before the GST rate change.
- Modern trade and e-comm re-stocking expected to normalize faster than general trade.
- HUL's distribution spans 9m stores, covering ~95% of value-added distribution and reaching nine of 10 Indian households.
- The company extended comprehensive trade support for smooth transition and inventory liquidation.
- The focus remains on accelerating growth in D2C, quick commerce and specialist stores (cosmetic and chemist outlets).

Key priorities: Focussed on volume-led growth

- Sharpen consumer segmentation. Tailor strategies for "power spenders, premiumisers, and democratisers" across brands and channels.
- Elevate brand desirability. Modernize core brands and scale up the premium portfolio through bold renovations and innovations.
- Future-proof frontline & channels. Build social-first demand generation, expand digital commerce and quick commerce.
- Reshape Portfolio Accelerate growth in high-potential demand spaces, based on market readiness and invest disproportionately to scale them up.

Margin outlook & investment strategy

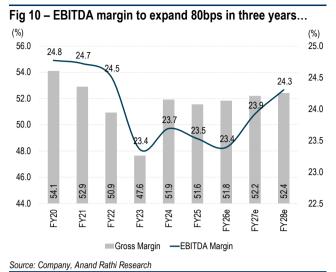
- Gross margin at 50.9% was flat y/y; but improved 130bps sequentially as the price-cost gap narrowed.
- The EBITDA margin at 23.2% was down 90bps y/y due to higher A&P spends (up 80bps).
- **Guidance.** EBITDA margin to be 22–23% in the near to mid-term, the ice-cream de-merger to add 50–60bps.
- Material costs: Palm oil and S&P were inflationary, while tea and crude oil declined.
- Management expects low single-digit price growth if commodities remain stable.

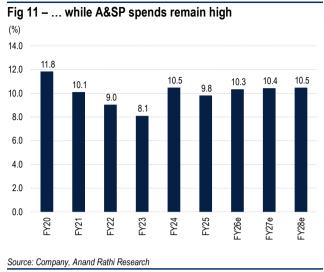
Other highlights

- Competition, market share. HUL maintained he No.1 position in over 85% of its portfolio. Delivered turnover-weighted market-share gains across key categories.
- Strengthened leadership in hair care and skin cleansing. Remains focused on competitive volume-led growth, even if it requires short-term investment.
- **M&A.** Acquired Minimalist, which delivered strong double-digit growth in H1 FY26.
- Continued focus on bolt-on acquisitions in beauty and wellness.
- Declared interim dividend of Rs19/share, totalling Rs44.6bn.
- Ritesh Tiwari transitioning to global head of M&A and Treasury at Unilever. Niranjan Gupta (ex-Hero MotoCorp) to join as CFO.









Valuation

With an old hand returning to steer HUL's ship amid choppy waters, we expect growth to recover, though gradually. The new CEO, Priya Nair, iterated the focus on volume-led growth through sharper consumer segmentation, brand modernisation, premiumisation and acceleration in digital and quick commerce. 40% of the company's portfolio now falls under the 5% GST rate and, despite near-term trade disruptions, management was optimistic of a stronger H2 FY26, driven by festival demand, GST normalisation and improved rural/urban demand. It maintained its near-term EBITDA margin guidance of 22–23% (the ice-cream de-merger to add ~50bps) and 23–24% in the medium term.

To factor in all this, we lower our FY26e/27e EPS 2% each and introduce FY28e. We retain our Buy recommendation, with a 12-mth TP of Rs2,910, 53x Sep'27e EPS (earlier Rs2,840, 53x FY27e EPS). At the CMP, the stock trades at 54x/48x/44x FY26e/27e/28e EPS of Rs47/52.2/57.6.

Fig 12 – Change in estimates										
	Old		Revise	ed	Change, %					
(Rs m)	FY26e	FY27e	FY26e	FY27e	FY26	FY27				
Sales	6,75,262	7,32,479	6,68,017	7,24,602	-1.1	-1.1				
EBITDA	1,59,180	1,75,908	1,56,255	1,73,339	-1.8	-1.5				
EBITDA margins, %	23.6	24.0	23.4	23.9						
PAT	1,13,142	1,25,793	1,10,525	1,22,741	-2.3	-2.4				
Source: Anand Rathi Researc	h									



Key risks

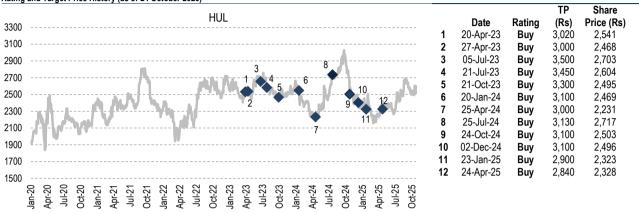
- Failure of brand launches.
- Unwarranted or overpriced bolt-on acquisitions.
- Price-led competition; loss of share to new entrant (Reliance) & /or others.
- Stringent regulations in nutrition-based healthcare.

Appendix

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Ratings Guide (12 months)									
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