

# Packaging

## SOUTH ASIA

The Magazine for Modern Packaging



SIG's range of liquid cartons, pouch with spout and bag-in-box – p44

**ExxonMobil, Dow Chemical, Sabic, and BASF show polymers and rPacks for food safe packaging at Interpack 2023 – p20**



Food pouches made of ocean plastic and bioplastics by Sabic at Interpack

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# UFlex Limited

India's largest  
multinational  
flexible packaging  
and solutions company

### Packaging films business

BOPET films, BOPP films, CPP films, high barrier metalized films, Asclepius™ PCR films, Alox coated films and specialty films



### Chemicals business

Printing inks, ink binders, waterbased, solvent based & solvent free laminating adhesives, UV & LED inks and coatings, specialty chemicals as polyols, primers and special effect coatings



### Aseptic liquid packaging business

Innovation packs with holography and foil stamping, packaging materials for base/slim/ultra lean/crown/leaf/pillow/trio/wedge/spectra, aseptic filling lines 'Flexpress 10000', Asepto Pro technical services and ASip - u shape paper straw



### Holography business

Holograms, security documents, holographic films, holographic aluminum lidding foil, holographic PVC blister, paper & board transfer, holographic thermal films, sequins films, glitter films, hot melt foil films, hot stamping foils and registered lens technology



### Flexible packaging business

Flexible packaging laminates, pre-fabricated pouches, easy-tear sachets, big bags, block bottom bags, premium shower-proof bags, pharmaceutical packaging, Flexi Tubes and FlexFresh™ modified atmospheric packaging



### Printing cylinders business

Electromechanically & laser engraved rotogravure cylinders for printing, laser engraved coating cylinders for extreme high & low gsm, embossing cylinders, robotic laser engraved specialized rotogravure cylinders, flexographic polymer printing plates and flexographic elastomer printing plates



### Engineering business

Packaging machines, converting machines, recycling machines, specialty product machines and aseptic liquid filling machines



Niche packaging solutions absorb the extra cost of recyclable structures

## UFlex produces monopolymer PE-MDO packaging for exports



UFlex resealable 5 kilogram rice pouches for export using mono-material PE structures that are easily recyclable. Photo UFlex  
Right: Jeevaraj Pillai, joint president – Packaging and New Product Development at UFlex

The Indian flexible packaging converters who purchased MDO film stretching units with their blown film lines, for producing monopolymer PE structures generally have a hard time selling the idea in the Indian market. It seems that until Schedule 2 of the Waste Management Rules notified in February and June 2022 which specify the Extended User Responsibility (and the financial penalties) for using un-recyclable plastic packaging, gain further awareness – or impact the bottom lines of the brand owners, they will remain reluctant to pay the extra cost of monomaterial PE-MDO structures.

However, UFlex in alliance with Indian consumer product exporters, as the company's joint president Flexible Packaging Business and New Product Development president Jeevaraj Pillai explained to us, is already the largest producer of PE-MDO structures at a level of 300 to 400 metric tons a month. "We have been focusing on export packaging for Europe where they

are bent on using PE mono-polymer pouches that allow mechanical recycling, although we have sustainable or circular PET alternatives also. The higher cost of the PE-MDO structure works for a niche range of products in which the larger volume and format of the pouch or bag are able to reduce the packaging cost down to 1% or even less – in comparison to the value of the consumer product," he says.

According to him, PE films processed with MDO technology not only fulfill the requirements of the downstream processes such as gloss, transparency and mechanical properties but also provide greater pliability and quality for producers.

Pillai explains that some of the export products that are already using the PE-MDO structures produced on the company's 5-layer W&H VarexII blown film line with MDO installed at its Haridwar plant. These include 5, 10 and 20-kilogram bags and pouches for exporting rice and protein powders.

"This solution cannot work for snack pouches or smaller pouches," he says, "where the cost of packaging is very high in comparison to its contents – in some cases as high as 7%."

Additionally, UFlex is tying up with Exxon Mobil to use its certified-circular Exceed PE polymers which can be used in food packaging. The Exceed certified-circular polymers, leverage ExxonMobil's proprietary Exxtend technology for advanced (chemical) recycling, allowing UFlex to incorporate certified-circular content into food packaging solutions.

The product quality and performance of the certified-circular polymers are identical to virgin plastic and can be used for applications including contact-sensitive, food-grade packaging. In collaboration with its brand owner customers, UFlex will be among the first in India to use certified-circular performance PE polymers to produce films for high-performance flexible packaging. ■ – Naresh Khanna

Indian Plastics Institute Ahmedabad seminar on 14 July

## Experts on innovations in flexible packaging

Shardul Sharma

Advancements and innovations in the flexible packaging industry were the key focus areas at a seminar organized by the Indian Plastics Institute in Ahmedabad on 14 July – which brought together industry stakeholders, experts, and professionals to exchange knowledge and discuss the latest trends in the field.

Jagdish Vishwakarma, minister of multiple departments in the Gujarat state government, was the chief guest at the seminar. Vishwakarma, whose participation underscored the importance and support from the government for the packaging industry, spoke about the importance of plastics in the modern age. The guest of honor, NC Saha, former director of the Indian Institute of Packaging, spoke about the trends in the global and Indian packaging industry.

The keynote address was delivered by Biswajit Basu, who represented Nestle, a leading name in the food and beverage industry. Basu shed light on Nestle's commitment to addressing sustainability challenges in the packaging sector and emphasized the initiatives the company has undertaken to promote environment-friendly practices.

The seminar was structured into three technical sessions, each focusing on specific aspects of the flexible packaging industry. In the first session, Sachin Laddha and Tarunesh Sharma from Dow Chemicals discussed the innovative solutions offered by the company for the flexible packaging industry. Laddha highlighted Revoloop, a recycled plastics resin developed by Dow, which effectively reduces plastic waste. He explained how Revoloop provides several grades as a single-pellet solution, ready for use in various applications.

Sharma's presentation focused on Dow's vacuum metalized PE solutions, such as Innate ST100 resin and Elite AT6900 polyethylene resin. These advanced solutions have been designed to meet the specific needs of the flexible packaging industry, offering enhanced performance and functionality.

The first session also featured experts from UFlex, a prominent packaging company. Sanjay Sabharwal discussed various solutions provided by UFlex for extrusion lamination, a critical process in flexible packaging. He delved into the technical aspects of extrusion lamination and showcased UFlex's expertise.

R. Balasubramanian, also from UFlex, presented detailed insights into gravure printing technology. He discussed the solutions offered by Uflex in this field, highlighting the company's capabilities.

The second technical session commenced with Kirti Panchal from Echaar Equipments, who focused on CI flexo printing technology. Panchal shared information about the innovative solutions manufactured by Echaar and their contribution to enhancing the quality and efficiency of flexo printing processes. Panchal talked about the rich history of the Echaar Group in the engineering industry. Echaar Group ventured into the production of CI flexo presses in 2017. The group has a presence in wind turbines, atomic energy, and the defense sector, among others.

Rajesh Sonar of Mamata Machinery provided an overview of Mamata's success story in the global packaging machinery market. He said a significant portion of Mamata's machines, about 70%, is exported, showcasing the company's inter-



*Kirti Panchal of Echaar Equipments speaking at the seminar*

national reach and reputation. Sonar touched upon the crucial topic of sustainability in relation to extrusion, shedding light on Mamata's sustainable practices.

Mahesh Thakkar from Prasad Group spoke on automation in the flexible packaging industry, discussing various advancements and technologies. Thakkar highlighted the importance of automation in meeting the growing demands and complexities of the industry.

Subham Shah of Subham Extrusion addressed the topic of co-extrusion technology in the context of flexible packaging. He shared insights into the advancements and benefits of co-extrusion technology, which enables the production of multi-layered films with different properties, enhancing the functionality and versatility of packaging materials.

The final technical session was led by Vikas Deo from Windsor Machines, who introduced the audience to Windsor's range of multi-layer blown film lines. Deo discussed the different configurations available, such as 3-layer, 5-layer, and 7-layer. He announced Windsor would soon launch a 9-layer blown film line.

Shanish Pandey from SA Automation addressed the audience on trends in converting and printing. He shared insights into the latest developments, technologies, and techniques that are shaping the converting and printing processes in the flexible packaging industry.

Trilochan Pradhan of Chem-Trend Chemicals concluded the session with a presentation on efficiency improvement in flexible packaging. He highlighted the role of innovative chemical solutions in enhancing operational efficiency, reducing waste, and improving overall production processes.

The seminar provided a comprehensive overview of advancements and innovations in the flexible packaging industry. Through presentations and discussions, attendees gained valuable knowledge about the latest technologies, solutions, and practices that drive the industry. ■



*A full house at the seminar*



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Learning to live with the new reality of single-digit growth in demand

## Indian flexible and carton packaging industry continues to build capacity

Industry experts tell us that the demand growth for consumer products, and hence both flexible and board packaging, softened. With rural demand particularly depressed, the periodic ups and downs seem systemic and points to single-digit growth in demand. The research data thus far on a leading group of food-related FMCG companies reveals expectations of flat or soft growth for most of the bigger companies, except Britannia and ITC's food consumer products division. Mrs. Bector's Foods and Jyothi Laboratories are the smaller companies, also expected to achieve higher growth in the coming quarters. Naresh Khanna reports.

Nevertheless several of the larger packaging companies continue to invest in capacity expansion. Among the global actors in India, SIG Combibloc continues to rapidly increase investments in India with the recent opening of its bag-in-box plant in Palghar and its commencement of construction in its Ahmedabad aseptic packaging plant. Hutahmaki India has a new project, which is banking on solutions for sustainable monomaterial flexible packaging with a new W&H blown film line with MDO and a Bobst vacuum metallizer. The Indian-owned SB Packaging, apart from absorbing Constantia's Indian assets across the country that it acquired, has also ordered significant capital equipment for its main plant in Hissar.

### Uflex results

Uflex, the Noida-headquartered global flexible and aseptic packaging conglomerate, which is continuously adding new plants and capacity, has reported a total consolidated revenue for the financial year ending 31 March 2023 at Rs 14,662 crore, an increase of 11.7 % from the previous year's Rs 13,127 crore. The consolidated net profit after taxes has declined by 56% to Rs 480 crore in comparison to the previous year's Rs 1,099 crore. On 27 July the stock is quoted at around Rs 419, down from Rs 555 a year ago – and its peak of Rs 804 on 26 August 2022. Its share price was Rs 265.50 a share on 27 July 2020. Approximately 45% of the shares reside with the promoters, while approximately 47% are owned by the public.

### Monocartons

The larger and medium-sized monocarton companies such as Parksons, TCPL, CanPack, Kumar Printers, ITC Packaging, Pragati Offset, HBD, Suki, Bhudhraj, Any Graphics and White Print O Pac, VK Global, Sain Packaging, York Printers and Galaxy Offset have in the main been building new plants and adding printing and converting capacity. Among the larger carton companies, faster and more automated presses and systems are replacing their earlier 6 and 7-color plus coater UV presses to remain competitive at a time of single-digit demand growth for the overall market.



## FLEXIBLE PACKAGING

For their part, the commercial printers migrating into monocartons have understood that to be competitive in this segment, efficiencies in inputs and resources are easier to achieve on larger format presses. Having entered monocartons and litho-laminated cartons with multicolor presses in smaller formats, they are now graduating to the second stage of their diversification by installing larger format machines with coaters and UV curing. In some cases, these can even be reasonably modern used presses.

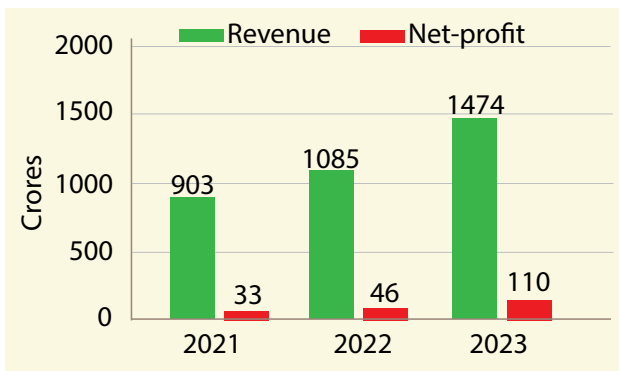
In the past half-year, the carton industry has also taken a hit from one of the major alcobev suppliers doing away with the outer carton packaging for their liquor bottles. This measure has taken an unquantified but substantial tonnage out of the carton industry and instilled the fear that other liquor manufacturers may be thinking along similar lines.

Narendra Paruchuri of Pragati in Hyderabad, who is generally measured in his condition monitoring of the industry, says that at least high-end commercial printing is keeping its head above water, although not as strong as monocartons. From his point of view, the seasonal upswing for cartons also looks promising.

Meanwhile Pragati has just installed another new multicolor press, highly configured for the special coating effects for it is known. This is a Komori GL 40 full UV 7-color press with two coaters, one coater after the sixth printing unit and another coater after the seventh printing unit. This enables a full gamut of print and drip off and gloss coatings on first six units and the first coater followed by the seventh print unit that can either add an overprinted color or an overprint varnish and then a coater for matt coatings. Thus, it becomes possible to add textures, gloss and matt coatings in a single pass.

### TCPL adds both flexible and carton capacity in FY23-24

One of the several companies that are in both monocartons and flexible packaging, TCPL Packaging continues to diversify and grow in the current financial year which started out with high expectations of the Indian consumer economy picking up steam. Its third Bobst gravure press, a Rotomec 8-color, is expected later this year. Meanwhile, two KBA multicolor sheetfed presses have been installed in Silvassa and Haridwar. Another sheetfed multicolor press, a Komori GL40 6-color plus coater UV press, is to be installed later in the last quarter of the calendar year at the Creative carton plant in Noida that was acquired a couple of years ago by TCPL.



TCPL's financial results for financial year ending 31 March 2023

TCPL's results for the financial year ending 31 March 2023 show a healthy 35.8% rise in revenue to Rs 1,474 crore from Rs 1,085 crore in the previous year. Profits have increased to Rs 111 crore from Rs 47.35 crore in the previous financial year, representing an increase of 136%. The company has also announced the doubling of its dividend to Rs 20 per share on its Rs 10 face value shares that are currently being quoted at around Rs 1700 – an increase of about 70% since last July. Three years ago on 27 July 2020, TCPL Packaging shares were selling for Rs 277 each on the National Stock Exchange. While the company is majority owned by the promoter family, around 39% of the shares are in public hands. ■

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UFlex showcases FlexiTubes at Cosmohome Tech Expo

## ‘The tube industry in India is dynamic’ – Ish Dhawan

Priyanka Tanwar

UFlex FlexiTubes recently participated in the Cosmohome Tech Expo held from 19 – 21 July 2023 at New Delhi’s Pragati Maidan – displaying its FlexiTubes tube range for cosmetics, oral care and other segments. FlexiTubes produces tubes for Mama Earth and VLCC, along with several other brands.

Ish Dhawan, general manager, sales & product development at FlexiTubes, said, “Our tubes are different, they are broadly common with lamitubes but the manufacturing process and the decoration makes it different. That’s why we have named them FlexiTubes.”

The tube industry in India is very dynamic, growing very rapidly and moving towards more sustainable tubes. We are continuously working on sustainable packaging for our tubes, he said. “Our printing process, type of decoration and the printing clarity that we give – which is not possible in the conventional lamitubes – is the edge we have to bring in for the cosmetic tube segments,” he said.

UFlex employs reverse rotogravure printing for lamitubes, the traditional process through which all laminates are made. He says, “It’s a very well-known laminate printing process where the plus point is the graphics and true-to-life pictures that we get. These are not possible when you do a surface printing on a pre-made laminate. Whatever limitations are there in the conventional lamitubes and OH tubes, we are there to solve these through the reverse rotogravure printing process.”

Challenges such as price pressure are always there, he says. “People are now accepting the process because they are seeing the value what we can bring,” he signs off. ■



*Ish Dhawan, general manager, sales & product development at FlexiTubes.  
Photo PSA*