

Packaging

SOUTH ASIA

The Magazine for Modern Packaging



Katsura India's rubber roller remanufacturing plant in Faridabad



Variation, premiumization and sustainability



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This unveiling of BOPA nylon films is in line with the government's 'Make in India' initiative and a strategic move to bolster the company's growth, it said. This new product launch mirrors the company's commitment to infuse technological advancement and innovation in manufacturing processes, enhance quality, optimize costs and ensure enhanced customer satisfaction. This investment also reiterates the strong commitment of the company to the Indian market.

Speaking on the launch, Mahesh N Gopalamudram, deputy CEO (growth division), JPFL Films, said, "With the launch of BOPA nylon films, JPFL Films has emerged as the first player to bring this innovation to the Indian market. This unique product offers improved mechanical properties and aroma barrier. This will also play a pivotal role in bringing solutions across pharma, medical, FMCG and food applications. It will be noteworthy to point out that 100% of these films were imported till recently.

"One of the main characteristics of this unique offering is its isotropicity (same set of characteristics or properties in all directions) produced in exclusive Japanese double bubble film technology that promises dimensional stability, puncture resistance and homogeneity across the length and width of the product. In addition, the product is suitable for high speed printing and serves as an effective barrier for aroma and gases.

"BOPA films are also produced by our group company Jindal Nylon films in Italy. This experience will also help us in serving Indian customers and bringing global innovation locally." ■



BOPA offers improved mechanical properties and aroma barrier

■ Indian multinational certified to use post-consumer rPE in food packaging

UFlex secures USFDA approval for recycled PE in food packaging

UFlex India's largest multinational flexible packaging company, has become the first Indian company to receive approval from the United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) for its recycling process. This approval allows UFlex to use recycled polyethylene (rPE) in food packaging, a major step in reducing plastic waste and supporting global brands in meeting their sustainability goals.

UFlex's recycling process is categorized as super-clean recycling, with the ability to de-ink post-consumer recycled (PCR) materials by more than 95%, making it one of the most advanced worldwide. The USFDA certification adheres to international standards and contributes to the global shift toward a circular economy, reinforcing UFlex' commitment to sustainability and innovation.

■ Announces Rs 317 crore investment in new Noida recycling plants

To further strengthen its recycling infrastructure, UFlex is investing Rs 317 crores (US\$ 38 million) in advanced recycling technologies. This includes the establishment of two new recycling plants at its Noida facility in India, with a combined



annual capacity to process 39,600 metric tons of plastic waste. These plants will significantly boost the production of rPET and rPE materials for use in food packaging, aligning with India's growing emphasis on sustainability and its evolving legislative framework.

"In line with our commitment to support the Government of India's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation, we are proud to announce this significant investment to strengthen our recycling capabilities. The Indian government has set ambitious targets for the collection, recycling, reuse, and use of recycled content in plastic packaging to promote sustainable packaging. Our enhanced recycling operations will empower brand owners to meet their EPR commitments and set a global benchmark for sustainable packaging," said, Jeevaraj Gopal Pillai, whole time director for sustainability, and president flexible packaging and new product development, at UFlex.

Pillai further stated, "Innovation and sustainability have always been at the heart of our journey. Three decades ago, when recycling was still an emerging concept, we envisioned a future where waste could be transformed into value. Our early investments in recycling multi-layered plastic waste, once thought to be impossible to recycle, proved that innovation could drive meaningful change."

He added, "With the first-ever USFDA approval for an Indian company in food-contact recycling, we are proud of how far we have come. This milestone is not only a proud moment for UFlex but also for India, as it highlights our country's growing leadership in sustainable innovation and underscores its potential to make significant contribution to the global sustainability agenda.

"Additionally, we have applied for USFDA certification to recycle polypropylene (PP), which will position UFlex as the first company in the flexible packaging industry with the technology and capacity to recycle all three materials—PET, PE, and PP—for use in food packaging. We are excited to collaborate with global brands to help them meet the growing consumer demand for sustainable products while reducing plastic pollution."

At present, there are no specific guidelines for the use of recycled polyethylene (rPE) content in food packaging. However, there is a mandatory requirement under India's extended producer responsibility (EPR) regulations to incorporate recycled content in packaging. UFlex, in collaboration with industry players, is actively engaging with government bodies such as FSSAI and BIS to help develop the necessary guidelines for the safe and sustainable use of rPE content in food packaging in India. This collaborative effort aims to ensure that the industry adheres to the highest standards in food packaging while contributing to a circular economy.

Currently, UFlex has recycling plants in India, Poland, Egypt, and Mexico, processing post-consumer multi-layered mixed plastic (MLP), multi-layer aseptic packaging (MLAP), and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) waste. It is the only Indian company working on innovative solutions for flexible MLP and PCR applications both in India and globally. Through the conversion of post-consumer waste into high-quality, food-safe materials, the company is driving innovation while reinforcing its commitment to a circular economy. ■

(Left to right) Mihir Banerji, secretary general of PPRDC; Manas Kumar Sarkar of PPRDC; Ashok Chaturvedi, chairman and managing director, UFlex; Deepak Mishra, joint secretary, department of chemicals and petrochemicals; Shishir Sinha, director general, Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering and Technology; and Jeevaraj Pillai, trustee, PPRDC, releasing the report on 'Quantitative and Qualitative Determination of Recycled PE Content in Post-Consumer Recycled Blends' last year

Indian OEMs in flexo and digital make progress in exports

Flexo automation – shift to digital & hybrid

The pressure-sensitive label industry in India continues to grow as packed and labeled products in numerous types of containers, formats, and sizes multiply. Every food and snack product is available in various exotic and localized flavors. You can now buy packs of Hershey's chocolates filled with California almonds with guava and Mexican chilli flavor, or Hershey's Exotic Dark blueberry and acai flavored centers. Also, you can find Mazan chocolate cubes filled with paan flavor and many other products in the market with a variety of localized flavors including Kurkure packs with 'UP Taste.' In short, the number of SKU's of pouches and labeled containers have substantially multiplied.

Aayush Pandey

Label converters also seem to be multiplying with the entry of nine Indian manufacturers of label presses. Although the imported narrow web flexo presses are still coming in, the market is increasingly dominated by local OEMs for narrow and mid-web flexo, digital, and hybrid presses. Indian flexo and digital OEMs such as Monotech are getting more orders, and increasingly for exports. However, in several interactions at recent shows label converters and OEM suppliers have told *Packaging South Asia*, "Hybrid technologies will shape the future of Indian label printing industries."

It is no longer about flexo versus digital versus flexo. At the Labelexpo India in 2022, the European plate and roller manufacturers said that 'digital is the death of flexo.' To bolster their views they pointed to challenges such as print density, banding, and handling newer substances – a virtual laundry list of difficulties with digital label production.

Digital printing has found its place in various label applications, especially when personalization, variable data, and shorter print runs are required. Flexo holds significant advantages in terms of cost-effectiveness in large-volume production runs and printing on certain materials and increasingly



The Indian label industry continues to grow as packed and labeled products in numerous types of containers, formats, and sizes increase. Photo PSA



Digital technologies allow the possibility of printing on a variety of substrates. Photo PSA

for short-run flexible packaging, especially with the widespread availability of locally manufactured presses.

Managing shorter print runs is challenging for flexo converters, considering the cost of creating printing plates, time-consuming press set-up, and set-up waste. Adding flexo units to a digital module in a hybrid configuration, or investing in a digital roll-to-roll press alongside established flexo lines has helped converters adopt a more sustainable 'print-on-demand' business model for shorter-run labels and packaging.

Hybrid printing can be a more sustainable and economical approach. "The flexo technologies being retrofitted with add-on features to a digital press are referred to as hybrid," explained Ajit Bharadwaj of Vinsak. "Features such as variable data printing, foiling, stamping, die-cutting, and more automated features are increasingly in demand among converters. Reducing avoidable print waste saves both converters and brands money and reduces the need to handle excess printed stock," he said.

Parwez Izhar, senior vice president of the printing cylinders business at UFlex shares that the Indian packaging industry is witnessing a surge in smart packaging that features technologies such as track-and-trace systems integrated into labels and packaging including RFID, NFC codes, QR codes, holograms, and more.

Izhar explains that approximately 20% of the gravure market share has shifted to flexo, primarily due to its cost-effectiveness and faster turnaround time. He says, "In the label industry, both flexo and digital are gaining ground, and with the increasing demand for short-run jobs, converters are also turning to digital."

"However, converters are not focusing on just one approach, they are thinking about growth. Many opt for both technologies—if they have flexo, they add digital. Converters recognize the demand for a premium look and feel, so the future lies in hybrid technologies that can meet all the quality, volume, and variable data requirements," Izhar adds.

The automated flexo presses that include hybrid LED UV systems, die-cut units, pre-register, auto-register, movable turn bar, lam and relam units, peel and seal kits, and foiling stations for labels, shrink sleeves, and flexible packaging are increasing in global demand. Faridabad-based Multitec's mid-web flexo presses can print on various substrates including thin and extensible materials with capability ranging from 10 microns up to 450 microns at 200 meters a minute with impressive registration and low setup wastage.

Multitec generally leads the industry in new technology adoption and implementation with 40% of its manufacturing being exported. Amit Ahuja, managing director of Multitec explained, "The growing short-run demand is creating a market space for digital. This does not pose any threat to veteran flexo users – but the future is in the hybrid production of labels together with the increasing demand for more automation features and quicker and more precise make-ready solutions." ■



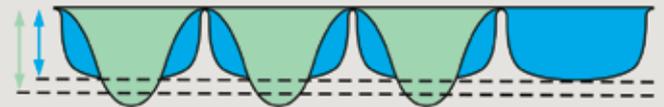
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