

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

Pepsico takes a crack at the Indian biscuit market

fe Bureau

Pune, Jun 18

The Rs 10,000-crore snack market in India has just got spiced up. After Kurkure's success, Frito-Lay India, the food division of Pepsico India has now forayed into the 1500-million tonne biscuit category dominated by Parle, Britannia and ITC Foods.

Frito-Lay has launched 'Aliva' - baked savoury crackers, specially made for the Indian market by blending the texture of biscuits and flavour of Indian namkeens.

The company is planning to tap into the segment that exists between salty snacks and biscuits, Vidur Vyas, executive vice-president, marketing, Frito-Lay India, said. The company is hoping to replicate this marketing success story with Aliva as well. This is a segment that is unique to the Indian market and the group does not have a presence in this segment elsewhere globally, Rajeev Kumar, vice-president, operations, Frito-Lay India, said.

A new baking line has been set up at the company's Ranjangaon plant in Pune district that manufactures Lays potato chips, Leher Kurkure and Cheeto brands. Aliva

would be entirely manufactured out of the Pune plant, Vyas said. Aliva has been in the process of development for the last two years and is a baked product made from wheat and dal.

The company initially plans to tap top metros and reach out to malls to market its product and a week later the product will be available across India. Kurkure's is currently available across one million outlets in India.

The first phase of the company's growth in India between 1996 to 1999 involved potato chips while the second phase that lasted till 2008 shifted focus on a mix of western and traditional snacks such as Kurkure. "The company is now in its third phase of growth in India. This is where we will look at bridging the gap between namkeens and biscuits," Vyas said.

Aliva will be available in four flavours - pindi masala, tomato, roasted spices and mint flavour and herbs. Aliva will be available for an introductory price of Rs 12 for a 60-gm pack as against Parle's Monaco that is available for Rs 7 for a 75-gm pack and Britannia's 50:50 that sells for Rs 7 for 65 gm.