

News monitored for: Pepsi - Corporate

# Sweet Nothings: Pepsi to Cut Sugar in Drinks

Beverages giant to reduce sugar content in juices and carbonated drinks in India by 2025

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**New Delhi:** PepsiCo will reduce sugar content in its juices and carbonated drinks in India by 2025 as part of a global pledge announced by Chief Executive Indra Nooyi on Monday amid a backlash against such products over an obesity epidemic and illnesses such as diabetes. Several countries are also considering a sugar tax to reduce consumption of sugary drinks.

As part of the initiative, the company will introduce smaller sizes and bring zero-calorie drinks to India with close to two-thirds of the company's beverages having 100 calories or less per 12-ounce serving.

"We have started the sugar reduction journey across colas, flavours and juices. We will be replacing sugar with natural

and artificial sweeteners across our portfolio, and will also reduce portion sizes of beverages in bottles and cans," PepsiCo India Chairman D Shivakumar told ET. Pepsi began selling colas in 150-ml cans, the smallest in the domestic market, in February. "These are now being

**Pepsi says two-thirds of its beverages will have 100 calories or less per 12-ounce serving**

extended to other brands such as 7Up, Mountain Dew, Diet Pepsi and Mirinda. This is about portion control," Shivakumar said. "For the next 10 years we will focus on products, planet, and people."

The company began testing the use of plant-based sweetener stevia in 7Up in August, leading to a cut of 30% sugar content.

**Towards a Healthy Portfolio >> 16**

## A FIZZY NOTE FROM NOOYI



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# Moving Towards a Healthy Portfolio

## ►► From Page 1

That's the first time stevia was used in 7Up anywhere in the world and in a fizzy drink in India. The Indian government had urged Noyi to reduce sugar in its beverages two years ago during an India trip.

A PepsiCo India spokesperson said the company is in the process of taking its vitamin and electrolyte fortified brand 7Up Revive national and has stepped up use of grains, fruit and vegetables in oats brand Quaker. Lime-lemon drink Nimbooz already combines fruit juice with fizz.

Fizzy drinks now contribute less than 25% of PepsiCo's global sales, according to data by global research firm Mintel. Other unswee-

tened drinks the company makes include Starbucks and Pure Leaf ready-to-drink coffee and iced tea, juices and Gatorade sports drinks.

The commitment to boost nutritional content extends to snacks as well, PepsiCo said. The US parent has said that by 2025, three-quarters of its global foods portfolio will restrict sodium to 1.3 milligrams per calorie. Also, three-fourths won't exceed 1.1 grams of saturated fat per 100 calories. PepsiCo said it has made "significant strides and is now frying snacks in many countries using heart-healthy oil". In India, its snack brands include Lays chips and Kurkure.

## SUSTAINABILITY STEPS

On sustainability, the PepsiCo spo-

kesperson said, "The India business is the first in the global system to get to positive water balance, by recharging and replenishing water. In India, we have delivered a reduction of 34% in beverages and 39% in foods. And Quaker has pledged to provide a minimum of 400,000 meals to children."

Other goals include reducing its carbon footprint and achieving increased water savings worldwide. These will include 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions across production, packaging and transportation by 2030. On water, the firm said it will target 15% improvement in water efficiency by 2025 and replenishing all of the water it consumes in manufacturing operations.

On October 11, the World Health Organization (WHO) had urged countries to tax beverages with high sugar content.

"A tax of 20% results in a drop in sales and consumption of sugary drinks, which are driving the obesity crisis. If governments tax products like sugary drinks, they can reduce suffering and save lives. They can also cut healthcare costs and increase revenues to invest in health services," WHO said.

UK and Portugal have said they will introduce a sugary drinks tax. Mexico has already introduced it, while the Philippines and South Africa are learnt to be considering such a levy. In India, the implementation of a sugar tax is being debated.