India Equity Research Life Insurance July 15, 2025

HDFC LIFE INSURANCE

RESULT UPDATE

KEY DATA

Rating	BUY
Sector relative	Outperformer
Price (INR)	757
12 month price target (INR)	920
52 Week High/Low	821/584
Market cap (INR bn/USD bn)	1,631/19.0
Free float (%)	49.6
Avg. daily value traded (INR mn)	2,338.2

SHAREHOLDING PATTERN

	Mar-25	Dec-24	Sep-24
Promoter	50.3%	50.3%	50.3%
FII	25.6%	25.1%	25.6%
DII	13.3%	13.7%	13.3%
Pledge	0%	0%	0%

FINANCIAL	S		(1	NR mn)
Year to March	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
APE	154,790	174,688	201,684	233,431
VNB	39,620	45,656	53,042	60,698
VNB margin (%)	25.6	26.1	26.3	26.4
EV	554,230	647,316	745,293	860,042
APAT	18,108	21,381	25,215	28,936
FDEPS	8.4	10.1	11.9	13.7
RoEV (%)	17.4	17.8	16.1	16.4
P/EV (x)	2.9	2.5	2.2	1.9
P/E (x)	90.1	74.9	63.5	55.3

CHANGE IN ESTIMATES

INR bn	Revised es	stimates	% Revi	sion
Year to March	FY26E	FY26E FY27E		FY27E
APE	174.7	201.7	-	-
VNB	45.7	53.0	-	-
VNB Margin (%)	26.1	26.3	0bp	0bp
Embedded value	647.3	745.3	1.6	1.5

PRICE PERFORMANCE



Business as usual

HDFCLIFE's Q1FY26 total APE grew 12.4% YoY (+0.8% versus estimate). Both retail and group businesses grew evenly at 12.4% YoY and 12% YoY, respectively. Despite surrender value impact and lower fixed cost absorption, HDFCLIFE reported a 7bp YoY increase in VNB margin to 25.1%, resulting in a Q1FY26 VNB of INR 8.1bn (+12.7% YoY), i.e. 1.9% above our estimate. The company aims to grow VNB in line with top line in FY26.

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We forecast HDFCLIFE would deliver APE/VNB growth of 12.9%/15.2% in FY26. In all, we maintain FY26 and FY27 VNB estimates and FY26-28E RoEV of ~16%. Reiterate 'BUY' with an unchanged TP of INR920, implying FY26E/27E P/EV of 3.1x/2.7x.

Growth healthy despite high base

HDFCLIFE delivered total APE growth of 12.4% YoY (on a high base of 23.2% YoY) as retail/group APE expanded 12.4%/12% YoY. Growth was driven mainly by PAR products (+123.8% YoY); ULIPs grew just 11.8% YoY. PAR mix thus rose to 27.4% (+1,366 YoY/889bp QoQ) on an APE basis and that of ULIPs' fell to 32.5% (-15bp YoY/-540bp QoQ). Management stated that growth appeared moderate due to Q1FY25's high base and that they expect growth to be back-ended in FY26. Within group business, savings/annuity grew strongly at 19%/12.4% YoY while protection grew just 8.5% YoY. Management stated the slowdown in group protection was largely a result of slower credit growth mainly in the MFI segment.

In Q1, banca/non-banking alliances registered growth of 8.9%/13.6% YoY while direct channel grew just 4.2% YoY; agency channel edged down 0.6% YoY due to the industry-wide slowdown in the agency channel. VNB margin improved slightly by 7bp YoY to 25.1%. Management indicated that a 30bp drag from revised surrender norms, investments in proprietary channels and tech initiatives (Project Inspire) was offset by a better product mix. Management stated that negative impact of 60bp YoY in Q1FY26 from lower fixed cost absorption is expected to normalise over FY26.

Q1FY26 operating RoEV at 13.6%; PAT improves 14.4% YoY

For Q1FY26, back book surplus improved 14.8% YoY while new business strain increased 15.7% YoY; overall underwriting surplus improved 11.1% YoY. IEV rose 17.6% YoY to INR583.5bn as economic variance aided EV by INR9.6bn. Operating RoEV for Q1 came in at 13.6%. Q1FY26 renewal premium growth was healthy at 18.6% YoY while PAT improved 14.4% YoY to INR5.5bn. HDFCLIFE reported an AUM of INR3.6tn (+14.7% YoY/5.8% QoQ).

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Year to March (INR mn)	Q1FY26	Q1FY25	% Change	Q4FY25	% Change
APE	32,250	28,700	12.4	51,860	-37.8
VNB	8,090	7,180	12.7	13,760	-41.2
VNB margin (%)	25.1	25.0	7bp	26.5	-145bp
EV	583,500	496,100	17.6	554,200	5.3

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Financial Statements

Policyholder AC (INR mn)

Year to March	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
Total Premium earned	698,370	812,286	938,489	1,083,306
Commission	78,445	73,343	87,430	98,784
Operating expenses	62,508	75,708	86,944	99,299
Provisions and taxes	(167)	9,293	10,102	11,005
Benefits Paid	394,977	477,307	540,892	617,697
Other income	2,849	3,065	3,298	3,548
Transfer from shareholders AC	1,073	966	869	782
Net Cash Flow	166,529	180,667	217,288	260,851
Income from Investments	259,548	254,550	308,957	353,318
Change in valuation of liabilities	415,546	423,901	512,037	596,972
Surplus/(deficit) after tax	10,531	11,316	14,209	17,197
Transfer to shareholders AC	10,069	10,184	12,788	15,477

Shareholders AC (INR mn)

Year to March	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
Transfer from Policyholders' a/c	10,069	10,184	12,788	15,477
Investment income and other Income	12,011	14,938	16,485	17,900
Total income	22,080	25,122	29,273	33,377
Expenses	2,200	2,530	2,910	3,346
Contribution to Policyholders' a/c	975	966	869	782
Provisions other than taxation	126	138	152	167
Profit before tax	18,779	21,488	25,341	29,081
Taxes	671	107	127	145
РАТ	18,108	21,381	25,215	28,936

Balance Sheet (INR mn)

Year to March	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
Share capital	21,530	21,530	21,530	21,530
Reserve and surplus	135,557	151,592	170,503	192,205
Net worth	157,086	173,122	192,033	213,734
Borrowings	29,500	29,500	29,500	29,500
Credit/debit balance in fair value a/c	4,460	4,817	5,202	5,618
Policyholders' a/c	3,193,439	3,617,340	4,129,377	4,726,349
Funds for future appropriation	12,576	13,708	15,129	16,848
Total Liabilities	3,397,062	3,838,487	4,371,241	4,992,050
Investments	3,363,988	3,802,204	4,331,439	4,948,385
Loans	23,783	26,161	28,777	31,655
Fixed assets + DTA	6,086	6,436	6,786	7,136
Net current assets	3,204	3,685	4,238	4,873
Goodwill	0	0	0	0
Total Assets	3,397,062	3,838,487	4,371,241	4,992,050

Source: Company and Nuvama estimates

Year to March	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
NBP	333,923	433,831	502,900	585,711
APE	154,790	174,688	201,684	233,431
VNB	39,620	45,656	53,042	60,698
EV	554,230	647,316	745,293	860,042
EVOP	79,220	88,431	104,280	121,983
PAT	18,108	21,381	25,215	28,936
FDEPS (INR)	8.4	10.1	11.9	13.7
FDBVPS (INR)	72.9	81.9	90.8	101.1
Growth (YoY %)				
NBP	12.7	29.9	15.9	16.5
APE	16.5	12.9	15.5	15.7
VNB	13.2	15.2	16.2	14.4
EV	16.8	16.8	15.1	15.4
EVOP	14.5	11.6	17.9	17.0
PAT	15.0	18.1	17.9	14.8
FDEPS	14.9	20.3	17.9	14.8
FDBVPS	10.4	12.3	10.9	11.3
Expense ratios (%)				
Commissions/TWRP	11.2	9.0	9.3	9.1
Opex/TWRP	9.0	9.3	9.3	9.2
Total expenses/TWRP	20.2	18.3	18.6	18.3
Efficiency ratios (%)				
VNB Margin	25.6	26.1	26.3	26.4
ROEV return	17.4	17.8	16.1	16.4
Operating RoEV	16.7	16.0	16.1	16.4
Non-operating RoEV	0.8	1.8	0	0
RoAA	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
RoAE	12.1	12.9	13.8	14.3
Valuation				
Year to March	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
P/E (x)	90.1	74.9	63.5	55.3
P/ABV (x)	10.4	9.2	83	75

Key metrics (INR mn)

P/E (X)	90.1	74.9	63.5	55.3
P/ABV (x)	10.4	9.2	8.3	7.5
P/EV (x)	2.9	2.5	2.2	1.9
P/VNB Multiple (x)	29.2	23.6	18.5	14.4
P/EVOP (x)	20.6	18.4	15.6	13.4
P/VIF (x)	4.2	3.6	3.3	2.9
P/AUM (x)	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3

Valuation on TP				
Year to March	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
P/E (x)	109.4	91.0	77.2	67.2
P/ABV (x)	12.6	11.2	10.1	9.1
P/EV (x)	3.6	3.1	2.7	2.3
P/VNB Multiple (x)	38.0	31.2	25.1	20.1
P/EVOP (x)	25.0	22.4	19.0	16.2
P/VIF (x)	5.1	4.4	4.0	3.5
P/AUM (x)	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.4

Exhibit 1: Total APE up 12.4% YoY; VNB margin improves 7bp YoY to 25.1%

Particulars (INR bn)	Q1FY25	Q2FY25	Q3FY25	Q4FY25	Q1FY26	YoY (%/bp)	QoQ (%/bp)
Total APE	28.7	38.5	35.7	51.9	32.3	12.4	(37.8)
Individual APE	24.7	33.9	31.2	46.3	27.8	12.4	(40.1)
Group APE	4.0	4.6	4.5	5.5	4.5	12.0	(19.0)
Protection APE share (%)	14.0	12.3	13.0	7.0	14.0	-	697bp
New Business Premium	64.0	81.0	79.0	109.7	72.7	13.6	(33.7)
Renewal Premium	64.1	88.3	93.8	130.6	76.0	18.6	(41.8)
VNB (calculated for Qtr)	7.2	9.4	9.3	13.8	8.1	12.7	(41.2)
VNB Margin (%) calculated	25.0	24.3	26.1	26.5	25.1	7bp	(145)bp
FYTD VNB	7.2	16.6	25.9	39.6	8.1	12.7	(79.6)
FYTD VNB Margin (%)	25.0	24.6	25.1	25.6	25.1	7bp	(51)bp

Source: Company, Nuvama Research

Exhibit 2: PAR share in APE mix improves 1,366bp YoY to 27.4%; ULIPs' share falls 15bp YoY to 32.5%

Particulars	Q1FY25	Q2FY25	Q3FY25	Q4FY25	Q1FY26	YoY (%/bp)	QoQ (%/bp)
APE Product mix (INR bn)							
Individual Savings	22.0	30.3	27.8	41.9	24.6	12.0	(41.2)
PAR	4.0	4.8	7.5	9.6	8.8	123.8	(8.0)
Non-PAR	8.6	13.7	8.7	12.6	5.3	(39.0)	(58.1)
ULIP	9.4	11.8	11.7	19.7	10.5	11.8	(46.7)
Group savings	1.3	1.6	1.4	3.7	1.5	19 .0	(59.9)
Protection	4.0	4.7	4.6	3.6	4.5	12.4	23.8
Individual Protection	1.5	1.9	1.8	2.2	1.8	19.0	(21.0)
Group Protection	2.5	2.9	2.9	1.4	2.8	8.5	94.6
Annuity	1.4	1.9	1.8	2.6	1.6	12.4	(37.8)
Individual Annuity	1.2	1.8	1.6	2.2	1.4	12.4	(37.6)
Group Annuity	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.2	12.0	(38.9)
Total	28.7	38.5	35.7	51.9	32.3	12.4	(37.8)
APE Product mix (%)							
Individual Savings	76.6	78.7	78.0	80.7	76.3	(26)bp	(440)bp
PAR	13.8	12.6	20.9	18.5	27.4	1,366bp	889bp
Non-PAR	30.1	35.5	24.3	24.3	16.4	(1,376)bp	(790)bp
ULIP	32.7	30.6	32.8	37.9	32.5	(15)bp	(540)bp
Group savings	4.4	4.1	4.0	7.2	4.7	26bp	(257)bp
Protection	14.0	12.3	13.0	7.0	14.0	-	697bp
Individual Protection	5.2	4.8	5.0	4.3	5.5	30bp	116bp
Group Protection	8.8	7.4	8.0	2.7	8.5	(30)bp	581bp
Annuity	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	-	-
Individual Annuity	4.3	4.6	4.5	4.3	4.3	-	1bp
Group Annuity	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.7	-	(1)bp
Total	100	100	100	100	100		

Particulars Q1FY25 Q2FY25 Q3FY25 Q4FY25 Q1FY26 YoY (%/bp) QoQ (%/bp) Channel mix NBP basis (INR bn) CA 24.1 19.9 16.7 16.4 33.0 1.7 (49.2) 6.5 5.1 5.1 6.3 12.1 0.7 (58.0) Agency Broker 1.9 2.4 2.4 3.3 3.6 89.4 10.5 Direct 8.0 8.3 9.1 9.5 9.8 (18.6) (3.1)38.7 40.9 39.3 21.5 Group 32.3 51.5 (23.8) **Total NBP** 64.0 81.0 79.0 109.7 72.7 13.625 (33.7) Channel Mix-NBP basis (%) CA 25.7 29.8 25.2 30.0 23.0 (270)bp (704)bp

8.0

3.0

12.0

51.8

100

11.0

3.0

9.0

47.0

100

7.0

5.0

11.0

54.0

100

(90)bp

200bp

(190)bp

350bp

(404)bp

200bp

204bp

704bp

Exhibit 3: Share of Agency declines 90bp YoY to 7% on NBP basis while CA/direct share decreases 270bp/190bp YoY to 23%/11%

Source: Company, Nuvama Research

Agency

Broker

Direct

Group

Total

Exhibit 4: Persistency down 130bp/10bp YoY in 13/37th month cohort and up 350bp/410bp YoY in 49/61st month

8.1

3.0

11.3

47.8

100

7.9

3.0

12.9

50.5

100

Particulars	Q1FY25	Q2FY25	Q3FY25	Q4FY25	Q1FY26	YoY (%/bp)	QoQ (%/bp)
<u>AUM (INR bn)</u>	3,102	3,249	3,287	3,363	3,559	14.7	5.8
- Equity (%)	34.0	35.0	33.0	31.0	32.0	(200)bp	100bp
- Debt (%)	66.0	65.0	67.0	69.0	68.0	200bp	(100)bp
Persistency (%)							
13th month persistency	87.3	82.5	81.9	82.7	86.0	(130)bp	330bp
25th month persistency	75.9	76.3	75.4	77.4	79.0	310bp	160bp
37th month persistency	73.1	73.1	71.8	71.2	73.0	(10)bp	180bp
49th month persistency	67.5	73.1	68.1	70.2	71.0	350bp	80bp
61st month persistency	59.9	67.9	57.8	61.9	64.0	410bp	210bp
Solvency Ratio (%)	186	181	188	194	192	600bp	(200)bp

Source: Company, Nuvama Research





Exhibit 6: VNB margin increases 7bp YoY to 25.1%



Source: Company, Nuvama Research

Company, Nuvama Research

Exhibit 7: ULIP share in mix declines 15bp YoY to 32.5%



Note: as a % of total APE

Source: Company, Nuvama Research

Exhibit 9: Persistency improves in 25th/49th/61th month*



Source: Company, Nuvama Research

* cohort in FY25

Exhibit 8: Share of banca declines 500bp YoY to 60%



Note: as a % of individual APE Source: Company, Nuvama Research

Exhibit 10: Debt share in AUM improves to 68%



Exhibit 11: Income statement: PAT rises 14.4% YoY to INR5.5bn in Q1FY26

<u>Re-arranged income statement</u> (INR bn)	Q1FY25	Q4FY25	Q1FY26	YOY(%)	QoQ(%)	FY25	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
Policyholder's account									
Reported APE	28.7	51.9	32.3	12.4	(37.8)	154.8	174.7	201.7	233.4
Premiums									
- First Year Premium	23.6	44.0	25.5	8.2	(42.0)	129.8	145.9	168.2	194.3
- Renewal Premium	64.1	130.6	76.0	18.6	(41.8)	376.8	389.1	447.3	511.5
- Single Premium	40.4	65.7	47.2	16.8	(28.2)	203.9	287.9	334.7	391.4
Net premium income	125.1	237.7	144.7	15.6	(39.1)	696.2	812.3	938.5	1,083.3
Commissions									
- First Year Premium	8.4	21.6	14.2	69.7	(33.9)	58.6	43.8	53.8	60.2
- Renewal Premium	1.1	2.0	1.3	21.2	(35.1)	5.9	24.9	28.2	32.2
- Single Premium	5.2	2.3	1.9	(62.8)	(13.8)	13.9	4.6	5.4	6.3
Net commissions and rewards	14.7	25.8	17.5	19.0	(32.2)	78.4	73.3	87.4	98.8
Operating expenses related to insurance business	12.7	17.2	15.1	19.1	(12.2)	62.2	75.7	86.9	99.3
Provisions and taxes	0.1	1.8	1.6	1,107.6	(10.7)	(0.2)	9.3	10.1	11.0
Benefits paid	88.3	110.4	86.8	(1.7)	(21.4)	393.5	477.3	540.9	617.7
Other income and trf to shareholders	0.7	1.0	1.4	92.1	41.2	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.3
Net cash flow	10.0	83.4	25.0	149.5	(70.0)	166.1	180.7	217.3	260.9
Investment income	141.2	0.2	145.9	3.3	80,893.3	259.5	254.5	309.0	353.3
Change in liabilities	145.7	82.0	170.2	16.8	107.6	415.2	423.9	512.0	597.0
Surplus	5.6	1.6	0.8	(85.2)	(48.9)	10.4	11.3	14.2	17.2
- transfer to shareholders	2.7	2.5	3.7	37.5	48.5	10.0	10.2	12.8	15.5
- FFA	3.0	(0.8)	(2.8)	(195.5)	NM	0.5	1.1	1.4	1.7
Shareholder's account									
Transfer from policyholder's account	2.7	2.5	3.7	37.5	48.5	10.0	10.2	12.8	15.5
Income	2.6	3.3	3.2	24.5	(2.2)	11.3	14.9	16.5	17.9
Expenses including trfs	0.3	0.9	1.3	381.6	43.4	2.6	3.6	3.9	4.3
PBT	5.0	4.9	5.6	12.7	15.3	18.7	21.5	25.3	29.1
Taxes	0.2	0.1	0.1	(28.5)	46.7	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.1
РАТ	4.8	4.8	5.5	14.4	14.7	18.0	21.4	25.2	28.9
FDEPS (INR)	2.26	2.25	2.58	14.4	14.7	8.5	10.1	11.9	13.7

Exhibit 12: QoQ analysis of change in IEV; closing IEV increases 16.8% YoY to INR554.2bn

Particulars (INR bn)	Q1FY25	Q2FY25	Q3FY25	Q4FY25	Q1FY26	YoY (%)	QoQ (%)
Opening EV	474.6	496.0	521.2	532.6	554.2	16.8	4.1
VNB	7.2	9.4	9.3	13.7	8.1	12.5	(40.9)
Unwind	9.3	9.6	9.7	9.8	10.6	14.0	8.2
Expected return on existing business	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	NM	NM
Variance in operating experience	0.9	0.2	0.3	(0.2)	0.1	(88.9)	(150.0)
Change in operating assumptions	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	NM	NM
IEV operating earnings	17.4	19.2	19.3	23.3	18.8	8.0	(19.3)
Economic variances	4.0	9.6	(8.2)	(1.8)	9.6	140.0	(633.3)
Total IEV earnings	21.4	28.8	11.1	21.5	28.4	32.7	32.1
Dividend and capital injections	-	(3.6)	0.3	0.1	0.9	NM	800.0
Closing EV	496.0	521.2	532.6	554.2	583.5	17.6	5.3

Source: Company, Nuvama Research

Exhibit 13: Operating RoEV declines 110bp YoY to 13.6%

Particulars (%)	Q1FY25	Q2FY25	Q3FY25	Q4FY25	Q1FY26	YoY (%)	QoQ (%)
Operating RoEV	14.7	15.5	14.8	17.5	13.6	(110)bp	(393)bp
Non-operating RoEV	3.4	7.7	(6.3)	(1.4)	6.9	356bp	828bp
ROEV return %	18.0	23.2	8.5	16.1	20.5	246bp	435bp

Source: Company, Nuvama Research

Exhibit 14: EV movement table

Particulars (INR mn)	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
Opening IEV	329,580	395,270	474,680	554,230	647,316	745,293
VNB / Value added by new business during the period	36,744	35,010	39,620	45,656	53,042	61,515
Expected return on existing business	26,244	32,400	38,450	42,676	51,138	60,369
Variance in Operating experience	1,552	1,500	1,150	100	100	100
Mortality / morbidity	0	0	0	0	0	0
Expenses	0	0	0	0	0	0
Persistency	1,552	1,500	1,150	100	100	100
Others	1,552	0	0	0	0	0
Change in operating assumptions	350	300	0	0	0	0
Other operating variance	0	0	0	0	0	0
IEV operating earnings	64,890	69,210	79,220	88,431	104,280	121,983
Economic variances	(15,940)	13,500	3,570	10,000	0	0
From actual return in excess of expected real-world return	0	0	0	0	0	0
From change in economic assumption	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other non-operating variances	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total IEV earnings	48,950	82,710	82,790	98,431	104,280	121,983
Merger with Exide	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital contributions / dividend payouts	16,740	(3,300)	(3,240)	(5,345)	(6,304)	(7,234)
Closing IEV	395,270	474,680	554,230	647,316	745,293	860,042

Exhibit 15: EV and VNB margin sensitivity

	FY	23	FY	24	FY25	
Particulars	% Change in VNB Margin	% Change in EV	% Change in VNB Margin	% Change in EV	Change in VNB margin	% Change in EV
Increase by 100bps in the reference rates	(1.5)	(2.4)	(1.2)	(2.7)	(1.4)	(2.7)
Decrease by 100bps in the reference rates	0.7	2.1	0.8	2.6	0.9	2.6
10% decrease in equity values	(0.1)	(1.3)	(0.2)	(1.5)	(0.2)	(1.4)
10% increase in the discontinuance rates	(0.3)	(0.3)	(0.6)	(0.1)	(0.9)	(0.1)
10% decrease in the discontinuance rates	0.3	(0.3)	0.6	0.1	0.9	0.1
10% increase in maintenance expenses	(0.5)	(0.8)	(0.6)	(0.9)	(0.8)	(0.9)
10% decrease in maintenance expenses	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.9	0.8	0.9
10% increase in acquisition expenses	(3.9)	NA	(3.2)	NA	(2.5)	NA
10% decrease in acquisition expenses	3.9	NA	3.2	NA	2.5	NA
10% increase in mortality/ morbidity rates	(1.4)	(1.1)	(1.5)	(1.2)	(1.6)	(1.2)
10% decrease in mortality/ morbidity rates	1.4	1.1	1.5	1.2	1.6	1.2
Tax rates increased to 25%	(5.8)	(8.9)	(5.1)	(9.3)	(4.5)	(9.5)

Source: Company, Nuvama Research

Exhibit 16: Changes in estimates

		Earlier		I	Revised		Cha	nge (%/bp)	
(INR bn)	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
APE	174.7	201.7	233.4	174.7	201.7	233.4	-	-	-
VNB	45.7	53.0	61.5	45.7	53.0	61.5	-	-	-
VNB Margin (%)	26.1	26.3	26.4	26.1	26.3	26.4	0bp	0bp	0bp
Embedded Value	637.3	734.5	848.4	647.3	745.3	860.0	1.6	1.5	1.4
Operating RoEV (%)	16.0	16.2	16.5	16.0	16.1	16.4	Obps	-13bp	-12bp
Target Price (INR)		920			920				
Rating		Buy			Buy				

Q1FY26 conference call highlights

Growth outlook

Management stated that APE growth in Q1FY26 was in line with expectations. As the year progresses, growth is expected to be driven by both an increase in average ticket size and the number of policies (NOP). They indicated H2FY26 growth should outpace H1FY26's given the high base effect from H1FY25 (25.2% YoY growth). Management stated growth will be lower than 18–20% growth in FY25. While NOP growth was weak in Q1, the two-year CAGR stands at 10%. Management expects a recovery in NOP growth going forward. The company had consciously slowed growth in the lower ticket size segment due to profitability considerations while NOP in the above INR0.1mn segment has seen steady growth.

VNB margin

Management indicated that a 30bp drag from revised surrender norms, investments in proprietary channels and Project Inspire was offset by a better product mix. Despite a 1,600bp shift from non-PAR to PAR savings, VNB margin rose 7bp YoY to 25.1% aided by rider attachment, longer-tenure products and improved pricing. Margins are expected to remain range-bound in FY26, with potential expansion over three—five years. A 60bp negative impact from lower volumes YoY may normalise as the year progresses. The company aims to grow VNB in line with top line in FY26.

Product mix

ULIP

Management noted that ULIP performed well in Q1FY26 supported by the market recovery. While product designs evolve with changing customer preferences, there have been no recent changes in the ULIP product structure.

PAR and NPAR

The company also noted that the margin differential between ULIP and PAR products is narrowing driven by high sum assured product sales and stronger persistency. NPAR sales were temporarily moderated as the company stayed away from irrational pricing. However, with improving yields, management expects a rebound. The share of NPAR has declined while PAR has increased, but NPAR is likely to recover and end up in the mid-20% range by end-FY26. PAR mix may moderate slightly, but is expected to remain above 25%.

Retail protection

Retail protection business grew 19% YoY in APE terms. All the three recently launched retail products—Ultimate, Super, and Elite Plus—have performed well. The company continuously redesigns offerings based on customer risk appetite and experience, and some of the newer products have effectively addressed these evolving needs.

Group protection

Management noted that the pace of decline in MFI has eased among larger partners due to a more stable regulatory environment and a favourable base effect. The downward trend in MFI volumes, was more than offset by growth in the non-MFI segment. This growth came from both expanding existing partner relationships into new business lines and on-boarding new partners.

Distribution Channels

Agency

Agent addition remained strong with 23,000 agents on-boarded in Q1FY26. The company is investing in technology and training to enhance ground-level monitoring and agent lifecycle management. These initiatives are expected to support higher volumes without proportionate headcount increases while maintaining a focus on branch-level profitability. Management expects the agency channel to outpace other channels driven by continued investments in its development.

Banca

The product mix with non-HDFC Bank bancassurance partners is currently slightly better than that with HDFC Bank. However, digital integration benefits with HDFC Bank are expected to start flowing in from Q2FY26, which should help improve the product mix there. Currently, protection products account for 3–4% of the mix, and management is focused on increasing this share within the bancassurance channel. Counter share expansion within HDFC Bank took place in H1FY25 and has now stabilised. Going forward, growth from this channel will largely mirror HDFC Bank's own growth trajectory.

Company Description

HDFC Life has been consistently rated as one of the top players in India's life insurance sector on APE as well as NBP. It was set up in FY2000 as a joint venture between HDFC and Standard Life Aberdeen. The company offers a range of individual and group insurance solutions that meet various customer needs such as protection, pension, savings, investment and health, catering to a diverse range of customers. It was listed on NSE and BSE in FY18.

It reported AUM of INR3.36tn for the year ended FY25 and solvency ratio of 194%, above the regulatory threshold of 150%. HDFC Life has a market share of 11.1% of individual APE (FY25). HDFC Life has one of the most balanced product mixes in the industry. On the distribution front, bancassurance contributes to around two-third of Individual APE (66%), while agency contributes ~19%. HDFC Life continues to benefit from its presence across the country with 650 branches and additional distribution touch points through 300+ partnerships.

Investment Theme

HDFC Life is among the top three private life insurer in India It has been the unrivalled innovation champion in life insurance—particularly adoption of pure protection products and, lately, highly successful introduction of annuities, NPAR and PAR products. A premium is usually assigned to this business, considering the inherent value creation opportunity (not captured by its current fundamentals), its pension presence and prescient capacity build-up in a white space (retirement planning).

Key Risks

- Protracted weakness in capital markets affecting ULIP persistency: Limited renewals obviously hurt a largely fixed cost-quasi asset management business through a rundown in asset size and consequent cost-driven profitability pressures.
- Interest rates and rate curves, may impact availability and attractiveness of FRAs which may consequently impact insurers ability to design and sell products. HDFCLIFE has a high percentage of sales of non-participating products (including annuities), which need to hedged using FRAs.
- Regulatory changes may have a profound impact- especially with increased adoption of open architecture, changes in commission and expenses of management limits, use and file of products, introduction of composite insurance licenses etc.
- Technology-based disruption attempts, which may break the stronghold of existing players, if new licenses are granted.

Additional Data

Management

CEO	Vibha Padalkar
CFO	Niraj Shah
CO0	Sameer Yogishwar
Other	
Auditor	B S R & Co. LLP & G.M. Kapadia & Co.

Recent Company Research

Date	Title	Price	Reco
17-Apr-25	Growth moderation leads to miss; Result Update	716	Buy
15-Jan-25	Growth slows; margin bounces back; <i>Result Update</i>	594	Buy
15-Oct-24	One-offs affect margin; <i>Result</i> Update	714	Buy

Holdings – Top 10*

	% Holding		% Holding
Exide Industire	4.04	Capital Group	1.91
ICICI Prudentia	2.62	Blackrock Inc	1.81
FMR LLC	2.53	CAMAS INV PTE L	1.70
SBI Fund Manage	2.09	Nippon Life Ind	1.44
Vanguard Group	1.94	Franklin Resour	1.26
*Latest public data			

Recent Sector Research

Date	Name of Co./Sector	Title
10-Jul-25	Life Insurance	Growth softens; Sector Update
09-Jun-25	Life Insurance	May-25: Base effect dampens growth; Sector Update
14-May-25	Max Financial	VNB growth set to improve; <i>Result</i> Update

Rating and Daily Volume Interpretation



Source: Bloomberg, Nuvama research

Rating Rationale & Distribution: Nuvama Research

Rating	Expected absolute returns over 12 months	Rating Distribution
Buy	15%	203
Hold	<15% and >-5%	64
Reduce	<-5%	36

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