

Spencer's ties up with UK's Woolworths

Our Bureau
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SPENCER'S Retail, part of the Rs 13,500 crore RPG Enterprises, has signed an exclusive tieup with the £3 billion Woolworths plc of the UK, which owns the world-famous toy brand Chad Valley.

This, according to RPG group vice-chairman Sanjiv Goenka, is the first of the many international tieups that are on the cards for Spencer's.

"We plan to enter at least three more tieups within the next few months," said Mr Goenka at the sidelines of a press conference. He was in the city to inaugurate India's as well as Asia's first Chad Valley store at

Spencer's South City.

Woolworths' head of international trade Simon Brown said while large-format stores were their principal focus, at least two standalone stores were also planned in the next 12-18 months.

"We looked at the Indian market for three to four years before entering and hope to grow by 50-60% each year," said Mr Brown.

He added that Woolworths' Ladybird range of kid's clothing was likely to be introduced in India by September, as part of its tie-up with Spencer's.

According to Mr Brown, Woolworths is planning to generate as much business in India as in the UK. "In the UK, our sales are

roughly around \$5 million," he said.

In India, too, while the market is largely unorganised so far, the potential is huge. Chad Valley Toys cover a wide range, primarily for new-borns to 10-year old.

According to Mr Goenka, data from the 2001 census states, out of 1 billion Indians, 16% were children below 7 years, while another 19% were in the age group between 7 and 14 year.

"Therefore there are 350 million reasons for Spencer's to have a serious look at the toy business. It's a very promising line of business," said Mr Goenka.

The Chad Valley range, priced upwards of Rs 49, will be available across 400 Spencer's stores located across 35 Indian cities.