

BUY TP: Rs 918 | ▲ 21%

HDFC LIFE

Insurance

16 July 2025

A steady quarter

- HDFCLIFE reported healthy APE growth of 13% YoY in Q1FY26, stronger than industry growth (up 7%)
- VNB margins witnessed expansion of 9bps YoY, aided by higher average ticket sizes, and ULIPs with higher rider attachments
- We maintain BUY on HDFCLIFE with TP to Rs 918 (earlier Rs 900), implying 2.5x in its Jun'27 P/EV. HDFCLIFE remains our top pick

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Healthy APE growth: APE grew 13% YoY to Rs 32.3bn, on a higher base (for Q1FY25 APE was up 23% YoY) vs our estimate of Rs 32.6bn. The company continued to demonstrate a steady APE growth despite the volatile/challenging external environment. Further, it outperformed industry growth during the quarter. Overall, industry APE growth, including LICI, was at 7% YoY in Q1FY26 and APE for private players grew 10% YoY during the quarter. Thus, HDFC Life outperformed the industry growth, in terms of the overall industry as well as private APE growth. Consequently, market share gains stood at 70bps YoY, in terms of new business premiums.

VNB margin expansion: VNB margin expanded by 9bps YoY to 25.09% in Q1FY26 vs our expectation of 26.1%. This was primarily aided by higher average ticket sizes, supported by traction in select unit linked and par products, coupled with enhanced rider attachments to ULIPs. Contrary to initial expectations, ULIPs remained strong, aided by buoyant equity markets. ULIPs' share currently stands at 33% in the product mix vs 32% in Q1FY25 vs 40% in Q4FY25. Management anticipates a more balanced contribution from both ticket size and policy volumes. Further, absolute VNB increased 13% YoY to Rs 8.1bn vs our estimate of Rs 8.5bn. The company foresees a gradual shift towards traditional products, thereby lending support to margins.

Maintain BUY: We believe HDFCLIFE is well placed to achieve its APE growth outlook of 18-21% and VNB margin of 26-27% in FY26-28E, aided by better product mix and strong APE growth momentum. Incremental focus on the agency channel growth, along with increasing penetration in Tier-2 and -3 cities bode well. Further, regulatory concerns are beginning to recede while some competitive intensity persists. Hence, we maintain BUY on HDFCLIFE with TP to Rs 918 (earlier Rs 674), implying 2.5x in its Jun'27 P/EV and continue to prefer HDFCLIFE as our top pick.

Key changes

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	Target	Rating	
	A	∢ ▶	

Ticker/Price	HDFCLIFE IN/Rs 757
Market cap	US\$ 18.8bn
Free float	50%
3M ADV	US\$ 26.8mn
52wk high/low	Rs 821/Rs 584
Promoter/FPI/DII	50%/25%/13%

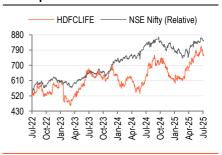
Source: NSE | Price as of 15 Jul 2025

Key financials

Y/E 31 Mar	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E
NBP (Rs mn)	3,33,653	3,92,346	4,55,121
APE (Rs mn)	1,54,790	1,86,522	2,20,096
VNB (Rs mn)	39,626	46,589	56,248
Embedded Value (Rs mn)	5,54,230	6,43,744	7,50,258
VNB margin (%)	25.6	25.9	26.5
EVPS (Rs)	257.4	299.0	348.5
EPS (Rs)	8.4	10.3	11.4
Consensus EPS (Rs)	-	-	-
P/EV (x)	2.9	2.5	2.2

Source: Company, Bloomberg, BOBCAPS Research

Stock performance

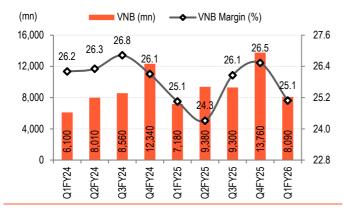


Source: NSE



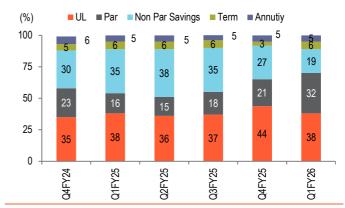


Fig 1 - VNB margin expected to remain range-bound



Source: Company, BOBCAPS Research

Fig 2 – ULIP demand continues to remain strong



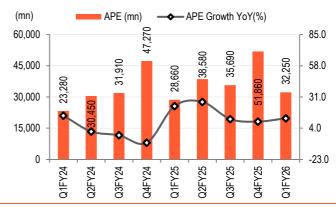
Source: Company, BOBCAPS Research

Fig 3 - Stable gross premium mix



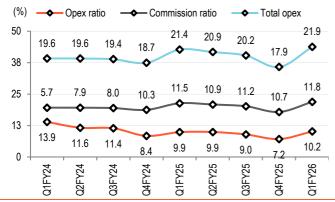
Source: Company, BOBCAPS Research

Fig 4 - APE grew by 12.5% at Rs 32,250 mn



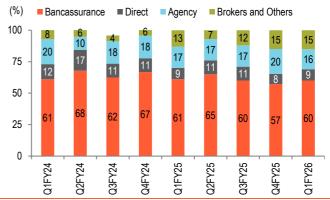
Source: Company, BOBCAPS Research

Fig 5 - Opex ratio came in at 21.9%



Source: Company, BOBCAPS Research

Fig 6 – Growth in agency channel to grow faster than other channels



Source: Company, BOBCAPS Research



Fig 7 - Policyholder's account

(Rs mn)	Q1FY26	Q1FY25	YoY (%)	Q4FY25	QoQ (%)	FY25	FY24	YoY (%)
Gross premium income	1,48,751	1,28,109	16.1	2,40,316	(38.1)	7,10,449	6,30,765	12.6
First Year Premium	25,502	23,579	8.2	43,960	(42.0)	1,29,761	1,11,108	16.8
Renewal Premium	76,030	64,106	18.6	1,30,623	(41.8)	3,76,796	3,34,451	12.7
Single Premium	47,219	40,424	16.8	65,733	(28.2)	2,03,892	1,85,205	10.1
Reinsurance	4,090	3,013	35.8	2,660	53.7	14,288	11,173	27.9
Net premium income	1,44,661	1,25,096	15.6	2,37,656	(39.1)	6,96,161	6,19,592	12.4
Income from investments (Net)	1,45,950	1,41,244	3.3	180	80893.3	2,59,453	3,83,543	(32.4)
Other income	739	667	10.7	768	(3.8)	2,830	3,357	(15.7)
Contribution of funds from Shareholders' A/c	666	64	940.0	227	193.2	1,004	1,251	(19.7)
Total	2,92,015	2,67,072	9.3	2,38,831	22.3	9,59,448	10,07,743	(4.8)
Commission on								
First Year Premium	14,250	8,398	69.7	21,560	(33.9)	58,603	31,511	86.0
Renewal Premium	1,295	1,069	21.2	1,996	(35.1)	5,896	5,219	13.0
Single Premium	1,947	5,236	(62.8)	2,258	(13.8)	13,854	15,833	(12.5)
Others	0	0		0		0	0	
Net Commission	17,492	14,703	19.0	25,814	(32.2)	78,353	52,563	49.1
Benefits Paid (Net)	86,798	88,278	(1.7)	1,10,404	(21.4)	3,93,459	3,96,965	(0.9)
Change in actuarial liability	1,70,165	1,45,657	16.8	81,959	107.6	4,15,156	4,84,194	(14.3)
Surplus/Deficit	834	5,627	(85.2)	1,633	(48.9)	10,430	7,751	34.6

Source: Company, BOBCAPS Research

Fig 8 - Shareholder's account

(Rs mn)	Q1FY26	Q1FY25	YoY (%)	Q4FY25	QoQ (%)	FY25	FY24	YoY (%)
Transfer from Policyholders' Account	3,663	2,665	37.5	2,467	48.5	9,968	7,991	24.7
Investment Income	3,202	2,572	24.5	3,274	(2.2)	11,251	10,022	12.3
Other income	0	0	-	0		1	131	(98.9)
Expenses other than those related to insurance business	616	198	211.6	532	15.6	1,429	1,209	18.2
Transfer of funds to Policyholders' Account	666	64	940.0	227	193.2	1,004	1,251	(19.7)
Provisions for diminution in value of investments	(22)	0		119	-	126	45	181.4
Profit before tax	5,607	4,975	12.7	4,862	15.3	18,661	15,638	19.3
Provisions for tax	142	198	(28.5)	97	46.7	640	(50)	
Profit after tax and before Extraordinary items	5,465	4,777	14.4	4,765	14.7	18,021	15,689	14.9

Source: Company, BOBCAPS Research



Earnings call highlights

Business Highlights

- HDFCLIFE reported robust gross premium income growth of 16.1% YoY in Q1FY26 at Rs 1,48,751 mn. This growth was driven by strong performance in renewal and single premium segments, which increased by 18.6% and 16.8% respectively. First year premium income grew by 8.2% at Rs 25,502 mn.
- Over 70% of new customers acquired in Q1FY26 were first-time buyers. The growth
 was supported by higher average ticket sizes and strong traction in select unit-linked
 and participating products. Going forward, management expects a balanced
 contribution to growth from both ticket size and policy volumes.
- PAT increased 14% YoY to Rs 5,465 mn supported by a 15% growth in back book profits.
- EV stands at Rs. 583.6 bn with operating ROEV of 16.3% on a rolling 12-month hasis
- Credit Protect business witnessed a recovery, aided by higher disbursements, improved attachment rates, and expansion into new lending segments.
- Management expects H2FY26 to outperform H1FY26, supported by a low base in H2FY25 and a high base in H1FY25.
- EV grew by 17% and stood at Rs. 554.23 bn with 16.7% ROEV.

APE and VNB Margin

- Individual APE grew by 12.5% YoY, outperforming at the overall industry as well as private sector levels. This led to a market share gain of 70 bps at the industry level and 40 bps within the private sector.
- HDFC Life expects margins to remain range-bound in the near term, with potential for expansion over the next 3 years.

Persistency Ratio

- The 13th-month persistency ratio declined by approximately 1%, primarily due to a reduction in large-ticket policies following recent tax changes.
- Conversely, the 61st-month persistency improved across cohorts, reflecting stronger retention in long-term savings products.

Product Mix

- Share of unit linked stood at 38%, participating products at 32%, non-par savings at 19%, term at 6% while annuity share came in at 5%.
- Demand for ULIP products remained strong, supported by sustained performance in equity markets. However, HDFC Life anticipates a gradual shift toward traditional products during FY26.
- Participating products have seen increased traction, driven by refreshed propositions and macroeconomic uncertainty.



Share of non-par products declined due to aggressive pricing in the market. Management expects non-par mix to stabilise in the mid-20% range in FY26, while the par product mix is projected to slightly decline to marginally above 25%.

Channel Mix

- Agency channel delivered 2Y CAGR of 10% post the changes in surrender regulations.
- Management expects agency channel growth to outperform other distribution channels, which are projected to grow at similar levels.



Valuation Methodology

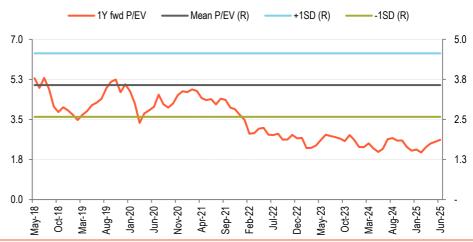
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Fig 9 - Actual vs Estimates

Rs mn	Q1FY26A	Q1FY26E	Actual vs. Estimates (%)
Gross Premium	1,48,751	1,55,439	(4.3)
APE	32,250	32,641	(1.2)
VNB	8,090	8,503	(4.9)
VNB Margin	25.1	26.1	-97bps

Source: Company, BOBCAPS Research

Fig 10 - P/EV Band



Source: Company, BOBCAPS Research

Key risks

Key downside risks to our estimates are:

- Change in regulatory framework: Any unfavourable change in regulations can affect business growth. For example, ULIP proceeds are currently taxed to the extent the yearly premium exceeds Rs 0.25mn. Similarly, any change in income tax rate for insurance companies could adversely impact profitability, in our view.
- Losses from capital and bond markets: Prolonged weakness in capital markets could hamper growth of ULIPs. Although insurance companies are opting for balanced product mixes, many of them have sizeable business coming from ULIPs.
- Increasing interest rates: Guaranteed-return businesses could be affected by an increase in interest rates as other financial instruments (e.g. deposits) become more attractive.



- Adverse economic events: A significant economic decline may result in financial difficulties or defaults by issuers of bonds in the company's investment portfolios. The shareholders' equity and earnings and policyholders' funds may also be affected by fair value revaluation of bonds held in investment portfolios.
- High surrender of policies: Life insurance companies face the risk of surrendered policies. In ULIPs, customers can withdraw policies after five years even if they have been taken for longer durations. Policies can also be surrendered in case of job loss and monetary requirements, among other factors, which lowers the persistency ratios.

Glossary

Glossary of Abbreviations					
APE	Annual Premium Equivalent	NBP	New Business Premium		
EOM	Expenses of Management	ROEV	Return on Embedded Value		
EV	Embedded Value	ROP	Return of Premium		
EVOP	Embedded Value Operating Profit	RWRP	Retail Weighted Received Premium		
HNI	High Net Worth Individuals	ULIP	Unit Linked Insurance Plan		
IRDAI	Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority	VNB	Value of New Business		



Financials

Y/E 31 Mar (Rs mn)	FY24A	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
Gross premium income	6,30,765	7,10,449	8,34,778	9,68,342	11,29,087
First year premium	1,11,108	1,29,761	1,50,260	1,74,302	2,03,236
Renewal premium	3,34,451	3,76,796	4,42,432	5,13,221	5,98,416
Single premium	1,85,205	2,03,892	2,42,086	2,80,819	3,27,435
Net written premium	6,19,592	6,96,161	8,16,263	9,46,866	11,02,022
Income from investments	3,83,543	2,59,453	3,49,604	3,99,314	4,82,141
Other Income	4,608	3,834	4,006	4,185	4,373
Total income	10,07,743	9,59,448	11,69,873	13,50,365	15,88,536
Commissions	52,563	78,353	91,673	1,06,341	1,21,228
Operating expenses	69,011	62,218	65,951	75,184	86,086
Benefits and bonuses paid	3,96,965	3,93,459	4,80,020	5,52,023	6,18,266
Change in liabilities (net)	4,84,194	4,15,156	5,10,226	5,92,373	7,34,542
Others	0	0	0	0	0
Total expenses	10,02,732	9,49,186	11,47,870	13,25,920	15,60,122
Surplus before tax	5,011	10,263	22,003	24,445	28,414
Provision for tax	(5,924)	(5,882)	2,012	2,212	2,556
Surplus after tax	7,751	10,430	13,932	15,327	17,950
Trf to shareholders' a/c	7,991	9,968	13,653	15,020	17,591
Balance being FFA	(240)	462	0	0	0

Income Statement (I	Non-technical)
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Y/E 31 Mar (Rs mn)	FY24A	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
Trf from policyholders' a/c	7,991	9,968	13,653	15,020	17,591
Income from investments	10,022	11,251	12,283	13,570	14,974
Contr. to policyholders' fund	1,251	1,004	1,034	1,065	1,097
Others	(1,123)	(1,554)	(1,768)	(2,048)	(2,375)
PBT	15,638	18,661	23,134	25,477	29,093
Provision for taxation	(50)	640	925	1,019	1,164
PAT	15,689	18,021	22,208	24,458	27,929
Dividend+Interim div.+DDT	4,304	4,521	4,521	4,521	4,521

Balance Sheet

Y/E 31 Mar (Rs mn)	FY24A	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
Equity	1,46,517	1,61,256	1,78,937	1,98,873	2,22,281
Policyholders' funds	27,34,890	31,53,161	37,28,737	44,20,792	52,53,512
FFA	12,115	12,576	13,583	14,669	15,843
Others	43,771	68,348	73,536	79,417	86,083
Total liabilities	29,37,293	33,95,342	39,94,792	47,13,751	55,77,719
Shareholders' funds	1,48,819	1,83,863	2,12,362	2,39,969	2,59,167
Policyholders' funds	18,17,966	21,62,671	27,03,338	32,98,073	38,91,726
Assets to cover linked liab.	9,55,416	10,16,282	11,68,724	13,44,032	15,32,197
Others	0	0	0	0	0
Total assets	29,37,293	33,95,342	39,94,792	47,13,751	55,77,719

Key Metrics

Y/E 31 Mar	FY24A	FY25A	FY26E	FY27E	FY28E
AUM (Rs mn)	29,22,201	33,62,815	40,84,424	48,82,074	56,83,089
NBP (Rs mn)	2,96,314	3,33,653	3,92,346	4,55,121	5,30,671
APE (Rs mn)	1,32,910	1,54,790	1,86,522	2,20,096	2,59,713
VNB (Rs mn)	34,955	39,626	46,589	56,248	68,126
VNB margin (%)	26.3	25.6	25.9	26.5	27.2
Embedded value (Rs mn)	4,74,680	5,54,230	6,43,744	7,50,258	8,77,385
ROEV (%)	17.5	16.7	17.0	17.2	17.5
ROE (%)	11.4	11.7	13.1	12.9	13.3
Opex ratio (%)	10.9	8.8	7.9	7.8	7.7
Cost ratio (%)	19.3	19.8	19.0	18.8	18.4
Solvency ratio (%)	-	-	-	-	-
EPS (Rs)	7.3	8.4	10.3	11.4	13.0
BVPS (Rs)	68.5	75.0	83.1	92.4	103.2
EVPS (Rs)	220.6	257.4	299.0	348.5	407.5

Source: Company, BOBCAPS Research



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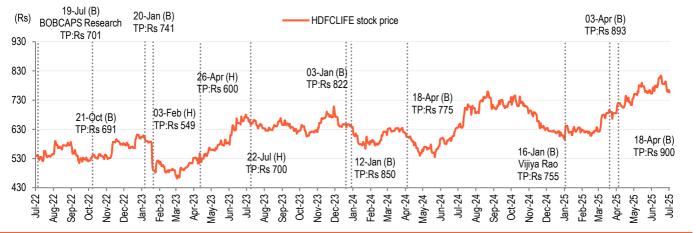
HOLD - Expected return from -6% to +15%

SELL - Expected return <-6%

Note: Recommendation structure changed with effect from 21 June 2021

Our recommendation scale does not factor in short-term stock price volatility related to market fluctuations. Thus, our recommendations may not always be strictly in line with the recommendation scale as shown above.

Ratings and Target Price (3-year history): HDFC LIFE (HDFCLIFE IN)



B-Buy, H-Hold, S-Sell, A-Add, R-Reduce

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HDFC LIFE



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