

## AmorePacific, South Korea's biggest beauty firm, is struggling

In a quiet street in a **glitzy** part of Seoul's **Gangnam** district sits a **sleek** building covered in a **shimmering grid** of gold-effect metal. Inside the flagship store for Sulwhasoo, a luxury skincare line, looks less like a shop and more like a museum. Upstairs, customers can book an **eye-wateringly** expensive facial or sip coffee on the roof **terrace**.

glitzy 盛大的; 闪光的

Gangnam 江南区

sleek 圆滑的; 时髦的

shimmer 闪光; 闪烁

grid 网格

eye-wateringly 非常地

terrace 平台; 阳台; 梯田

Welcome to the world of cosmetics as entertainment, which has attracted women (and a few men) around the globe to Korean beauty trends. Aided by influencers on YouTube and Instagram, where young women in Europe and America look for trends, K-beauty's ten-step cleansing programmes, **snail-slime** facials and panda face masks are following in the footsteps of K-pop and Korean barbecue as a global phenomenon.

snail 蜗牛

slime 粘液; 史莱姆

You would, then, expect the country's biggest cosmetics firm to be thriving. Yet AmorePacific Group (which owns Sulwhasoo and other brands) has struggled. Its sales, two-thirds of which are generated at home, with most of the rest from China, have not recovered since a Chinese boycott following the installation of an American missile-defence system in South Korea two years ago. **Profitability** has plunged, giving investors a black eye that even a panda mask cannot **conceal**.

profitability 营利性

conceal 隐藏

Although the missile **spat** did not help AmorePacific, its other problems are **self-inflicted**. Unlike LG, a **sprawling conglomerate** that is its main domestic competitor, AmorePacific may have relied too heavily on its **mass-market** products at the expense of the luxury segment, where **margins** are **plusher**.

spat 口角; 争吵

self-inflicted 自己造成的

sprawling 蔓延的

conglomerate 企业集团; 聚合物

mass-market 大众市场的

margin 利润; 边缘

plusher 豪华的; 舒服的

At home, meanwhile, a new challenger is emerging not in the form of upstart producers but the year-old “*corset*-free movement”. AmorePacific will be hoping that this salvo against the *prevailing* ideal of Korean beauty will *inflict* less damage than the missile *dispute*.

corset 紧身衣; 束腹

prevailing 流行的

inflict 造成; 使遭受

dispute 争论; 争端