



INTERVIEW KAPIL AGARWAL, JOINT MANAGING DIRECTOR, UFO MOVIEZ INDIA

'UFO gearing up to keep IPL magic alive in cinema halls'

For the first time in the history of sports, Indian Premier League (IPL) 3 matches, to be held from March 12, 2010, will be shown live on gigantic screens across cinemas in India. UFO Moviez, a digital satellite cinema network, is the technology and marketing partner for IPL's theatrical rights. Kapil Agarwal, joint managing director, UFO Moviez India, says the company is gearing up for the big event and has partnered with three big cinema players in India for screening the matches. In an interview with Priyanka Akhouri, Agarwal talks about how installation of high definition (HD) digital technology in theatres will change the way IPL is viewed. Excerpts.

What marketing and distribution strategies are being taken for IPL's theatrical success?

For the first time in India, cricket fans will be able to

watch IPL on big screen. Both multiplexes and single screens in India will be dressed in IPL fever and have celebrities visiting the cinema halls to cheer the teams. We have partnered with multiplex chains INOX, Fame and Cinemax for screening the matches and are installing digital screens. Select theatres will be termed as FEP — Screens (founding exhibition partner). These screens will offer cricket related merchandise, and multi cuisine food stalls. We are trying all possible ways to keep IPL magic within cinema halls alive. IPL 3 will definitely create a carnival and a stadium environment for IPL in the theatres.

How many screens will be showing IPL and what is the revenue share model?

UFO has over 1,700 screens, of which 25% screens in India have been converted into digital. UFO is expected to add another 150-200 screens especially for showcasing IPL 3. Our target is to showcase IPL matches across 1,000 cinemas, of which over 250 screens have been signed, including cinemas in smaller towns like Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Chattisgarh, Rajasthan and so on. In terms of revenue share, we have a 50:50 revenue share model with the theatres and secondly,

'Our target is to showcase IPL matches across 1,000 cinemas, of which over 250 screens have been signed'

theatres will be charged on the basis package of 10, 20 and 30 matches, if they choose not to showcase all the matches. Semi-final matches will be charged at 25% premium over the per match base rate, and final matches will be charged at 50% premium. The ticket prices of the matches will be the same as the ticket price of any movie in multiplexes and small screens, ranging from as low as Rs 40 in smaller towns to as high as Rs 300 in metros. Multiplexes will be charged as high as Rs 25,000-40,000 for a houseful match, whereas single screens will be charged Rs 12,000-30,000.

How do you see IPL 3 shaping up in India in terms of theatrical viewership?

Cricket is a religion in India and audience response to IPL is sure to be overwhelming. Since it will be cricket fever for one and half months, it is certain that there will be no big film releases. Therefore, people would definitely come to theatres to watch their favorite teams and players, both national and international. The screens are HD digital screens, which add an extra advantage of viewing the match with a good sound system. If these facilities are being provided to the viewers in affordable rates and better viewing experience than TV, it will definitely pull the audiences to the theatres. We are also positive that occupancy during the IPL matches will definitely overshadow film occupancy.

