



**UFO MOVIEZ INDIA LIMITED**

**Publication: The Economics Times, Date: 28 November 2009 Page No: 16**

# Cinemascope: Cinemax cashing in on the IPL craze

Leena Mulchandani  
MUMBAI

A FORTNIGHT after Entertainment Sports Direct (ESD) bagged the theatrical rights of the Indian Premier League (IPL), Cinemax is the first multiplex to have signed the pact to screen the IPL across its 74 screens and 11 centres. The deal has been signed on a revenue-sharing basis between the multiplex chain and ESD's partners in India — UFO Moviez.

Explaining the broad contours of the deal, Sanjay Gaikwad, founder and managing director of UFO Moviez, said: "Revenue sharing means we will share the box-office receipts as well as the marketing costs. About 10 locations will be identified as the main marketing spots where we will run contests, sell merchandise and create a carnival-like experience so that

the audience can experience more than just cricket and increase revenues."

Promoted by DAR Capital Group, ESD, acquired the global theatrical rights of the IPL for Rs 330 crore which include the exclusive, exhibition rights for cinema halls, stadia, buses, trains, armed service establishments, bars, hotels, restaurants, airports, railway stations, shopping malls and offices. "Last year, we couldn't get the IPL rights. There is potential for us to at least partially make up for the dip in revenues from movies which has been a trend we have observed during the IPL period," says Devang Sampat, senior vice president, Cinemax.

Multiplexes face a hard time pulling in audiences during the IPL season as producers are wary of releasing their films during the period. Usually occupancy in multiplexes



hovers around 35% but during the IPL season, specially during the semis and finals falls to as low as 10%. In spite of their best efforts, screening the matches will only partially

make up for the dip in revenues. "The matches will go on for only a few hours a day. With very few producer going ahead with their films release during this period, we are really low on content to feed the other shows," says Sampat who is happy he has at least managed to salvage some of his potential losses.

Cinemax had profitably screened the T20 World Cup final, about three years ago. The match between India and Pakistan netted a cool Rs 5 lakh across just three properties. Audiences can expect ticket prices for the IPL screenings to be the same as weekend prices of new film releases with ticket prices for the semi-finals and the final being higher.

Meanwhile, UFO is also in talks with other multiplex chains and expects to close all the-

atrical deals by December-end. Marketing plans at the local level will kick-start in January next year. All the films that use UFO technology will have teasers and advertisements that will promote the IPL. In all, UFO expects about 1,000 screens in India to screen the IPL this year.

leena.mulchandnai@timesgroup.com