



No decision on multiplex telecast of IPL yet

ASHISH SINHA
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With no headway in awarding the in-theatre telecast rights of the forthcoming Indian Premier League's (IPL) Twenty20 cricket tournament by its organisers — the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) — millions of Indian fans may not be able to watch the IPL matches in multiplexes in a 'stadium like' environment.

For the multiplexes, this means a further loss of potential revenue-earning opportunity, as there are no new films slated to hit the screens in April and May, due to the ongoing tussle between the Bollywood film producers and the multiplexes. IPL is scheduled to be played between April 18 and May 24 in South Africa.

"There is no forward movement on awarding the in-theatre telecast rights for the IPL to any party so far. The matter is still open and will be looked into as the tournament progresses," a top executive in the IPL committee said, requesting anonymity.

However, sources in the film exhibition business said the BCCI and the IPL organising committee may award the live screening of the last seven IPL matches, including the quarter finals, semi-finals and the final, to select multiplex and single-screen theatres.

The 34-day IPL tournament, however, will be available live

News agencies to cover IPL

THE stalemate over the media coverage of the second Indian Premier League (IPL) is finally over with the major international news agencies agreeing to cover the event after the organisers withdrew contentious conditions imposed on the media outlets. Ending uncertainty over the coverage of the event, starting April 18, the negotiation between the News Media Coalition (NMC), representing media interests worldwide, and the IPL authorities found a way out, clearing the decks for the worldwide coverage of the Twenty20 extravaganza. The Associated Press (AP), Agency France-Presse (AFP) and Reuters would now be covering the five-week event after the IPL authorities withdrew their previous decision not to allow the agencies to distribute news and photographs to cricket websites.

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IPL could have been held in India: Chidambaram

HOME Minister P Chidambaram reckons that the Indian Premier League (IPL) could have been held in India in two parts if the organisers had taken into account the security concerns and not put pressure on the state governments. "We could have done it, but only if they (IPL officials) had reflected on the concerns of the police and not try to pressurise the (state) chief ministers," Chidambaram said in an interview to a private news channel. "I am not letting out any secret by that. If they had only listened to the concerns of the police, this tournament could have been played in two parts. First the league part and then give a break for the critical three- or four-week period and then the knock-out part," he said.

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on cable and direct-to-home platforms on the SET MAX channel, the host broadcaster for the tournament. The second edition of IPL was shifted out to South Africa by the BC-

CI in March over security concerns.

Last month, the IPL organising committee had floated tenders to award the in-theatre telecast rights for the tour-

nament. The rights holder would then have to share the high-definition feed of the IPL matches with the multiplex and the single screen theatres on revenue sharing arrangement.

Some names are doing the rounds, including that of leading media agency Group M and multiplex chain PVR Cinemas, as being shortlisted to get these rights. But the IPL has not made any announcement, so far.

Sensing an opportunity in showcasing a live event on the theatre screens in real time, UFO Moviez has already put its plans in place for airing any such events in their 1,500 single-screen theatres.

"We have already made a presentation to the BCCI and IPL committee on how our technology can be used to screen 'live' IPL matches in single screen theatres at a very short notice. If some one can get the theatre rights, we can partner with them to show IPL or any such events on our single screens in high definition format," says Kapil Agarwal, joint managing director of UFO Moviez, a film exhibition company that specialises in satellite-based transmission of films across theatres in real time.

This means exhibitors using UFO technology do not require physical movie prints.

Some multiplexes are mulling taking the standard definition TV feed from SET MAX and showing it on their screens. Rohit Gupta, president of Multi Screen Media (MSM) said it was up to the rights holder, IPL, to decide on sharing the TV feed with any theatres. MSM runs channels like SET MAX, Sony TV and Sony Pix among others in India.