



## 3i invests \$22m in UFO Moviez

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INTERNATIONAL private equity group 3i has invested \$22 million in digital cinema chain UFO Moviez, buoyed by the fast growth in the media and entertainment sector. 3i has subscribed to cumulative convertible preference shares issued by UFO Moviez with the option to invest another \$3 million later.

UFO Moviez plans to utilise the money to part finance its expansion plans. It intends to invest in hardware to expand its presence in India and overseas in markets like the Middle East, South-East Asia and Africa by January '07. The company is present in 600 theatres across India and plans to reach 3,000 digital cinema houses worldwide by '08. UFO plans to scale up its Indian operations from 600 to 2,000 screens by '08.

Chris Rowland, managing partner (Asia & group markets) 3i said: "We believe the value proposition of UFO of enhancing returns for exhibitors and distributors, offering

advertisers a unique one-window platform and addressing the issue of piracy, to be a winner."

This is the second investment by 3i in the media space, the earlier being in Nimbus Communications, which holds the BCCI global media rights till '10. Apollo group's Onkar Singh Kanwar owns 60% in UFO, while about 15% is held by the Singapore-based DG2L Technologies. The remaining stake is held by its CEO Sanjay Gaikwad.

The company has partnered with Agate Cufar, a retail and exhibition chain company with presence in Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, to install UFO's technology in 60 screens across the three countries. To enter the Sri Lankan market, the company tied up with the National Film Board to install its hardware across 50 screens.

UAE-based distributor and exhibition company Al Nisr has agreed to wire up 35 screens in Dubai and 10 screens in East Africa, while Mauritius-based Venus Group will digitise 15 screens.

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