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IPL IN CINEMAS

UFO aggressively seeking advertisers

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Digital satellite cinema network **UFO Moviez India Ltd** is aggressively scouting for advertisers after paying Rs330 crore for the rights to show Indian Premier League (IPL) matches in movie halls till 2019.

"We will air advertisements before and after the matches and during the strategic ad breaks," joint managing director Kapil Agarwal said. "When (the television broadcaster) SET MAX breaks for commercials after every over, we have planned in-theatre contests and activities for which local advertisers and brands have been roped in."

The third season of the tournament starts on 12 March.

Agarwal declined to disclose the advertising rates but pegged target revenues from commercials to be not more than Rs20 crore for this year.

UFO Moviez is likely to get a good response from advertisers as the tournament has a wide

reach, according to R. Venkatasubramanian, vice-president, Lintas Media Group, an advertising agency. However, the firm "will have to keep the costs low for advertisers to come on board," he said.

The sale of tickets, which will be priced at weekend rates, is likely to fetch UFO Moviez an additional Rs30-40 crore.

The firm has signed on multiplex chains such as Cinemax, Inox, Fame and PVR and many single-screen cinema halls to screen the matches. It has tied up with 550 theatre screens in some 500 cities, of which 200 are in multiplexes. Agarwal said his company aims to partner with 1,000 screens by the time the tournament begins, including an imminent deal with **Adlabs Cinemas**.

Besides the money to acquire the rights, UFO Moviez has invested some Rs30-40 crore for the upkeep of the cinema halls and equipment to beam the matches in theatres. Agarwal said it would take up to three years for the company to break even.