

## Small-budget films to battle it out at box office



**CHANGING SCRIPT?** If cinema halls make decent money from screening IPL matches, the plot could change for Bollywood

Bharati Dubey | TNN

**Mumbai:** Small-budget films that cost a total of around Rs 200 crore to make face an uncertain future due to their release dates clashing with IPL matches, which are expected to generate only about Rs 60 crore from screenings in about 700 cinemas across India in the next 45 days.

Sanjay Gaikwad, MD, UFO Moviez, said the IPL is "content-driven and I'm hoping it generates business of more than Rs 40 crore. If this works, I'm sure IPL will generate at least Rs 70 to 80 crore next season".

Marketing experts said exhibitors are eyeing business of Rs 60 crore to 70 crore if cinemas get occupancy of about 70% with each screen showing all 46 matches. "It's something new they are trying as there is no good content in cinema right now," said a marketing expert.

Devang Sampat, vice president, Cinemax Cinema, said, "We are expecting to generate about Rs 6 crore from the IPL and will screen all 46 matches at our 30 properties."

Harshvardhan Gangurde, vice president (marketing), Inox cinemas, said, "Any high-profile content, like T20, will impact attendance in cinemas. One has to live with it now and, in fact, amalgamate cricket into the programming in the future."

But some trade experts are unsure if it will work. An insider said, "The youth like to smoke and drink while watching IPL, so they would prefer a bar or stay at home rather than go to a cinema."

But cricket is a religion in India and the film industry is

scared of it taking over cinemas too. Most big movies will release only after April 16, when IPL and the T-20 World Cup will be over. The only exception is 'Housefull', which will release between the two tournaments.

Meanwhile, small-budget films are going to brave it out. Trade analyst Taran Adarsh said, "There are five releases per week and some from the likes of Subhash Ghai and Shyam Benegal. If IPL screening works, the film industry will be doomed because theatres will start screening all big matches."

Some films being released are RGV's 'Phoonk 2', 'Paathshala', Nikhil Advani's 'Jaane Kaha Se Aayi Hai', 'Lahore', the Vivek Oberoi-starrer 'Prince' and T P Agarwal's 'Na Ghar Ka, Naa Ghaat Kaa'. Some films, like Sunny Deol's 'Right Yaa Wrong' and the Shahid Kapoor-starrer 'Milenge Milenge', have been in the making for long.

