

Indian giant screens for European football stadiums

An Indian company, Technology Frontiers, is entering European football stadiums with giant and small screens, breaking the hold of European and American digital screen solution outfits on the market.

The Rs.280 million (\$7 million) Chennai-based company will shortly install its digital screens at four European football stadiums - two each in Romania and Poland.

'We will soon sign the contract with the football stadium authorities there. The contract value will be around \$2 million per stadium over a five-year period,' said M.S. Muralidharan, managing director of the company.

'Talks are also on with three stadiums in Greece as also with an ice hockey association in North America for the screens,' Muralidharan told IANS.

The order is expected to catapult Technology Frontiers into a different league. It already enjoys an edge over others, being the single point provider for both giant and ground display systems.

'In overseas markets, different companies offer different solutions and the stadium authorities have to deal with them individually,' Muralidharan said.

Although a cricket-focused company, Technology Frontiers is now branching off into football.

Unlike in India, where it holds advertising rights for such giant display screens and ground systems at cricket stadiums, in Europe, the company will just install and maintain the digital systems.

'Overseas clients not only look at the robustness of the systems in performance but also at the aesthetics,' Muralidharan said,

The company was able to reach new frontiers thanks to the Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket matches that are currently on across India.

The company bagged the rights for installing two big screens and also the ground screens at the eight venues - the first digital solution company in the world to manage so many venues at the same time, Muralidharan claimed.

Queried about the advertiser's response to the new medium, Muralidharan said: 'They have started looking at this media seriously. Today we have companies like Aircel, DLF, Kingfisher and others using this medium.'

With big screens becoming the medium to engage the crowds at the grounds, the company has mooted some interesting ideas.

'We have suggested to the Indian cricket board to conduct polling when the match is on - say whether a batsman would score 50/100 runs when his score is at say 40s or 90s,' he said.

Such a move would not pose challenges to the player, but also add more thrill to spectators and

engage a captive crowd throughout the match and make the sponsors happy, he said.

'For this, we can provide a set of two buttons at select seats. The giant screen will display the question and the spectators have to press one of the two," he said, explaining the modality of enabling the polling.

More than finding the advertisers, the biggest challenge for the company was to make the systems work at extreme conditions match after match. 'Our systems have successfully weathered extreme heat, hail and desert storms.'

As the playing pitch changes after each match, the ground electronic systems also have to be realigned in sync with the playing turf.

Venkatachari Jagannathan (© IANS / India eNews)