

For Big Cinema, it's time to expand operations

The global financial crisis may have forced many companies to put their expansion projects on hold, but Big Cinema, part of the Anil Ambani-promoted Adlabs Films Ltd, is singing a different tune.

Describing movie entertainment as a 'recession-proof business', a top company official told IANS the cinema chain's investment plans were on track and it was looking for new lease agreements in various parts of the country to expand operations.

'For us, the time is right to strike attractive property lease deals for expansion,' Big Cinema chief operating officer Tushar Dhingra said.

Big Cinema has 186 screens across 72 theatres in the country with a total seating capacity of 70,821.

Dhingra, however, said there would be a slight dip in the theatre advertisement revenue owing to the recession.

While advertisements account for 10 percent of the division's revenue, ticket sales account for 60 percent and 30 percent comes from selling food and beverages. For the last quarter Big Cinema earned Rs.890 million.

On future projects, he said Big Cinema will open a four-screen multiplex at Kathmandu, Nepal, next April.

'The total investment will be around Rs.60 million and the seating capacity will be 1,100. We are also promoting a megaplex with 10-15 screens under one roof,' Dhingra said.

Last week, the division opened a fully refurbished four-screen KG Big Cinema in Coimbatore with 2,325 seats.

'Our relationship with the KG group is a mix of lease rental and management contract. We have invested Rs.50 million. The theatre is a well known destination within and outside Coimbatore,' he said.

Meanwhile, Big Cinema was selected for the 'Exhibitor of the Year-2008' by CineAsia. The award will be presented Dec 11 at this year's CineAsia-2008 convention in Macau, China.

Venkatachari Jagannathan (© IANS / India eNews)