

## CRICKET CONTRACT

# Google in deal to telecast IPL matches live on YouTube

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MUMBAI

Cricket lovers will be able to watch the new season of the Indian Premier League (IPL) online, after Google India signed a two-year deal to broadcast the Twenty20 league live on its popular video sharing website YouTube.

The online coverage, a top Google official said, will also allow viewers to enjoy features not available on television—such as a choice of angles from any of the 34 cameras on the ground and on-demand availability of match archives (even of previous seasons), highlights, player interviews, award ceremonies and pitch reports.

The season kicks off on 12 March in Hyderabad and will feature, over the next 45 days, around 60 matches that will be played among eight IPL franchises across India.

“What is exciting about YouTube is that it gives you all the attributes of television, the rich audio/video experience, plus interactivity,” said Shallesh Rao, managing director, Google India and Media Platforms, Asia Pacific.

He added that while the live

interest from advertisers from the UK, India, Australia and the US,” said Rao.

Advertisers interested, another Google official said, range from consumer product firms to smaller establishments, current sponsors and partners of IPL, brands that haven't been able to associate with the league so far, and those that advertise heavily online.

Sponsors will have their brands splashed across the YouTube home page, next to and below the viewing window, overlay ads, as well as those inserted into the live feed and on-demand videos.

“We've structured it as a revenue share agreement between the two parties, so that our interests and incentives are aligned. We win together, everywhere, if we execute together and execute well,” said Rao.

Mohammed Saif, deputy director (consulting) for South Asia, Information and Communication Technology Practice, Frost and Sullivan, said the deal made perfect sense for Google, which earns 90% of its revenue through online advertising.

“Cricket is a religion in India. Apart from reinforcing their relationship with consumers in urban areas, who will log on to YouTube to watch the reruns or highlights, this move will also bring on board users who are still familiarizing themselves with the Internet,” said Saif. “Once you have the eyeballs, the advertisers will follow.”

AFP



**Two-year deal:** (from left) IPL's Lalit Modi, YouTube's Gautam Anand and Google India's Shallesh Rao in Mumbai on Wednesday.

rock band U2, drawing about 10 million users. It also covered live the inauguration of US President Barack Obama in January 2009.

Google has decided to limit the number of sponsors for the event to 10. It is yet to announce sponsorship rates, but two executives from media buying agencies said unfirmed figures doing the rounds were Rs4 crore for the presenting sponsor and Rs1.5 crore for associate sponsors.

“We are in active discussions with parties across the world. And have seen tremendous in-

streaming of matches would have the “classic television feed with commentary in English”, Google may also consider providing commentaries in other languages.

This will be the largest live streaming event that Google has ever hosted on YouTube, which registers one billion video views daily and has at least 400 million unique users around the world, said Rao.

A spokesperson said Google was expecting nearly 100 million viewers for IPL.

Last October, YouTube broadcast a live concert by the