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# It's cricket versus movies again this summer

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**Chennai:** The IPL returns to Chennai after three years (only one match was played last year before the rest were shifted due to political reasons) and with it comes a hard choice for the city, which is equally passionate about cricket and movies.

The summer will see back-to-back film releases, so what will people watch: movies or the cricket, which too will be at night? Last season the players were not allowed to entertain fans on their home ground, though they did dominate TV screens. This time theatre owners, producers and distributors face the added challenge of live matches in the city.

April, May and June are



## MOVIES IN QUEUE

**Ajith Kumar's** Tamil remake of 'Pink', titled 'Nerkonda Paarvai', has been announced for May 1 by its producer Boney Kapoor, but trade sources reveal it might be pushed to June /July

**The other releases eyeing summer dates** are Vikram's 'Kadaram Kondan', Jiiva's 'Kee' and 'Gorilla' and Sasikumar's 'Kombu Vatcha Singamda'

considered the best months for the cinema industry as schools and colleges are on summer break. But this summer, it's not just IPL, the Lok Sabha election campaign too will vie for eyeballs, at least till April 18 when Tamil Nadu goes to polls.

Producer, distributor and exhibitor Abirami Ramanathan admits cricket is a big

competition for theatre owners. "We have to bear the brunt for 40 days. Youth are mostly the cinemagoers who surely will choose cricket over movies. More than the matches played in Chennai, it's the telecast that eats into our profits — a section of people set up a huge screen at homes and invite people for drinks and dinner."

Producer and founder-dean of BOFTA G Dhananjayan disagrees that movies take a beating during IPL. "We don't get intimidated by IPL, rain, elections or exams.

"Yes, it may impact to an extent but if the content is appealing, the movie is bound to make waves. If we think we can wait to release a movie post cricket or elections, there's a bigger problem of backlog of movies, which the industry often witnesses. The smart way is to have faith in one's content and go ahead."

Vouching for the fact that both cinema and cricket can co-exist, UFO moviez CMO Siddharth Bhardwaj points out that films like 'Raazi', 'Bahubali 2', 'Sarkar 3' and Dhanush's 'Pa Paandi' made

waves at box office. "An intelligent crowd knows to juggle between movies and sports. End of March and April is when the entire nation goes to watch matches for the experience. Cricket is a passion and cinema becomes a choice. When cinema is available through the year, cricket becomes a festival for many. In fact, if there's competition, it may help the film industry to give content that can beat the cricket. Healthy competition is always welcome as it gives a choice to people."

From tweaking prime time shows to pulling women in with enriching content, the industry is all geared to face the hurdles this summer. The city that does 'paal abhishekams' to their favourite stars, equally worships M S Dhoni and his boys.