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IPL brand value may rise with Pepsi fizz

Dipti Jain | TNN

**New Delhi:** With global FMCG major PepsiCo bagging the title sponsorship rights for the Indian Premier League (IPL), the brand value of the cricket extravaganza is expected to shoot up in the following seasons. While advertiser interest remained lukewarm during the fifth season, experts anticipate a slew of advertisers and sponsors to queue up in the sixth edition after the league's association with the global consumer brand. The contract is for five years.

PepsiCo pipped Airtel, which had offered Rs 316 crore, to win the title sponsorship for the Twenty20 tournament for Rs 396.6 crore. PepsiCo's bid is

nearly twice the amount paid by IPL's previous title sponsor DLF, which ended its association with the event in August this year.

Market watchers say PepsiCo's association will help tweak the tournament's brand imagery by establishing a stronger consumer connect. While industry experts refused to put a number to the expected rise in IPL's valuation, media buying agencies say PepsiCo comes across as a more "relevant fit".

"We definitely expect PepsiCo to increase IPL's brand value. There has been a lot of talk about brand IPL going down. But instead there has been a manifold increment in most of the rights and proper-



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ties we have sold, which is a good sign," IPL chairman Rajeev Shukla told TOI.

Media buying agencies, however, say there has been a de-

cline in the brand value of IPL as compared to the initial two seasons, primarily because investments were higher as compared to returns in terms of viewership and valuations. According to industry estimates, IPL's valuation for the five seasons has remained close to an average of Rs 400 crore. While the initial two seasons recorded over 4% television viewership rating, that declined towards the last season.

Advertisers' interest remained tepid too. According to experts, the number of advertisers fell from 66 in season four to 58 in the fifth edition. Official broadcasting channel Set Max, which sold out nearly 100% of its ad inventories in

previous seasons, was left with 20% of its inventories unsold during season 5.

"Advertisers need to get into it with a long-term horizon, which is exactly what the ground sponsors are doing. If Pepsi is able to activate this association with smart communication strategy then surely IPL will get a new life," Navin Khemka, managing partner at Zenith Optimedia, said.

"Whenever a new sponsor comes on board, it is bound to create a buzz with intensive activation plans. Pepsi will hopefully engage the youth in a new way now and bring a new life into IPL," said Neerav Tomar, MD and CEO, IOS Sports & Entertainment.