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'We want to bridge gaps'

Together, the newly launched Radio Olive 106.3 FM and Suno 91.7 FM have an audience of 1.6 million expatriates in the country. **By Mudassir Raja**

Radio Olive 106.3 FM has created a milestone in the history by being the first private Hindi FM channel to be aired from Qatar. The owners have also started Suno 91.7 FM channel in the Malayalam language as well.

With the best of on-air talent and production teams, Radio Olive aims at providing the best of information, entertainment and music to the diaspora from the Indian subcontinent.

A few days ago, *Community* got a chance to visit the office of the network and interviewed its two managing directors, who are energetic and ambitious. Krishna Kumar and Ameer Ali launched the two FM radios about two months ago.

How would best explain your idea of having a Hindi FM channel in Qatar?

Krish: It has been a long-time desire of expatriates from the Indian subcontinent to have their own FM radio channel in Qatar. So far, the expatriates have been listening to channels from other countries. We are thankful to the leadership of Qatar and various ministries for approving our channel. Our Hindi channel caters not only to India but to the Indian subcontinent that also includes Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. The Malayalam channel takes care of people from Kerala, Tamil, and Sri Lanka. Together our two channels cater to the needs of 1.6 million people, who make up 68 percent of the total population in Qatar.

Radio is basically very essential not only for entertainment but also for creating awareness in the public. Still there are a lot of people who cannot read and they can only hear. Their best option is radio. We as a radio station are very young in Qatar, but so far we have received amazing response from the people. Listeners have accepted it (Radio Olive) as a local channel.

Our RJs have excellent interaction with the public. All in all, Qatar has accepted us in a nice way. We are also looking forward to having close association with

all government organisations to convey a lot of important messages. We want to create awareness about all events taking place in Qatar. We want to have Qatar known everywhere.

Please tell us about yourself and your partner.

Krish: I am a mechanical engineer. I moved to the field of media a few years ago. The best thing about me and Ameer Ali is that we have come here with a passion and a dream. We have been well versed with the radio media in India and other GCC countries. We have moved to Qatar and from now on we want to be a part of Qatar.

When did you start working on the project?

Krish: I have been working on the project for about four and a half year. Various ministries and government organisations conducted a study before allowing the FM radio. We are the first Hindi radio in Qatar. It is a gift from the leadership to the people here.

What kind of programmes do you air?

Krish: We do a lot of entertainment programmes. We also do infotainment programmes. We provide a lot of general information that people are interested in listening to. We do a lot of Bollywood shows. We play a lot of music. It is very jovial and lively atmosphere here.

Ameer: We have also done special campaigning for I Love My Qatar on the occasion of the Qatar National Day. We brought kids from different schools to our station and we also brought some movie artists from India.

How would you say that your radio channels are different from others?

Ameer: The public has already started saying that we are different. We are closer to the expatriate communities. Listeners like our Hindi radio caption - "Jio Bindas" (live admirably bold and independent). We also inform them about all the events taking place in Qatar.

Krish: We keep bombarding the



FOUNDERS: Krishna Kumar, left, and Ameer Ali.

listeners with news about different events taking place at different times in Qatar. Earlier the people did not use to know about most of the events in Qatar for various reasons. Now they know what is happening around them.

What are your future plans?

Krish: Qatar is in the world's focus because of the FIFA World Cup 2022. We want to play an important role in projecting this country in a different light. We want to give something back to Qatar. We want to bridge gaps between Qatar and the Indian subcontinent. We will try to enhance the name of Qatar at various other places.

We need to get people into Qatar. We want to be a face of Qatar, at least in our country. We want to say

that this is the best place to stay in.

We are growing. We are very strong on social media. We are also on the ground. We will soon be organising our own events here. The country is expanding and so will we in future. There is ever possibility that we can have our own English and Arabic FM channels.

With your experience in other countries, what different do you see in Qatar?

Krish: Qatar is very vibrant. There is a lot of positive energy that we feel. We want to settle down in Qatar. Qatar has handled many difficult situations very maturely. There is a lot of positive energy in the people here. It is an expanding country and everyone wants to be here.



GROUP PHOTO: The Radio Olive RJs in the studio.