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Established only weeks ago, Radio Olive & Radio Suno have started winning hearts.

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New melody in Qatar's airwaves

Irfan Bukhari
The Peninsula

Within six weeks of their launch, Radio Olive and Radio Suno, have gained ground in terms of popularity and acceptance in Qatar and have successfully provided expatriate communities with an invaluable source of entertainment and information.

Being operated under the umbrella of OliveSuno Radio Network, twin FM radio channels represent first effort from the private sector to broaden the horizon of media landscape in Qatar and that too with a constructive purpose. Radio Suno 91.7 FM is a Malayalam radio channel while Radio Olive 106.3 FM is in Hindi (Urdu) language.

Every success has its own story

and the tale behind success—in-no-time of both FM radio channels revolves around its team's enthusiasm, commitment, professionalism and experience. From engaging content creation to the selection of well-trained RJs; every operation is meticulously designed and executed.

"We were working on the project for the last four years as we wanted to fill the vacuum; the vacuum which was due to lack of any private FM radio channel that was pushing people to rely on FM radios of other neighbouring countries," said Krish Managing Director of Radio Suno.

He was talking to *The Peninsula* in state-of-the-art, stylish facility of OliveSuno Radio Network which houses both FM radio stations: Radio Suno and Radio Olive. "Combined, our two FM channels are serving an overwhelming majority of expatriates living in

Qatar; from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and other Southeast Asian countries," he added. He said OliveSuno Radio Network was covering around 68 percent of Qatar's population.

Krish thinks that these newly launched FM radio channels are a gift from Qatar's leadership to the residents of Qatar. "Now it is our turn to repay and promote the country through these platforms."

He said that both radio channels were doing tremendous job in creating awareness on an array of subjects among expatriate communities as well as were providing them with quality entertainment and information. "Due to dominance of entertainment and information in our content, we keep our channels in infotainment channels category."

Krish said that Qatar was a happening place. "Too many cultural, social, sporting activities are

happening here every moment therefore, we have a lot to share with our audience."

He said that Radio Olive and Radio Suno were promoting "brand Qatar" in Qatar and respective countries of expats. "Now "Qatar" is a global brand particularly after the announcement of 2022 FIFA World Cup hosting. We have to further build this brand in our countries and in the whole world."

Krish said that they were accomplishing the task not only through FM radio channels but also using multi-dimensional outreach model. "Radio is not alone. We have online platforms; we are having on ground activities etc."

Both FM radio channels have mobile apps as well as online streaming which definitely increase Network's outreach and impact. "Online streaming of radio channel is first time in Qatar rather in the whole GCC, Krish said.

Radio Suno and Radio Olive recently sponsored a Malayalam movie launch in Qatar offering the community a chance to meet an Indian actor they had invited from India. “The response was amazing and it was very successful event,” said Krish, adding that they had vibrant plans to organise such events in future as well.

Ameer Ali, Managing Director of Radio Olive said that the visits of celebrities to Qatar would help promoting brand Qatar. “They spread what they see among their followers across the world by their social media accounts.”

Ali said that the power of radio as a mass medium had not weakened. “Before the launch of private FM radio channels last month, a government-run Urdu radio was operating and they are still doing their job well. But there exists a marked difference between an AM

The content of both FM radios has everything to engage people; entertainment, information, weather updates, health tips, awareness campaigns regarding laws of the land etc.



Ameer Ali (left), Managing Director of Radio Olive and Krish, Managing Director's of Radio Suno.

Pics: Abdul Basit / The Peninsula

and FM radio channel.”

When asked to comment on the response they had received so far from the audience on both FM radio channels, Krish and Ameer Ali termed it “wonderful” further saying that the people were happy as they were waiting for alternatives. “Till now we were gauging the feedback from hearsay but now we have hired services of professional agencies to get accurate feedback.”

On financial sustainability of the venture, Krish said that it was a long journey but they had taken the step after vigorous research-based homework. “Yes our mainstay will be

on the advertisement revenue but definitely it is not going to happen overnight. Till then our board will have support from our local partners,” he said adding that they had adopted a financially-prudent step-by-step growth strategy.

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“We extensively cover social, cultural, sporting events. Recently, we promoted Doha Book Fair and designed dozens of special programmes to celebrate Qatar

National Day.” Ameer Ali, Managing Director of Radio Olive said that the Network was enjoying services of a professional, talented and vibrant team with vast experience in radio industry.

To a question about any obstacles they had faced or were facing in running the venture, Ali said that there existed no hurdles as the Ministry of Culture and Sports particularly Minister for Culture and Sports HE Salah bin Ghanem Al Ali was very helpful, always ready to extend his support for the Network.

Ameer Ali said that the Network was in its initial phase but for the future they had concrete plans to expand the workforce and field activities.

He said that different forms of media like radio, TV, print and even social media were posing no threat for one another rather they used to complement each other in this age of information.

Apart from producing and relaying quality content, OliveSuno Radio Network is fully aware of its corporate social responsibility. “We run a number of campaigns produced to guide, help and educate community on various subjects ranging from health to traffic rules. We also never felt any hesitation in supporting CSR campaigns of other companies provided they are duly approved by authorities concerned,” said Ameer Ali.



Staff of Radio Suno.