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Oman Sail wins five races against a top international fleet



ALL eyes were on Oman at the Extreme Sailing Series Trapani on Saturday, where the two Oman Sail boats, *Oman Air* and *The Wave*, Muscat dominated the racing. Between them the teams beat off a top international fleet to win the first five races of the day and their sterling performances on the water sees *The Wave*, Muscat finish the day top of the leaderboard, and *Oman Air* climb a place to fourth.

The Wave, Muscat started the day in third place overall, and after sailing to victory in the first three races, they had moved up to second and narrowed the gap between them and first placed Alinghi (SUI), skippered by America's Cup and Olympic sailor, Tanguy Cariou, to just one point. The team continued the same pattern throughout the day — by race four they were on equal points, and another win in race five for the team put them in the lead. The team claimed four victories in total — more than any other team in a single day so far this series.

Bowman Khamis al Anbouri said: "Today was a great day, we won four races, and we couldn't wish for more. The team did a great job and worked really hard. We avoided some of our mistakes from yesterday and we came to race course earlier to study the course better before the start of the race and team was in great shape, we were focused and calm and we are pleased about our performance."

Oman Air had an equally impressive day, claiming victory in race four and only finish-

ing out of the top three in one race. The team is now just 4.5 points off third placed Luna Rossa (ITA), skippered by Italian Max Sirena, a four-time America's Cup veteran, with Paul Campbell-James (GBR), the 2010 Series winner when part of *The Wave*, Muscat team, at the helm.

The team's day however wasn't without dra-

ma. In race two of the day, *Oman Air* and the two Italian teams *Luna Rossa* and *Niceforyou* were all racing towards the finish line, when *Oman Air* collided with *Luna Rossa*. In the thick of it, *Niceforyou* and *Luna Rossa* then collided, and both *Luna Rossa* and *Niceforyou* were given penalties. *Oman Air* sustained a minor amount

of damage to their left hull, and the team's shore crew, which includes Omani Mohammed al Shikely will be working on the boat overnight to make sure it is 100 per cent for racing today.

Six races took place within the confines of the harbour walls on Saturday, with up to 20 knots of breeze on the start line the teams jostled for space on the line. In his first event at the helm of an Extreme 40, triple Olympic gold medallist Ben Ainslie, showed the form of a true champion as he raced on the short courses for the first time — a style of racing that certainly seemed to suit him and the team.

"The course is nothing like what I'm used to sailing in but the guys were fantastic and they are doing great and helping me a lot and we enjoy sailing as a team together and we are having a good time," said Ainslie.

The Wave, Muscat has a six-point lead over *Alinghi* going into the penultimate day of racing tomorrow, with *Luna Rossa* a further six points adrift and *Oman Air* just 4.5 points off them.

"Today we had perfect conditions it wasn't too much wind to split the fleet but still enough gust and wind to keep the race exciting which gave us a chance to stretch our legs and show what the team can do, it was fantastic racing at the Trapani harbour. I think every event someone comes in with a good performance and we do everything possible to remain in the podium and I think we had a fantastic result considering the amount of talent in this fleet," Leigh Mcmillan commented.



Lovato wants to be role model for teenagers

ACTRESS Demi Lovato says she wants to be a role model for teenaged girls dealing with the pressure of looking skinny.

The actress has come a long way since checking into treatment almost a year ago, and says she "was dealing with the pressures to be thin."

"There was nobody out there for me to look at and say maybe this is unhealthy," Lovato, who battled eating disorders, revealed on an episode of *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*.

"I want to be that for a 13-year-old girl at home deciding whether or not to eat dinner, or an 18-year-old girl deciding whether or not to keep her breakfast down."

"It was the time in the tabloids when very, very skinny girls were on the cover of every magazine, and that's what I was looking up to. That's what I had to idolise. I don't want that for young girls to idolise," she added.

Lovato says she's grateful for her "meltdown", reports people.com.



"So many things were going great in my life, and then all of a sudden my personal life just went down at crazy speeds. I had a negative breakdown and it changed my life forever," she said. "But if I hadn't gone into treatment. I don't know if, one, I'd even be sitting here today, [or] two, if I'd be alive today," she added.

Women directors shine at Toronto film festival



Tanya Wexler

By Julie Gordon

MADONNA may have stolen the lion's share of the headlines, but there were plenty of films by women directors earning a lot of buzz at this year's Toronto International Film Festival, which drew to a close yesterday.

From the invention of the vibrator to the aftermath of a school massacre, women brought comedy and complexity to the event that helps launch Hollywood's Oscar season.

From Madonna's *W.E.* to Sarah Polley's *Take This Waltz*, many of the films delved into familiar themes of relationships, marriage and children, but it is unfair to label them as "chick flicks", said Canadian actress and director Polley.

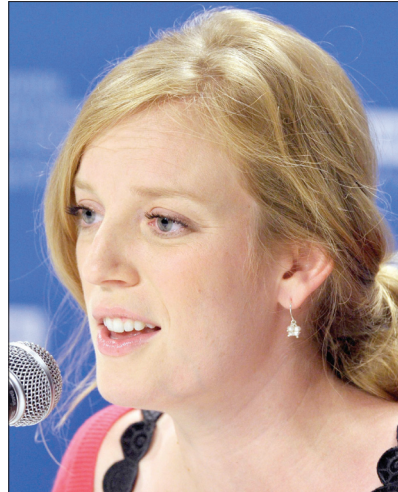
"If you make a movie about a woman, whether it's by a woman or from the perspective of woman, then it's (labelled) a 'chick flick,'" she said. "But there's no matching marginalising term to talk about a movie that stars a man."

"I guess if it's from a man's perspective and a man directs it, it gets to just be a movie," Polley added.

Her new feature, *Take This Waltz*, was one of three female-helmed films to get a high-profile gala screening at the festival. The movie stars Michelle Williams as a young married woman tempted into a relationship by a handsome neighbour.

Madonna's *W.E.*, about the 1930s marriage of King Edward VIII and American divorcee Wallis Simpson, was also given the gala treatment, although headline-grabbing talk about the pop star outweighed the interest paid to her film. And Tanya Wexler's crowd-pleasing Victorian vibrator comedy *Hysteria* rounded out the top-billed female films at Toronto.

Wexler, returning to the director's seat after taking a few years off to focus on her



Sarah Polley

family, said the goal with *Hysteria* was to make a romantic comedy that women would want to see, but that also had a message.

"This movie peeks at the idea of having the opportunity to choose," said Wexler. "It's really about being in charge of your-

self, your life and your body."

She added that despite all the advances women have made since the Victorian era, inequality and lack of choice remain issues for many women in all parts of the world.

"It's the difference of my kids saying 'that's not fair' if they don't each have seven jelly beans," said Wexler. "And the ability to choose if you want jelly beans or chocolate chips."

On the sales front, Andrea Arnold's bare bones adaptation of *Wuthering Heights* and Malgoska Szumowska's *Elles* both secured distribution deals. Lynn Shelton's comedy *Your Sister's Sister*, which mulls family and friendship was snapped up by IFC Films for distribution in the Americas and also tied up European and Australian deals.

"I did hear a couple of people say, 'it's like a really smart chick flick,'" said Shelton. "I don't really think it is. I've had so many men say that they just adore it."

Oscar Bait?

While Shelton's heartfelt turn is being called the sleeper-hit of this year's festival, the low-budget comedy is probably a stretch for major award contention.

More likely candidates at 2011's festival that could pop up on Hollywood's awards circuit include Agnieszka Holland's Holocaust drama *In Darkness* and Lynne Ramsay's disturbing take on a school massacre in *We Need to Talk About Kevin*.

Tilda Swinton's performance as a tortured mother in *We Need to Talk About Kevin* could net the actress an Oscar nod, while Holland's *In Darkness* has already been put forward as Poland's official entry for Best Foreign Language Film.

Holland, who has made over a dozen features, said it is challenging for women to make award contenders as they are often pigeonholed by the studio system into romantic comedies.

For Polley, the sheer number of female-driven films at this year's festival is a sign that that this may be changing. — Reuters



WINDOW

By Ahmed al Falahi
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Breaking the barrier of silence

EVERY now and then the sermon of Friday prayers raises confusing questions as is evident from the continuing debate that takes place every time. Former discussions have dealt with the conventionality of the topics being delivered despite the fact that the world is teeming with events which have a direct effect on everyone's day-to-day life, from the skyrocketing cost of living to the negative social upheaval, not to mention the growing sense of irresponsibility from a large section of the society. The high rate of school drop-out, the spread of drug addiction, the increasing rate of crime, the moral degradation of the young generations and their rush behind trivial matters and paltry fashions. All these sensitive matters and many others are not mentioned by preachers in their Friday sermons. Their speeches are mainly about juristic topics and on rare occasions they delve into hot issues albeit without getting to the depth of the matter in question.

I would like to discuss the linguistic mistakes committed by preachers in their Friday sermons, last week I counted 15 mistakes of this kind. We can find excuses for the preachers as regards the subject matter of their sermons as these sermons are provided by the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, but committing grammatical mistakes is unjustifiable. The majority of the preachers are graduates of colleges and higher institutes in which they received enhanced studies of the Arabic grammar and are supposed to be well-versed and highly qualified in their area of speciality, and this makes them quite capable of handling the sermons as well as it should.

Today's listeners are fully aware of both the linguistic side and the topic of whatever they listen, and they have the ability to identify the mistakes. They are even knowledgeable about whether or not the orator succeeds in imparting the information to the listeners. Sometimes the subject matter is of a high significance; however it looks unimportant because the orator fails to deliver his topic in an attractive way. Some speakers stand rigid clutching the paper with both hands as if it is going to run away. They do not budge a movement or show any sign of interaction with what they are saying, and some of them keep hold of a stick the purpose of which I failed to understand.

We know that it is utterly awesome to stand on the *mihrab* for the first time before hundreds of worshippers, but for an old and experienced preacher who repeats the same mistakes every time he scales the *mihrab* the matter needs to be reconsidered from the authorities concerned, we cannot turn a deaf ear to such grave blunders.

Madhuri Dixit relocating to India



BOLLYWOOD diva Madhuri Dixit, who shifted base to Denver in the US after marrying Shriram Nene 12 years ago, is returning to India permanently.

"For all my fans, we are relocating to India! It will be good to be back home," Madhuri wrote on microblogging site Twitter.

Madhuri tied the knot with Shriram Madhav Nene, a cardiovascular surgeon in 1999 and left her acting career to shift to Denver soon after. Post-marriage, Madhuri featured only in one film *Aaja Nachle* in 2007, as she got busy with family, including two children.

This year, the actress came to India for three months to judge the fifth season of dance reality show *Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa*. After that she has been flooded with offers. — IANS

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