

Record 422 air safety violations reported in 2016 against 275 in 2015, says Directorate General of Civil Aviation

NEW DELHI(K-CN): A record 422 air safety violations were detected by India's civil aviation regulator, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in 2016 against 275 in 2015.

According to the data provided by the DGCA in 422 air safety violations, 272 pilots including crew members were suspended, 42 pilots were kept off roaster, and 108 pilots got a warning.

SpiceJet reported the highest number of suspensions in 2016, followed by Jet Airways, 53 and 41 IndiGo pilots and crew members facing suspensions for air safety violations.

Related Article Air India woman pilot, cabin crew member fail alcohol test, grounded for three months Massive rise in air safety violations in 2016 comes at a time when the United Nations' aviation watchdog, the

International Civil Airways (India) Ltd, dia in its list of 13 ing, citing a lack of



Aviation Organization (ICAO) is coming to India later this year for a 10-day safety audit of DGCA.

The outcome of the audit will have consequences for the expansion plans of airlines such as Jet

Air India and the international launch plans of the Tata-Singapore Airlines joint venture Vistara, which will meet government norms to go international in 2018.

In 2012, after an audit of the DGCA, ICAO had placed In-

worst-performing nations in terms of air safety oversight.

This had triggered an audit by the US aviation regulator, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and in January 2014 the latter downgraded India's rank-

adequate regulatory oversight. However, after 15 months the ratings were restored in 2015.

During the 15 month downgrade period, Indian carriers were not allowed to add new routes to the US or sign agreements with US airlines.

Interestingly, finance minister Arun Jaitley in the annual budget for 2017-18 announced on February 1 has given DGCA a hike of a massive 800 percent to Rs 230 crore from Rs 28 crore during

the last budget.

Sources said with 800 per cent hike in budget, DGCA would undergo further modernization and put on roll more experts and investigators besides ensuring international standards in its functioning as was suggested by the ICAO and USFAA earlier

Meanwhile, the DGCA has called pilots and DIAL officials for questioning in the IndiGo-SpiceJet flight face off at IGI airport that took place on December 27 last year.

The IndiGo flight had just arrived from Lucknow with 160 passengers and Spicejet flight with 187 on board and was about to take off for Hyderabad when the two aircraft came close to each other.

On Friday, the DGCA called IndiGo pilots and two DIAL electricians for questioning. Earlier, an IndiGo flight had overshoot in front of SpiceJet.

According to a top DGCA official, SpiceJet flight SG 123 operating Delhi-Hyderabad was following instructions of Air Traffic Control (ATC).

While taxiing (going to the runway

for take-off), the SpiceJet pilots observed another aircraft on the same taxiway in the opposite direction and immediately the SpiceJet pilots stopped the aircraft and informed ATC.

IndiGo in this regard had issued a statement claiming that its pilots had followed standard procedures and took the decision of switching off the engine and reported the incident to ATC.

The DGCA had reported this to be a miscommunication with the ATC and had started investigating. *December 2, 2016 -- near miss incident between Jet Airways Boeing 737-800 and an Alliance Air ATR turboprop over Nagpur.

*October 22, 2016 -- GoAir aircraft did not follow the instructions issued by the Goa ATC. In the second incident, also being probed by DGCA ,

*November 2 --- IndiGo Airbus A320 plane and a KLM Boeing Dreamliner aircraft came into close proximity on November 2 over Jaipur airspace with vertical separation reduced to 200 feet.

Political party intensify campaign for panchayat poll

BHUBANESWAR(K-CN): With the five-phase panchayat polls set to begin from February 13, political parties have intensified their campaign with star campaigners leading the charge. The campaign schedule of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is, however, yet to be decided even though he was the number one star campaigner of the ruling BJD.

Sources maintained that with the BJD in a dominant position as the ruling party supported candidates have so far been elected uncontested in many seats, the Chief Minister is likely to limit his campaign to only Ganjam, his home district. The Chief Minister is likely to

campaign at few other places as well including tribal dominated Southern districts.

The campaign schedule of chief ministers of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, Raman Singh and Raghubar Das besides other central leaders are also yet to be finalised. Sources said the two BJP chief ministers will campaign for their party candidates from the second week of February. However, the two central ministers from the state, Jual Oram and Dharmendra Pradhan have already started campaigning for the party candidates.

Oram is leading the campaign of the BJP candidates in Sundargarh and other Western Odisha districts while Pradhan has campaigned for the party candidates in several areas. Oram will campaign for the party candidates in Sambalpur, Koraput and Balasore districts from tomorrow. Leader of the BJP legislature party KV Singhdeo will also campaign for the party candidates in Jagatsinghpur, Kandhamal, Bargarh, Balasore, Cuttack and Gajapati districts from tomorrow.

BMC's choking ways on traffic woes of Odisha capital city

BHUBANESWAR(K-CN): Parking of vehicles in downtown and upmarkets of the top Smart City is in disarray. Though the City's civic administration is sketching plans of improving lifestyle, urban mobility and non-motorised transport, a basic infrastructure like parking is being neglected.

A major cause of parking woes in the State Capital is centralisation of floating tenders. Under the current practice, a central committee of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) decides and declares which place is vacant and can be used for parking. While the declaration is done on the basis of a report from the respective zone or an internal inquiry, the feedback from traffic police is sought only on a few occasions. This has resulted in a sort of conflict between lease holders and zonal staff who deal with parking.

"A section of the BMC had proposed to decentralise the allocation of parking tenders. However, another group argued that if the process is decentralised, the Zonal Development Commissioners will float their own individual policies which may lead to conflict over parking fees across the City," an official of the Housing and Urban Development

districts. A team of Congress leaders including party MLA Jacob Pradhan, party spokesperson Siddhanta Mohanty, Girija Shankar Das and Sougat Mohanty submitted a memorandum to the State Election Commission (SEC) and demanded that election to seats where the BJD had violated the model code of conduct should be cancelled. Though it was decided at the all political party meeting convened by the SEC that party symbol cannot be utilised for campaign for panchayat posts which are not being on non-political party basis, BJD is violating this decision repeatedly, they said.



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I was written off by everybody in the south: Taapsee Pannu

Seven years since making her debut as an actress in a Telugu film, Taapsee Pannu continues to seek her own identity. Having worked extensively in the south, the actress has gone on to do films opposite some of the country's biggest stars, including Amitabh Bachchan and Akshay Kumar – and yet, she's yet to achieve stardom.

"Even today I'm considered as a newcomer. People always refer to me as an 'upcoming star' or a 'rising star'. I started out with films in the south, and then just when I was slowly getting a foothold, I decided to switch to Hindi films, where I had to begin from scratch all over again. So even though I have been here for six years now, I'm still considered as a newcomer. One day, I just want to wake up and feel like a star," Taapsee shares.

In an exclusive chat with City Express, Taapsee was brazenly honest, unbelievably grounded and extremely articulate in her thoughts and expressions. Having done intense films such as Baby and Pink, Taapsee will be doing a romantic-comedy in Amit Roy's Runninshaadi.com. The film, interest-

ingly, was shot before Baby and Pink, but wasn't released earlier as the filmmakers felt that it may not be the right time to release it since both Amit and Taapsee were 'newcomers'.

"In a way, it made sense because when you know you have the right product in your hands, you wouldn't want to release it too soon. I owe a lot to this film because it was on the sets of Runningshaadi.com when Shoojit Sircar (director of Pink), who's producing this film, saw an edit of my scene and decided to cast me as Meenal Arora for Pink. He did not know who I am or anything about me, but he took that decision based on what he saw," the actress explains.

Taapsee admits that jumping into Hindi films after spending years in the south wasn't an easy task. "Though Hindi is my native tongue, it was suddenly awkward to do a film in Hindi, since I was used to doing films in Tamil and Telugu. I had dubbed my own voice for my films in the south, so to suddenly speak in Hindi felt a bit weird. But it was during RunningShaadi.com that I discovered my true potential, where I realized how much

I can play with my language and nuances," she observes.

Taapsee plays a Sardarni in the film, in a role that the actress says, is exactly how she's like in real life. Taapsee also says

like how it's shown in the movies. So in this film, I made sure I stayed to my true self," Taapsee explains, passionately.

Running Shaadi.com will clash with another of

forward to see how people receive it," she reveals.

With films like Baby, Pink and now Ghazi – Taapsee has been the go-to person in doing intense roles on films dealing with

and pushing my barriers," Taapsee expresses.

And while she's busy with Hindi films, Taapsee says she hasn't completely gone away from doing films in the south. The actress, however, admits that she wasn't treated very well in the south by certain people during her stint in films here.

"It's a bit funny, because when I was here, they had written me off and were extremely mean to me. And now that I've done a few films in Hindi, they ask me why I don't do Telugu films anymore," she quips, sarcastically.

When asked to elaborate, she says, "People from both within and outside the industry had written me off here. I wouldn't like to take names but some people had dubbed me as 'bad luck'. They said I had 'Iron Legs' and were quite mean to me. People in the south are extremely auspicious, and at the time, doing a film with me wasn't very auspicious for them. It hurt because I worked very hard, dubbed my own voice and put in so much effort, only to be treated so harshly."



the film attempts to break stereotypes about the portrayal of Sardarnis and Delhi girls.

"North Indian girls are often portrayed on screen in a very clichéd manner. There is a certain notion about Sardarnis and Delhi girls. They are always shown as these loud, abusive and melodramatic girls. I'm a Delhi girl who hails from Punjab and believe me, we are not at all

Taapsee's film, Ghazi, a trilingual film. While she has a much shorter role in Ghazi, Taapsee says that it was extremely special. "I play a Bangladeshi Refugee in Ghazi. My role is more of a special appearance since it's a war film based on the navy during the 1971 war. There's not much scope for women characters in such a setting. But it was a challenging role and I'm looking

serious subjects. The actress, however, wants to do a few lighter roles as well and is keen to show her versatility as an actress. "I don't want to keep doing the same thing, just because they have been successful. I don't want to take names but there are a few actresses out there, who get comfortable doing the same kind of movies over and over again. I want to keep experimenting

Hansika in Mohanlal's next

It seems Mohanlal-B new release Bogan. Venkatesh, who has



Unnikrishnan team's untitled film is getting bigger and bigger. After Vishal and Srikanth, another popular south star Hansika Motwani will be making her Mollywood debut through the film. The update was announced by the director himself on his official Facebook page.

"I wish great luck to @Hansika for her

She will have a very special appearance in my Mohanlal film produced by Mr Rockline Venkatesh," posted Unnikrishnan.

According to the director, who had last teamed up with Mohanlal for Mr Fraud, VFX and special effects will have a lot of importance in the big budget project.

While Rockline

made films like Bajrangi Bhaijaan and Linga, is the producer, the project also boasts of an excellent crew. Manoj Paramahansa, who has cranked camera for films including Vinnaitaandi Varuvaaya and Nanpan, is the cinematographer.

4 Musics, the band behind the hit songs of Oppam, will be scoring the music.

Tamannaah Bhatia and Shruti Hassan are the new gal pals

Tamannaah Bhatia has been bonding with her contemporary Shruti Hassan.

eryday due to their busy schedules, but they always make sure to make time on

Shruti.

Tamannaah says, "Shruti is a sweetheart and a dear



for a while now. Tamannaah chose to take some time out last week to meet her new BFF Shruti Hassan to celebrate her birthday.

According to a source close to Tamannaah says, "Tamannaah and Shruti share a special bond, the two actresses may not be able to talk ev-

each other's birthdays. Shruti Hassan, who celebrated her birthday couple of days ago with close friends, had Tamannaah as one of her special guests. It is said that Tamannaah makes it a point to not miss her friend's special day at any cost. She had also brought a special gift for

friend. Since we both have tight schedules, we don't get much time to spend with each other the rest of the year, so I needed to be at her birthday party so that I could be with her. I have been attending her birthday since the last three years and making sure to be with her on her special day."

Snapchat files for \$3 billion IPO, outlines aggressive expansion plans

Snapchat owner Snap Inc shot the opening salvo in its \$3 billion initial public offering on Thursday, outlining aggressive expansion plans but offering new investors no say on how the company is run and no promise of profits.

Snap's publication on Thursday of its IPO registration document sets the stage for its upcoming marketing campaign to convince investors to look past its widening losses and the firm grip of its founders, and focus on its rapid growth of active users.

The number of

Snap's daily active users grew to an average of 158 million at the end of December, up 48 percent year-on-year, Snap revealed. However, its net loss widened to \$514.6 million in 2016 from \$372.9 million the year before.

Related Article Sony Entertainment CEO Lynton to quit for taking up top role in Snapchat Snapchat set to enter augmented reality headset field Snapchat updates guidelines to tackle fake news While Snap will have time to polish its marketing pitch in the run-up to the IPO

planned for March, some analysts were taken aback that the company was just beginning to reap cash from its product.

"What surprises me the most is that it is still very early days when it comes to Snap making money," said Rohit Kulkarni, managing director at private securities investment firm SharesPost.

Snap had confidentially registered with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission for an IPO late last year. It kept the filing under such tight wraps, even some of its IPO underwriters had not

seen it prior to publication on Thursday, sources familiar with the matter previously told Reuters.

Snap said in the IPO registration document published on Thursday it would become the first U.S. company to go public with shares on offer not granting voting rights to stock market investors. Its founders, Evan Spiegel and Robert Murphy, will keep control of the company.

Snap could be valued at between \$20 billion to \$25 billion, according to sources familiar with the situation who

asked not to be named because the matter is confidential. That would give the company the richest valuation in a U.S. technology IPO since Facebook Inc.

Snap, which launched itself in 2012 with an app that sends disappearing messages, rebranded itself last year as a camera company and started selling \$130 video camera glasses. It generates the majority of its revenue from advertising, seeking to challenge the dominance of internet giants such as Facebook and Alphabet Inc's Google.

"The industry has been crying out for new advertising units" says Ian Schafer, founder and chairman of ad agency Deep Focus, referring to the tight hold Facebook and Google have on the digital advertising marketplace.

In its IPO regis-

tration document, Snap cited Apple Inc, Google, Twitter Inc, Facebook and its photo-sharing platform Instagram as its competitors.

Spiegel, the 26-year-old Snap co-founder, last year earned \$503,205 in salary, with a \$1 million bonus. Imran Khan, Snapchat's chief strategy officer whom it hired from investment bank Credit Suisse Group AG in 2014, earned \$241,539 last year with a \$5.2 million bonus. In 2015, Khan also received \$145.3 million worth of Snap shares as a sign-up bonus.

Spiegel and Murphy will maintain tight control over Snap's stock through a unique three-share class structure. The structure will give Spiegel and Murphy the right of 10 votes for every share. Existing investors will have one vote for each of their shares, while new investors will have no voting

rights.

Snap said it couldn't predict if the structure would "result in a lower trading price or greater fluctuations" in the stock.

Keeping tight control is common in companies closely as-

sociated with their founders, who often prefer to grow their business without being questioned by a broad array of investors. Still, offering a class of stock with no votes in an IPO is unprecedented.

Russia's Sberbank to supply 20-25 tonnes of gold to India in 2017

MOSCOW(KCN): Sberbank CIB, the investment and corporate banking unit of Russia's largest

clients, who have the right to hold import operations with precious metals, on Jan. 27. The bank plans to



bank Sberbank, plans to supply a total of 20-25 tonnes of gold to India this year, the bank said in a statement on Friday.

Sberbank CIB started gold supplies to Indian corporate

start exporting silver to Indian clients at the end of the first quarter.

Sberbank CIB plans to supply a total of 50-60 tonnes of gold to Asia in 2017, it added.

Bosch to pay out \$327.5 million over Volkswagen 'dieselgate'

FRANKFURT(KCN): German car parts maker Bosch said Wednesday it will pay out some \$327.5 million (303 million euros) in compensation to US buyers and dealers of Volkswagen-made diesel cars affected by the 'dieselgate' scandal. Bosch made some elements of the sophisticated software, known as "defeat devices", that VW installed in 11 million diesel engines worldwide to minimise emissions during regulatory testing. Bosch said in a statement that a compensation agreement "would settle the claims of consumers and dealers of used vehicles against Robert Bosch GmbH, its

affiliates, employees, and directors" in the United States.

US customers who bought vehicles from Volkswagen and Audi with 2.0-litre diesel engines between 2009 and 2015, as well as 3.0-litre VW, Audi and Porsche cars produced between 2009 and 2016, will receive compensation.

The agreement must still be approved by a US federal judge in California, with a hearing slated for February 14.

While agreeing to pay out to VW buyers who have accused the firm of helping conceal the existence of the "defeat devices", Bosch said it "neither acknowledges the facts as alleged by the

plaintiffs nor does Bosch accept any liability." With the proposed agreement affecting only civil law claims, Bosch added that it "will continue to defend its interests in all other civil and criminal law proceedings and to cooperate comprehensively with the investigating authorities in Germany and other countries."

"We wish to devote our attention and our resources to the transition in mobility and in other areas of activity," chief executive Volkmar Denner said in the statement.

Presenting provisional results for 2016 last week, the Stuttgart-based, family-owned firm said it was investing billions in transitioning to

electric cars and connected objects from its traditional car components and domestic appliances business.

Bosch reported 73.1 billion euros (\$79 billion) in revenue and operating profit of 4.3 billion euros for the year.

Honda raises full-year profit outlook on lower costs, weaker yen

TOKYO(KCN): Honda Motor Co on Friday lifted its an-

October-December - up 27.4 percent from a year prior and ex-

automaker to invest \$436 million in its seventh plant in the

global automakers which have come under pressure from

count for around 26 percent of its global vehicle output.



nual profit forecast for the second time in as many quarters due to cost-cutting and the impact of a weakening yen, while sales in China remained strong.

Japan's third-largest automaker said it expected net profit for the year through March at 545.0 billion yen (\$4.82 billion), up from previous guidance upgraded in November, and 58.2 percent more than a year earlier.

It also raised its operating profit forecast to 785.0 billion yen after posting 207.6 billion yen for

ceeding the 157.07 billion yen average of 11 analyst estimates in a Reuters I/B/E/S/ poll.

Analysts expect the automaker to post full-year operating profit of 753.27 billion yen and net profit of 533.44 billion yen.

The automaker also forecasts the local currency to average 107 yen to the U.S. dollar through March, compared with an earlier forecast of 103 yen.

The results come as business is booming in China, where surging sales led by the Civic and the XR-V have prompted the

country.

It raised its full-year sales outlook for Asia including China to 1.945 million vehicles from 1.915 million.

The automaker expects to sell 5.005 million vehicles globally in the year through March, up from a previous forecast for 4.98 million. In the U.S., strong demand for Honda's latest CR-V sport utility vehicle (SUV) and the latest generation of its Civic sedan have also led to record sales in the automaker's biggest market during calendar 2016.

Honda is among

U.S. President Donald Trump, who has demanded that more cars sold in the United States be made locally to increase jobs and shrink the U.S. trade deficit.

The new president has focused on protectionist trade policies in his first weeks in office, formally withdrawing the United States from Trans Pacific Partnership trade pact. Honda and other Japanese automakers have increasingly localised vehicle production over the past three decades, and Honda's U.S.-produced vehicles ac-

The company operates seven production plants in the United States which manufactured nearly 80 percent of the record 1.64 million Honda vehicles sold in the country in 2016. It also operates plants in Mexico and Canada which export a chunk of their output to the United States. As demand for SUVs and trucks continues to rise in the United States, Honda has increasingly turned to exports from Japan, which more than doubled to 82,780 units in the 12 months through December.



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New Zealand recall Ish Sodhi for Hamilton ODI

HAMILTON(KCN): Steven Smith and Glenn Maxwell, that Ish has had some doubtful for the New Zealand leg- Glenn Maxwell, success in at in the match due to a ham-



spinner Ish Sodhi has been recalled into the side for the Chappell-Hadlee series decider against Australia to be played in Hamilton on Sunday. Sodhi was a key performer for the Black Caps when they emerged victorious in the deciding match of the 2016 series at the Seddon Park. Figures of 2 for 31, including the wickets of the captain

earned him the Man of the Match award. "History shows that the Seddon Park pitch can be spin friendly and for that reason Ish has been brought into the squad," ESP Nricinfo quoted New Zealand national selector Gavin Larsen said.

"We wanted the option of two specialist spinners for this match and it's a venue

past. Mike [Hesson] and Kane [Williamson] will now get the opportunity to assess the pitch over the next couple of days and make a decision from there as to who will be in the playing eleven," he added.

Meanwhile, Dean Brownlie has been retained in the squad as swashbuckling opener Martin Guptill remains

string strain. "Martin has made progress in the last couple of days, but it's not yet clear whether he'll be available for selection," Larsen said. "At this stage it's probably 50-50." The second ODI of the series was on Thursday abandoned without a ball being bowled after persistence rain left the outfield too wet to play at McLean Park in Napier.

Woods withdraws from Dubai with back spasm

Former world number one Tiger Woods has withdrawn from the EPGA Dubai Desert Classic before the start of Friday's second round due to a back injury.

A back spasm overnight failed to subside forcing the 14-time major winner to concede he could not compete as his comeback struggles continue.

The 41-year-old Woods shot a five-over par 77 on Thursday but insisted he wasn't in any pain. "No, I wasn't in pain at all. I was just trying to hit shots and I

before his return late last year, but back spasms.

"He felt okay coming off the golf course yesterday (Thursday). So he wasn't in pain. I didn't see him at dinner, but he said he was okay," explained Steinberg. "He then went into a spasm in his lower back, fairly late last night after dinner.

"He tried to work it out last night. Didn't really get it worked out. Had treatment starting pretty early this morning, for probably the past three, three-and-a-half

So that's where we are.

"He talked to Matthew (Fitzpatrick) and Danny (Willett), and he feels terrible for the tournament.

"He can move around. But he can't make a full rotation on the swing."

Woods was scheduled to take a week off after Dubai and then play two successive weeks on the PGA Tour — at the Genesis Open and Honda Classic.

But Steinberg did not comment about Woods' status for those two tourna-

him," he added.

"He's had some spasms before. No doubt about it. But he's got to get the spasm to calm down from what I gather. He has his trainer here, which is good, and that's who has been working on him for the past several hours.

"So yeah, he'll get it to calm down, and forget about the long term; the short-term prognosis, he hopes he'll be strong; based on the fact that it's not that nerve pain I just alluded to."

Woods, now languishing down in 666



wasn't doing a very good job," the American said.

His manager Mark Steinberg told reporters in Dubai that it wasn't the nerve issue that kept Woods out of the game for 16 months

hours, and he can't get the spasm to settle.

"He says it's not the nerve pain that's kept him out for so long. He says it's a back spasm and he just can't get the spasm to calm down.

ments.

"I think spasms are a funny thing. I'm certainly no doctor but they come and go. And again, the fact that he feels as though it's not the nerve pain, that's very encouraging for

in the world rankings, saw his long-awaited PGA Tour comeback come to an abrupt end at the Farmers Insurance Open last week as he tumbled out of the tournament after missing the cut.

Online viewing of women's league exceeds expectations despite drawbacks

CHENNAI(KCN): It has been a few days since the first ever women's football league in the country kicked off. It has not

ver lining though has been the faithful audience that the live streams have gathered. In a country where men's football

Bembem Devi coming out of retirement to pull on the latter's jersey, drew a whopping 64,000 viewers. The remaining games

football in India. I also don't think the stadium was that bad. There could have been more grass on the pitch, but the sur-



been the best of starts. The state of the pitch at the Ambedkar Stadium, where the matches are being played, has come in for much flak. With no television channel interested in telecasting it, the six-team league has so far gone under the radar.

Indeed, the only way of keeping track of the matches are to either turn up at the Ambedkar Stadium or tune into the All India Football Federation's Facebook page where most matches are live-streamed.

The biggest sil-

often finds few takers, it is assumed that the women's version will be condemned to obscurity of an even worse manner. But the numbers that AIFF's live streams are pulling suggests this is not the case. The inaugural encounter between Rising Students' Club from Odisha and Aizawl FC drew more than 38,000 viewers.

The next game between Puducherry's Jeppi-yar Institute and Manipur's Eastern Sporting Union, with former India captain Oinam

have healthy numbers, the match between Pune City FC and FC Alakhpura drawing 33,000 viewers and the encounter between Eastern Sporting Union and Rising Students' Club drawing 47,000 viewers.

Bembem, who has played for Maldives' New Radiant Club, is no stranger to league football and believes the numbers are encouraging. "Of course, it's a good start. The numbers are very good," she says. "This is a good sign for women's

face was very even. But yes, there is no doubt that this can be improved. They should think about holding this on a home-and-away basis next year."

Bembem also wishes that she had the chance to play in a league when she was at her peak. "Of course, I wish this had happened when I was younger," says the 36-year-old. "I had retired and I thought I would never get to play in a league in India. But thankfully this has happened now." vinprad@vividexp.com

Victories a boost for Men in Blue before Australia Test

BENGALURU(KCN): Pulling off dramatic wins has become a habit for the Indian team. A sensational performance on Wednesday saw the Men in Blue clinch the T20I series against England, adding to the ODI and Test series triumphs before that. This was after successful Test and ODI series against New Zealand.

Teamwork was evident. But the good part is that apart from seniors coming up with good performances, youngsters are also stepping up and showing that they can be match-winners. While it was great to watch centuries from Virat Kohli, M Vijay, Cheteshwar Pujara and useful contributions by R Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja and Jayant Yadav, other signifi-

cant highlights were the 303 by Karun Nair and 199 by KL Rahul in the Chennai Test. Similarly, in the ODI and T20I series, the likes of Kedar Jadhav, Rahul, Yuzvendra Chahal and Jasprit Bumrah delivered when it mattered.

The English were no pushovers. The series triumphs came only after India toiled hard. That, obviously, makes the victories sweeter and will be a boost before the Australia Test series. Virat Kohli said it was more of mental preparation than physical. "Hard work is something international cricketers do on a daily basis. Against teams like England, you need more mental preparation than physical work. I think we fought fire with fire

and were not willing to take a step backwards." "We got the results we wanted. Winning all three series feels really good because we were up against a top quality side. We understand that and to come on top after the end of all three series is a great feeling, knowing that we didn't have that much experience in our teams. The Test team is almost as good as new. Even in the ODI team, we had 3-4 experienced guys but the rest who stepped up were youngsters. This is a massive boost for us," Kohli said.

Talking about great performances from the youngsters, he said, "We have talks in the dressing room about taking every day as an opportunity, wanting to make a difference and

taking equal ownership of the team. The talk has always been to take responsibility as individuals. That's the only way we can become a champion side. That's why we've bounced back from difficult situations. That's why we saw special performances from guys who haven't played so many games." Though leading in all formats and delivering the goods, Kohli says it's no one-man show. "I said this before and you would have seen this on the field. I take a lot of advice from MS (Dhoni) and am always speaking to Ashish Nehra too. In ODIs, I was talking to MS a lot. To take advice from a person who has captained the side for so long is never a bad idea in crucial situations," he stated.