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Finance and Banking

IBBI registration must for asset valuations under bankruptcy code

- Professionals carrying out asset valuations under Companies Act and Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code will have to get themselves registered with Insolvency Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) from April to conduct such activities, an official statement said today.
- "With effect from April 1, 2018 for conducting valuations required under the Companies Act, 2013 and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016, a person is to be registered with the IBBI as a registered valuer," the Ministry of Corporate Affairs said in a statement.
- A government notification in October had delegated powers and functions to the IBBI under Companies Act and designated it as the authority under the Companies (Registered Valuers and Valuation) Rules, 2017.
- As per the notification, a valuer need to have necessary qualification and experience, a member of a recognised valuer organisation and should be registered with IBBI to carry out such activities.
- Besides, a person is required to complete a recognised educational course conducted by a Registered Valuer Organisation (RVO) and pass valuation examination conducted by the IBBI.

Maharashtra govt sanctions ₹14,240 cr for farm loan waiver

- The Maharashtra government on Monday made a ₹14,240-crore allocation for the farm loan waiver scheme and for repayment to farmers whose produce was purchased by the State.
- The State's cooperation and marketing department today issued a Government Resolution (GR) for the allocation of ₹14,240 crore for the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Shetkari Sanman Yojana, the loan waiver scheme announced on June 24 last year.
- At the time of the announcement, the State had claimed that the total outlay of the scheme would be ₹34,020 crore.
- The GR means that the state government has prepared itself for disbursement of the amount under the loan waiver scheme. The government had during the last monsoon session made an allocation of ₹20,000 crore and a major portion of it has been disbursed.
- The allocation of ₹14,000 crore was sanctioned during the winter session of the state Assembly held in Nagpur last month.

India and states

Assam government recognises 1.9 crore as legal Indian citizens in first NRC draft

- The Assam government late on Sunday night published the much-awaited draft of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), recognising the names of 1.9 crore people out of a total of 3.29 crore applicants as legal citizens of India. The rest of the names of applicants continued to remain "under various stages of verification" and are likely to be recognised in the final draft.
- "People, whose names have not figured in the list, should not worry, for this is a part NRC. The names of the remaining applicants are under various stages of verification. Claims and objections can be filed only after phase 2 which is the complete draft. Hopefully, we will be able to complete the entire process by 2018," registrar general of India (RGI) Sailesh, who was present during the online publication of the part NRC, told the media.
- The NRC authorities had received applications from 68.27 lakh families comprising 3.29 crore individuals.
- About 1.39 crore cases continued to remain under examination, scrutiny or field verification, Sailesh said.
- In December, the Centre had sought seven more months to publish the part draft but the Supreme Court, under whose direct monitoring the NRC is being updated, rejected the plea.

Nagaland declared as 'disturbed area' till June-end under AFSPA

- The entire Nagaland has been declared as "disturbed area" for six more months, till June-end, under the controversial AFSPA, which empowers security forces to conduct operations anywhere and arrest anyone without any prior notice.
- In a gazette notification, the Union Home Ministry said it is of the opinion that the area comprising the whole of Nagaland is in such a "disturbed and dangerous condition" that use of armed forces in aid of the civil power is necessary.
- "Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 3 of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (No. 28 of 1958), the central government hereby declares that whole of the said state to be a 'disturbed area' for a period of six months with effect from December 30, 2017, for the purpose of that Act," the notification said.
- A home ministry official said the decision to continue the declaration of Nagaland as "disturbed area" has been taken as killings, loot and extortion have been going in various parts of the state which necessitated the action for the convenience of the security forces operating there.

Health Ministry launches Allied and Health care Professional Database

- Aiming to make data repository robust, the Union Health Ministry on Monday launched the Allied and Health care Professional Database which will help the government to track the number of professionals and streams of allied and health care professions in the country.
- According to the ministry, more than 3, 000 professionals have already registered on the portal during the testing phase.
- The Allied and Health care Professionals' can visit the portal on the link mentioned above and provide basic personal, qualification and professional information. The portal will then send an

auto-generated email to the registered email of the candidate for verification and will provide an enrolment reference number for further usage.

- The candidates can subsequently login to the portal using the credentials received in the email and edit the information, upload qualification degree among other details.

Appointments

Vijay Gokhale appointed new Foreign Secretary of India

- Vijay Gokhale, who as envoy in Beijing played a key role in the resolution of the Doklam stand-off with China, was on Monday named the new Foreign Secretary to replace S. Jaishankar who retires this month.
- The appointment of Gokhale, currently Secretary (Economic Relations), was cleared by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, an official statement said.
- The 1981-batch Indian Foreign Service officer is widely believed to have played a key role as then Indian ambassador to China when he led the negotiations to resolve the over 70-day Doklam crisis.
- Gokhale along with Jaishankar led India's diplomatic outreach to the US and Japan in explaining to them New Delhi's stand on the issue and winning their support that built up the pressure on China.
- Gokhale has served Indian embassies in Germany and Malaysia and missions in Hong Kong, Hanoi and New York.

Pankaj Jain assumes charge as IIFCL Managing Director

- Pankaj Jain, Joint Secretary in the Department of Financial Services (DFS), has assumed charge as the Managing Director of India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd (IIFCL).
- He will be holding additional charge of IIFCL along with his present position as Joint Secretary at DFS. IIFCL is a state-owned company focused on infrastructure financing and development.
- The Government had in end December last year assigned the additional charge of the post of Managing Director of IIFCL to Pankaj Jain, a 1990 batch IAS officer of Assam-Meghalaya cadre.

Sports

Shahzar Rizvi Wins Men's 10m Air Pistol Gold

- Shooter Shahzar Rizvi ended a brilliant 2017 by winning the Men's 10m Air Pistol Gold at the 61st National Shooting Championship (NSCC), at the Karni Singh Shooting Range here on Sunday.

- Representing the Air Force, Shahzar won with a new finals national record score of 241.7, leaving Army's Yashwant Singh in silver medal position with a score of 237.7. Yashwant's teammate Omprakash Mitherwal won bronze, securing 218.0 in the finals.
- Earlier this year, the 23-year-old Meerut shooter won gold medals at the Commonwealth Shooting Championships and at the 10th Asian Airgun Championship in Japan as well.
- In NSCC, he beat a 568-strong field contingent, including the likes of Jitu Rai, who finished sixth in the final. Jitu, however, won the team event for his third gold of the tournament. His teammates were Mitherwal and Dharmendra Singh.
- In the Junior Men's 10m pistol final, Anmol Jain of Haryana won gold in a new finals national record score of 244.1. Saurabh Choudhary of Uttar Pradesh and Pankaj Yadav of Border Security Force (BSF) won silver and bronze medals, with scores of 238.8 and 218.6 respectively. The junior event also had a field of 314 entries.

Vidarbha Thump Delhi by 9 Wickets to Clinch Maiden Ranji Title

- Vidarbha claimed their maiden Ranji Trophy after beating Delhi by nine wickets in the final of the country's premier domestic tournament today.
- Chasing a target of 29, Vidarbha completed the task with loss of skipper Faiz Fazal's wicket.
- Opting to field, Vidarbha bowled out Delhi for 295 in the first innings with Rajneesh Gurbani picking up six wickets.
- In reply, Vidarbha notched up a mammoth 547 all out, as Akshay Wadkar struck his maiden century in first-class cricket.
- Overnight 528 for seven with wicketkeeper Wadkar unbeaten on 133, Delhi quickly picked up the remaining three wickets in the morning.
- Young pacer Navdeep Saini was the most successful bowler for Delhi, returning figures of 5 for 135 after bowling a marathon 36.3 overs. Delhi were a bowler short through the Vidarbha first innings as left-arm spinner Manan Sharma remained off the field due to a knee injury. Manan, though, batted in the second innings.

Star Sports is official broadcast partner for Khelo India School Games

- The Ministry of Sports & Youth Affairs has chosen Star Sports as its broadcast and production partner for the upcoming Khelo India School Games for five years.
- The broadcaster has bagged the broadcast rights for the event till 2022.
- The Ministry did not give out specifics about the financials of the broadcast deal.
- He added, "With Khelo India, we seek to bring back active playtime in the lives of our children. Parents and teachers need to embrace sports and ensure that it is as essential a part of the everyday life of children as educational curriculum."
- Khelo India School Games 2018 is the marquee event of the Ministry, under revamped Khelo India programme. The games are being organized for under-17 group (boys and girls) from January 31, 2018, in 16 different sports disciplines.
- The event is expected to host around 6,000 athletes and officials in its first edition.

World

Google develops human-like text-to-speech Artificial Intelligence

- In a major step towards its “AI first” dream, Google has developed a text-to-speech artificial intelligence (AI) system that will confuse you with its human-like articulation.
- The tech giant’s text-to-speech system called “Tacotron 2” delivers an AI-generated computer speech that almost matches with the voice of humans, technology news website Inc.com reported.
- At Google I/O 2017 developers conference, company’s Indian-origin CEO Sundar Pichai announced that the internet giant was shifting its focus from mobile-first to “AI first” and launched several products and features, including Google Lens, Smart Reply for Gmail and Google Assistant for iPhone.
- According to a paper published in arXiv.org, the system first creates a spectrogram of the text, a visual representation of how the speech should sound.

Obituaries

Ex-Windies umpire Clyde Cumberbatch passes away

- Former West Indies umpire Clyde Cumberbatch has recently passed away in Port of Spain. He was 81.
- Fellow Trinidadian and international umpire, Peter Nero condoled the demise of Cumberbatch, saying that he has lost his umpiring father.
- Born on November 13, 1936, Cumberbatch had officiated in 12 Tests and 26 ODIs between 1981 and 1997.
- After bidding adieu to his umpiring career, Cumberbatch served as chairman of the West Indies Cricket Umpires Association's Training and Examination Committee for 12 years before stepping down from the post in June this year.