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IBC News

We should improve our system so that prospective bidders feel more confident: Ravi Mital, Chairperson-IBBI

Shri Ravi Mital, Chairperson-IBBI has said that Insolvency Professionals (IPs) should make every possible effort to improve the insolvency ecosystem in the country which will ultimately increase the confidence of prospective bidders in the stressed assets and ensure better resolution of the corporate debtors. He was speaking as the Chief Guest at the Conference (physical) on "Developing Markets for Stressed Assets in India" organized by IIIPI in New Delhi on Friday, September 22, 2023.

"IPs should compile litigations and find out ways to minimize delays. If delays are reduced, venture capitalists will be encouraged to invest in stressed assets," said Shri Ravi Mital. He also suggested the IPs to revisit the companies, which they had resolved through resolution plans under the IBC, after 4 to 5 years of their resolution and prepare "success stories", which will be useful in creating a positive environment for investment in stressed assets. Speaking on this occasion, Shri Akhil Gupta, Vice Chairman-Bharti Enterprises Ltd., said that it is the right time to extend Prepack Insolvency for all the companies.

IIIPI Chairman Dr. Ashok Haldia highlighted that the ultimate objective of the IBC is to reduce stressed assets and the focus of the IBC 2.0 is to ensure the speedy resolution of CIRP cases. He informed that IIIPI has made mandatory Peer Review for a class of IPs and the result of Peer Review will also be made available on IIIPI website in future. The Conference also witnessed 'Special Address' by CA. G. C. Misra, Chairman, Committee on IBC-ICAI and CA Subodh Kumar Aggarwal, Past President-ICAI and Prof. Balagopal Gopalakrishnan, IIM, Ahmedabad. Besides, there was a "Panel Discussion" on the topic in which IPs, bankers, industry professionals, lawyers etc. shared their views and exchanged ideas.

Source: iiipi.icai.in/September 22, 2023

https://www.iiipicai.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/IIIPI-Press-Release-on-Stressed-Assets-22.09.23.pdf



The clean slate principle would stand negated if the Successful Resolution Applicant is asked to pay the arrears payable by the CD: SC

The Supreme Court has held that the issue of Corporate Debtor's dues falls within the fold of the phrase 'arising out of or in relation to insolvency resolution' under Section 60(5)(c) of the IBC. Therefore, the dues of the Corporate Debtor have to be paid in the manner prescribed in the Resolution Plan, as approved by the Adjudicating Authority. The above judgement came in the case of *TATA Power Western Odisha Distribution Ltd. (TPWODL) Vs. Jagannath Sponge Private Ltd.*

In this appeal, TPWODL, which supplies the electricity, insisted on payment of the dues of the Corporate Debtor by the Successful Resolution Applicant (SRA)- Jagannath Sponge Private Ltd., for restoration/grant of the electricity connection. Relying on the previous Supreme Court judgements in the matter of Paschimanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd. Vs. Raman Ispat Private Limited and Ors. (2023) and Southern Power Distribution Company of Andhra Pradesh Limited Vs. Gavi Siddeswara Steels (India) Pvt. Ltd. and Anr. (2023), the Court ruled that the Appellant cannot insist on payment of arrears, which have to be paid in terms of the waterfall mechanism, for grant of an electricity connection. However, the SRA will have to comply with the other requirements for grant of electricity connection, added the Court. Further, the Court also cited the case of Embassy Property Developments Pvt. Ltd. Vs. State of Karnataka and Ors. (2020) wherein the Supreme Court has clarified that a decision by public authority etc. may fall within the jurisdiction of the tribunals constituted under the IBC, where the issue relates to or arises out of the dues payable to an Operational or Financial Creditor.

Source: Livelaw.in, dated September 11, 2023

https://www.livelaw.in/pdf_upload/34458202332646784or der1 1-sep-2023-492608.pdf

If we reduce delay, then the recovery will be better: IBBI Chairperson

"We are trying to speed up the process and are open to suggestions from stakeholders. The direct benefit of the IBC is recovery, but you know the indirect benefit is even bigger and it is called a behavioral change. It is called the change in creditor and borrower relationship," said Ravi Mital, Chairperson, IBBI addressing Assocham's 8th National Summit on 'Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code and Valuation'. He also highlighted that the motto was to bring the company back on track, however, IBC is evaluated based on the recovery mode.

IBBI Chairperson informed that now the NCLT is approving 35 plans a month and at this rate, and if it can continue it will definitely reduce delay to a large extent. "We have to be more innovative to reduce delays. Of course, there is a need for an amendment," said Mital. "We are trying to find out or analyse the cause of delays at various levels and are trying to speed up the processes," he added.

Source: Telegraphindia.com, September 17, 2023

https://www.telegraphindia.com/business/insolvency-andbankruptcy-board-of-india-seeks-to-plug-delay-and-lowrecovery/cid/1966882

UK Electric Car Subscription Service 'Onto' Faces Insolvency

Onto, a UK electric car subscription service is currently facing insolvency despite successfully raising £100 million in investments in January of this year. The investments were intended to expand its electric vehicle fleet and potentially expand into other regions. The company cites challenging market conditions, including a significant drop in the price of used electric vehicles, rising interest rates, and financial constraints on consumers' disposable income as reasons for its financial difficulties. According to the company, the administrators now manage the business and affairs as agents of the Company and certain subsidiaries.

Source: Elective.com, September 18, 2023 https://www.electrive.com/2023/09/18/onto-insolvent/

Party City exits bankruptcy as USA Court approved Reorganization Plan

As per the Reorganization Plan, debt of around \$1billion has been cancelled and nearly 800 stores of the Company will be closed in the USA. However, many of its workers will stay employed as the company has renegotiated many of its leases and exited 'less productive locations'. Party City had approximately 6,400 full-time and 10,100 parttime workers as of 2021. Party City, the largest party supply store in the US, filed for bankruptcy in January after struggling to pay off its \$1.7 billion debt load.

Source: CNNBusiness.com, September 07, 2023

https://edition.cnn.com/2023/09/07/business/party-city-exitsbankruptcy/index.html

Whether the Corporate Debtor is to be revived or not is essentially a business decision and hence should be left to the CoC so long as it musters more than 66% vote share: NCLAT

The NCLAT, New Delhi has held that undisputedly, in the statutory framework of the IBC, there is only limited review available which can be exercised by the Adjudicating Authority without trespassing upon the business decision of the majority of the CoC and it is here that primacy of the commercial wisdom of the CoC comes into play.

"There can be no fetters on the commercial wisdom of the CoC. The supremacy of commercial wisdom of the CoC has been reaffirmed time and again by the Hon'ble Supreme Court. It is not for the Adjudicating Authority to consider or evaluate on merits the rationale underlying the commercial decision of the CoC.," said the court and upheld the decision of the Adjudicating Authority of ordering the liquidation of the Corporate Debtor as decided by the CoC with 100% vote share. This judgement has come in the matter of SAJ Housing Pvt. Ltd. (Appellant) Vs. Priyanka Chouhan, Liquidator of CD. The Court also observed that the Appellant was informed and given ample opportunity to file claims as Operational Creditor, but it did not turn up. The CoC having applied its commercial wisdom and proposed liquidation, the CIRP having been concluded and liquidation proceedings under

Section 33(2) of the IBC have commenced. However, the court allowed the Appellant to file claims before the Liquidator.

Source: IBClaw.in, September 01, 2023

https://ibclaw.in/saj-housing-pvt-ltd-vs-ms-priyanka-chouhannclat-new-delhi/?print-posts=pdf

Marginal Improvement in Realizations under the IBC, 2016 during Q1 of FY 2023-24: Study

The report revealed that CDs, OCs and FCs witnessed a marginal improvement in realisations during the June quarter of FY24 compared to previous year. While the realisation for CDs was 18.3% compared to 18.2%, it was 17.7% for OCs as against 15.7%, said the Report which is based on an analysis of the recent data released by the IBBI. As per the Report, for the CIRP yielding resolution, the timeline recorded in this period has been the highest at 635 and 643 days for OCs and FCs, respectively, since FY21. The average timeline for resolution of cases for CDs was 541 days in Q1 FY24, same as in FY23. The resolution timeline for CDs was 516 days in FY2021.

Source: The Indian Express, August 31, 2023

https://indianexpress.com/article/business/banking-andfinance/average-time-taken-for-ibc-resolution-at-three-yearhigh-8916823/

Benitago Group, which had acquired Amazon's ecommerce business, files for bankruptcy

As per the media report, the company's assets and liabilities are ranging from \$50 million to \$100 million. "Benitago has plans to restructure its debt and potentially sell off some parts of its business in bankruptcy, "said the Report. Founded by Benedict Dohmen and Santiago Nestares in 2016, Benitago connects with self-starting Amazon business owners who are looking to sell their businesses. The company had raised around \$380 million in equity and debt to fund acquisitions of brands built to sell on Amazon's marketplace. It had about \$7.5 million in cash at the time of the bankruptcy filing.

Source: ET Retail.com, September 02, 2023

https://retail.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/ecommerce/e-tailing/amazon-e-commerce-business-acquirerbenitago-files-for-bankruptcy/103306411

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code has brought a paradigm shift in the insolvency regime in the country and is a crucial milestone in the economic reforms: Prime Minister

Hailing the IBC, 2016 as a crucial economic reform, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has said, "When we speak of Ease of Doing Business, ease of winding up a business is also an important facet of the cycle". He acknowledged the need to make the insolvency regime "even better". These views were expressed by the Prime Minister in a signed message for seminar on "Rejuvenation of Economy under Insolvency Laws" recently organized by the International Council of Jurists, London in New Delhi.

"Today, the health of our banking system is seeing new highs while the recovery of NPAs has been extremely encouraging. The sustained efforts by all stakeholders to get the process of resolving insolvency going smoothly has been an important contributor. It is the outcome of these dedicated and committed endeavours that the nation has massively improved its Ease of Doing Business," said the Prime Minister. "Although other factors, like rigorous tax enforcement, still impact the economy, resolving NPAs is pivotal for revitalising credit growth and investment," he said. The Prime Minister emphasized that India has pursued a human-centric approach to development, for true progress is always people-centric. "Just a few years ago, India, which used to be counted among the "Fragile Five" economies, is now being considered a bright spot in the global economy," said the Prime Minister and credited the turnaround to the coordinated implementation of several reforms.

Source: Business Standard. Com, August 26, 2023

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/insolvencycode-a-crucial-milestone-in-economic-reforms-pm-modi-123082600841_1.html

Financial Performance of the Companies that were taken up for action under IBC has improved: Study by IIMAhmedabad

According to the Study, there was a 76% jump in average sales of companies three years after resolution. Besides, the staff strength (employees) went up, which was indicated by an increase in average wage bill by around 50%. "Trends in the market capitalization of listed resolved firms indicate a significant revival in the average

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market valuations in the post resolution period, which is expected give the growth opportunities that will accrue to these firms post the resolution with creditors," said the Report. The Report has also highlighted some of the areas of improvement in the IBC ecosystem such as performance of resolution professionals, repeated attempts by the litigants to delay the process, and dealing of tax authorities, banks and RBI with resolved companies.

Source: The Times of India, August 28, 2023

https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/indiabusiness/business-parameters-of-companies-improve-afterinsolvency-process-study/articleshow/103114811.cms? from=mdr

Judicial Interventions such as IBC should be used only as a last resort in case of stalled housing projects: Govt. Panel

The primary reason for stress in real estate projects is lack of financial viability which has resulted in cost overruns and delays, said the 'Report of the 'Expert Committee on Rehabilitation of Legacy Stalled Real Estate Projects' which was headed by former NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant. "The project resolution should be a win-win situation for all stakeholders," suggested the Expert Committee. The 14-member Committee has made sevenpoint recommendations. It was set up by the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry in March to tackle the problem of incomplete real estate projects following a recommendation made by the Central Advisory Council under the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016.

Source: The Hindu, August 21, 2023

https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/use-insolvency-codeas-a-last-resort-says-panel-on-stalled-housingprojects/article67219902.ece

China's Real Estate Company - Evergrande Group filed for bankruptcy protection in New York

Evergrande Group, once holding a staggering debt exceeding \$300 billion, has initiated a Chapter 15 bankruptcy protection filing under USA's bankruptcy laws. It is reportedly part of one of the world's biggest debt restructuring exercises, as anxiety grows over China's worsening property crisis and a weakening economy. In addition to the Evergrande Group, some more major real estate companies in China have defaulted on their offshore debt obligations. The Company has over 1,300 real estate projects spanning more than 280 cities of China. Its bankruptcy filing is being seen as a move for securing its US assets as it navigates a multi-billion-dollar debt restructuring deal with creditors. The company's offshore debt restructuring involves a total of \$31.7 billion, which includes bonds, collaterals and repurchase obligations.

Source: The Telegraph, August 19, 2023

https://www.telegraphindia.com/world/evergrande-files-for-usbankruptcy-protection-as-china-economic-fears-mount/cid/ 1960022

NARCL gets NCLT's approval to acquire twin SREI Companies

NCLT Kolkata on August 11 approved the Resolution Plan submitted by National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd. (NARCL) with respect to the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) of the twin companies – SREI Infrastructure Finance Ltd (SIFL) and SREI Equipment Finance Ltd (SEFL). The Plan has already received 'fit and proper' approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). It will be the first acquisition by the government-owned Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC).

The insolvency proceedings against SIFL and SEFL commenced in October 2021 after the insolvency petitions filed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) were approved by the Kolkata bench of the NCLT. The total admitted claims of financial creditors are ₹32,750.22 crore. State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, Union Bank of India, Canara Bank, IDBI Bank, UCO Bank and Indian Overseas Bank, among others, are the financial creditors to the Corporate Debtors. The Resolution Plan submitted by NARCL was approved with an 89.2% voting share of the consolidated CoC for SIFL and SEFL while the Resolution Plan submitted by Authum Investment and Infrastructure received 84.86% vote, and the consortium of Varde Partners and Arena Investors got only 9% vote. These three bidders had had participated in the challenge mechanism process, adopted by the CoC in which NARCL won the bid.

Source: Financial Express, August 12, 2023

https://www.financialexpress.com/business/industry-ncltapproves-narcls-resolution-plan-for-two-srei-firms-3207937/

NCLT approved Vedanta's Plan for Meenakshi Energy

NCLT Hyderabad has approved ₹1,440 Crores' Resolution Plan of the Vedanta Limited to acquire Meenakshi Energy Ltd. As per the Resolution Plan Vedanta Limited will pay ₹312 Crores as Upfront Payment. The CIRP of Meenakshi Energy Ltd. was admitted on November 07, 2019, on a petition filed by the State Bank of India. Subsequently, claims amounting ₹12,944 Crores were filed out of which ₹4,625 Crores were approved as 'Admitted Debt'. The Average Liquidation Value of the CD was ₹1,100 Crores while Average Fair Value was estimated to be ₹2,150 Crores.

Source: ibbi.gov.in, August 14, 2023

https://ibbi.gov.in/uploads/order/38088c4a6ca0b9d235a4b4a0 ccc0f24f.pdf

Sudal Industries' Resolution Plan approved from Canara Bank under Pre-Pack

The resolution plans for Sudal Industries, an aluminum products manufacturer, were also invited from external parties but no other investor submitted resolution plan. Finally, Canara Bank, the financial creditor of the company approved the Resolution Plan that was tabled by the company's existing promoters.

The Company had an outstanding dues of ₹150 crore out of which ₹96 crore was owned by the Canara Bank. As the Company failed to pay back, it was admitted to Pre-Pack Insolvency Resolution Process for MSMEs (PPIRP for MSMEs) in April. So far only six cases have been admitted under PPIRP for MSMEs, which was introduced in 2021. Out of the six cases, four are ongoing while one – Amrit India - has been resolved and one case was withdrawn. Amrit India had not availed any bank loan. As per the Resolution Plan, Canara Bank will receive ₹32 crore while unsecured financial creditors, will get less than 1% of their claims. The operational creditors, employees and workmen will be paid their full dues.

Source: The Economic Times, August 11, 2023

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/ metals-mining/aluminum-co-becomes-first-to-get-debtresolution-from-banks-under-pre-pack-rules/arcticleshow/ 102657564.cms?from=mdr

Euroboden GmbH, Germany's real estate giant filed for bankruptcy

The Munich based property developer has reportedly filed to 'open insolvency proceedings' with a local court. Euroboden GmbH, which has 115 million euros (\$126 million) in bonds outstanding and is facing possible downgrades in its credit rating, said in a statement that negotiations for property sales had fallen through, hurting its finances. Germany has long benefited from an era of cheap money that fuelled a boom in real estate, but now the sector is grappling with a major turn of fortune.

Source: Reuters.com, August 11, 2023

https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/munich-developerinsolvent-latest-blow-german-property-sector-2023-08-11/

NCLAT is empowered to recall its judgment but not to review them: Supreme Court

The Supreme Court has upheld the judgement of a five members' bench of NCLAT wherein it was held that the Rule 11 of the NCLAT Rules, 2016 empowers the Appellate Tribunal to recall its judgment but not to review them.

"We are in agreement with the view taken by the Five Judges Bench of the NCLAT and thus find no reason to interfere with the impugned judgment," said a two judges' Bench of the Supreme Court in the matter of Union Bank of India Vs. Financial Creditors of M/s Amtek Auto Limited & Ors. The Apex Court dismissed the appeal but allowed the appellant to approach appropriate Bench 'to urge on the facts of the case'.

In the incumbent case, a three Member bench of NCLAT had made a reference to a larger bench on three points – (a) Whether NCLAT not being vested with any power to review the judgment can entertain an application for recall of judgment on sufficient grounds? (b) Whether NCLAT judgment in Agarwal Coal Corporation Private Limited Vs Sun Paper Mill Limited & Anr., (2019) and Rajendra Mulchand Varma & Ors Vs K.L.J Resources Ltd & Anr., (2020), can be read to mean that there is no power vested in NCLAT to recall a judgment? (c) Whether the judgment in above two cases, lay down the correct law? Answering

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these questions in June 2023, a five-member Bench of NCLAT had ruled that by invoking inherent powers under Rule 11 of NCLAT Rules, 2016, the Appellate Tribunal can recall its judgement, but the power of recall would not include re-hearing of a case to find out any apparent error in the judgment. NCLAT also laid down the grounds on which power of recall can be exercised.

Source: Livelaw.in August 02, 2023

https://www.livelaw.in/supreme-court/supreme-court-rulingnclat-judgement-review-recall-union-bank-of-india-v-amtekauto-case-234172?infinitescroll=1

SBI Files CIRP petition against Mumbai Metro One on ₹416.08 crore dues

India's largest bank, the State Bank of India (SBI) has filed a CIRP petition under Section 7 of the IBC2016 in NCLT, Mumbai seeking to initiate insolvency proceedings against Reliance Infrastructure (RInfra) led Mumbai Metro One Private Limited (MMOPL), which operates Versova -- Andheri -- Ghatkopar Metro Rail in Mumbai. RInfra holds 74% of the equity share in MMOPL and the balance 26% is held by the MMRDA. As per the petition, the MMOPL owes about ₹416.08 crore dues to the SBI.

MMOPL is India's first metro project to be financed by Indian banks and also the first such metro project in the country to be awarded on Public Private Partnership (PPP) basis. In addition to the SBI, MMOPL has also borrowed from Canara Bank, IDBI Bank, Indian Bank, Bank of Maharashtra, IDBI Bank and India Infrastructure Finance Company (UK).

Source: Freepressjournal.in, August 05, 2023

https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/mumbai-newssbifiles-insolvency-proceedings-against-rinfras-mmopl

USA's 100-year-old trucking giant 'Yellow Corp' files for Bankruptcy

The Company has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection as it is reportedly burdened with a heavy debt load after a series of mergers and following tense contract negotiations with the Teamsters Union. Reportedly, the estimated assets and liabilities of the company are \$1 billion to \$10 billion, with more than 100,000 creditors. Yellow, formerly called YRC Worldwide, is one of the largest U.S. trucking companies and a dominant player in the "less-than-truckload" segment that hauls cargo for multiple customers on a single truck. Its customers include large retailers such as Walmart, Home Depot, and Uber Freight etc.

Source: Reuters.com, August 08, 2023

https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/ustrucking-firm-yellow-files-bankruptcy-after-loading-up-debt-2023-08-07/

There should be no differentiation in payment among Operational Creditors of the same class-NCLAT

The NCLAT heard an appeal filed by Akashganga Processors Pvt. Ltd. against the rejection of their resolution plan by the Adjudicating Authority under the IBC: The Resolution Professional's plan was rejected, citing violations of Section 30(2)(e) and (f) of the I&B Code. Akashganga Processors argued that the Operational Creditor, who received no allocation in the plan, did not object and thus, could not be considered aggrieved. They also defended payments made to Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) and Surat Municipal Corporation, which were vital for the Corporate Debtor's continuity. Supporting the appellant's stance, the Resolution Professional's counsel asserted that the resolution plan adhered to the regulations, and the payments made were in line with the Section 53 waterfall mechanism, prioritizing creditor payments. However, a dissenting Financial Creditor opposed the appellant's arguments, advocating for no discrimination in payment among Operational Creditors.

After careful consideration of all submissions, the NCLAT acknowledged differential payment between Financial and Operational Creditors, but it emphasized that there should be no discrimination among Operational Creditors themselves. In this case, while the claims of two Operational Creditors, State Tax, Government of Gujarat, and Central Excise, Government of India, were admitted, the Resolution Plan allocated no amount to one Operational Creditor but made payments to the other two. The NCLAT held that there couldn't be discrimination in payment among Operational Creditors within the same class.

Source: ibbi.gov.in

https://ibbi.gov.in//uploads/order/2f72d4f861acbe397871823af 096ff4c.pdf

Amidst Energy Crisis and Rising Interest Rates Insolvencies Surge at Record Pace in Germany

German firms experienced the highest increase in insolvencies in over two decades during the first half of this year, according to a study by Creditreform. The 16.2% rise, totalling 8,400 corporate insolvencies, was attributed to factors such as the energy crisis, inflation, and rising interest rates. Excessive energy and material costs, poor consumer conditions, and reliance on state funding without adapting business models were also identified as contributing factors. The insolvencies are expected to increase further as inflation and interest rates continue to rise.

Source: Yahoo.com, June 29, 2023 https://shorturl.at/oANP2

IBC has rescued 72% of distressed assets since 2016, though half of them ended in orders of liquidation: Financial Stability Report by RBI

While the IBC has been effective in terms of financial recovery, with financial creditors recovering 34.3% of their claims, realization in comparison to liquidation value was 169%. "Though realization is incidental under the Code, financial creditors recovered 34.3% of their claims

which only reflects the extent of value erosion by the time the CDs entered CIRP," said the Financial Stability Report by the Reserve Bank of India.

According to the Report, by March 2023, a total of 6,571 corporate insolvency resolution processes (CIRPs) had commenced, of which 4,515 or 69% were closed. Among the closed CIRPs, 21% were closed on appeal, review or through settlements, 19% were withdrawn, 45% ended in orders of liquidation, 15% resulted in the approval of the resolution plans. It further revealed that the average time for concluding the 678 CIRPs that yielded resolution plans was 512 days, while CIRPs ending in liquidation took an average of 456 days. Voluntary liquidation processes took average of 411 days for closure, which is much higher than the 330 days' timeframe provided under the IBC, 2016. Another challenge, according to the Report, has been attracting investors for legacy non-performing assets. Investors remain wary of complexities involved in restructuring and turning around these troubled assets, which has hindered the resolution process.

Source: The Economic Times, June 29, 2023

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/si nce-launch-ibc-has-resolved-72-of-distressed-assetcases/articleshow/101348409.cms

