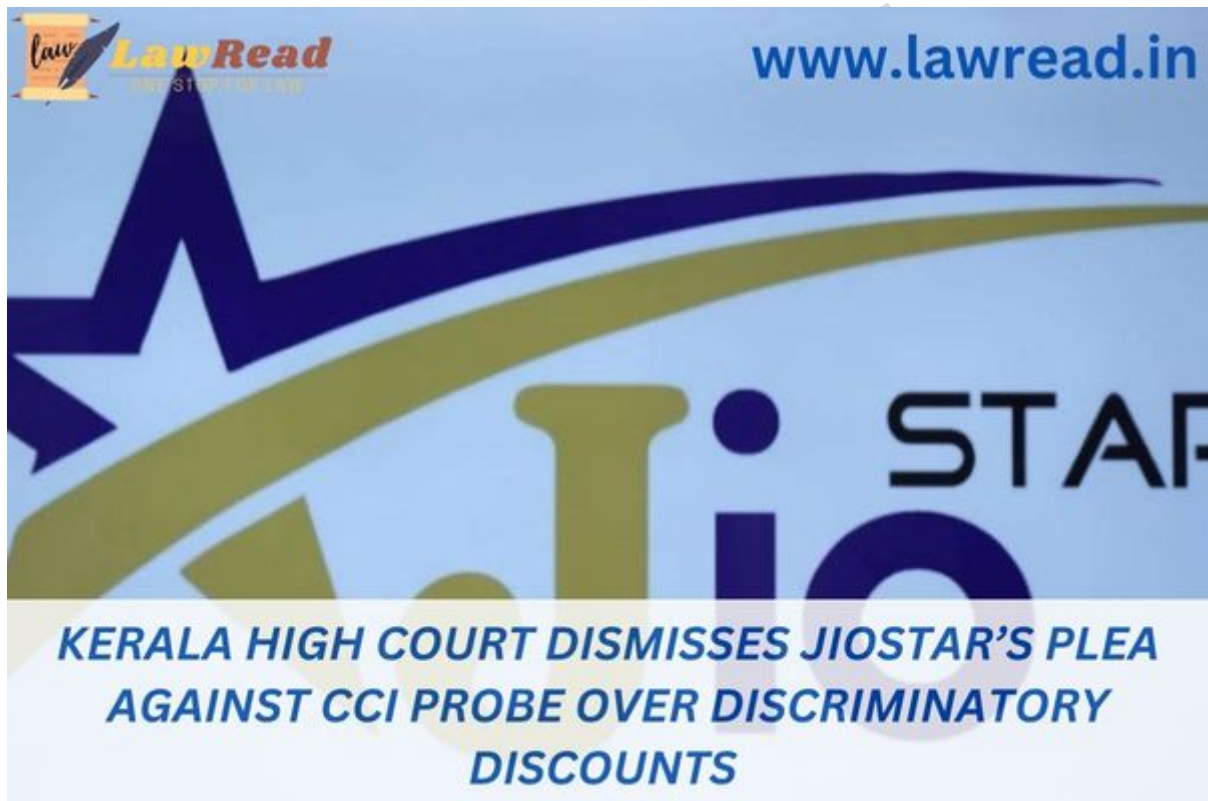


News

Kerala High Court dismisses JioStar's plea against CCI probe over discriminatory discounts



The case concerns claims by Asianet Digital Network Pvt Ltd that JioStar extended indirect discounts to KCCL through marketing arrangements that allegedly breached TRAI's Interconnection Regulations.

The Kerala High Court on Wednesday dismissed JioStar's appeal against Competition Commission of India (CCI) 's probe into claims that the broadcaster favoured Kerala Communicators Cable Ltd (KCCL) in pricing of channels [Jiostar India Private Limited Vs Competition Commission of India].

A Division Bench comprising Justice SA Dharmadhikari and Justice Syam Kumar upheld a single judge's verdict allowing the CCI to continue its probe.

Asianet Digital Network Pvt Ltd had filed a complaint before CCI claiming that Star India, which is now known as JioStar, was offering indirect discounts to KCCL through marketing arrangements in breach of TRAI's Interconnection Regulations.

After the CCI ordered an investigation under Section 26(1), Star India had challenged the directive, claiming that only Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) could examine such issues. A single-judge in May 2025 rejected Star India's plea, leading to an appeal.

The Division Bench dismissed the appeal today after finding no reason for interference with the single-judge's decision.

However, the Court also directed that the question of jurisdiction asked by JioStar must be determined first by CCI and that a separate reasoned order must be passed on the aspect by the competition watchdog.

“CCI must decide as a preliminary point its jurisdiction to take up the whole matter and proceed with it in the face of specific provisions of TRIA-Regulations, especially Regulation 7, violation of which has been alleged,” the Court directed.

The Court further said that CCI may defer consideration of the matter if it comes to the conclusion that TRAI would have the authority to examine the issues. If CCI decides otherwise, the Court ordered that it shall then pass a reasoned order on the complaint moved by Asianet.

“The entire exercise will be carried out within an outer limit of 8 weeks from the date of receipt of certified copy,” the Court ruled.

A detailed copy of the judgment is expected.

On the main contentions, the Court directed the CCI to proceed on the basis of Director General's report and provide sufficient chance of hearing to all the stakeholders.

“Thereafter, it must proceed to pass a reasoned and speaking order, considering all

the contentions of different parties," the Court added.

Following the pronouncement of the decision, JioStar asked the Court to keep the judgment in abeyance for four weeks so that it could approach the Supreme Court.

However, the counsel presenting for Asianet opposed the request, arguing that extending the earlier interim order would only lead to further delay and defeat the Court's eight-week timeline for the CCI to conclude the process.

The bench did not instantly pass any order on JioStar's request