



**Competition Law**

*Newsletter - July 2026*

# IN THIS ISSUE...

**CCI ORDERS PROBE AGAINST MRS. INDIA INC. FOR RESTRICTIVE CLAUSES AND EXPLOITATIVE CONDUCT**

**Page 3**

**CCI PENALIZES ODISHA TRUCK ASSOCIATIONS FOR CARTELIZATION**

**Page 3**

**CCI EXONERATES AIOCD AND 33 PHARMA COMPANIES RE STOCKIST APPOINTMENT IN 2012 CASE**

**Page 4**

**CCI APPROVES TILAKNAGAR INDUSTRIES' ACQUISITION OF PERNOD RICARD'S IMPERIAL BRANDS BUSINESS**

**Page 5**

**CCI CLEARS KIMBERLY-CLARK'S ACQUISITION OF KENVUE**

**Page 5**

**CCI APPROVES LENEXIS FOODWORKS ACQUISITION OF BURGER KING'S INDIA FRANCHISE**

**Page 5**



**In this edition of the Competition Law Newsletter, we bring to you significant orders passed/published in the month of July.**

---

In this edition of the Competition Law Newsletter, we bring to you significant orders passed/published by the Competition Commission of India (**CCI/Commission**) in June.

### **CCI ORDERS PROBE AGAINST MRS. INDIA INC. FOR RESTRICTIVE CLAUSES AND EXPLOITATIVE CONDUCT**

---

Vide Order dated [18<sup>th</sup> February 2026](#), the CCI considered the Information filed by Smt. Rinima Borah Agarwal (**Informant**) against Mrs. India Inc. (**OP**), a sole proprietorship firm run by Smt. Mohini Sharma, alleging contravention of Sections 3 and 4 of the Competition Act. The Informant, a participant and 1st runner-up in the OP's 'Mrs. India' beauty pageant in 2024, alleged that the OP, which holds exclusive licenses for several major international 'Mrs.' beauty pageants including Mrs. World, Mrs. Globe, Mrs. Earth, Mrs. Galaxy, and Mrs. International Summit, is the dominant player in the relevant market for services of beauty pageants for married women in India. The Informant's grievances centered on being coerced into signing one-sided agreements (Participants' T&C and Winners' T&C) after paying significant fees, which imposed restrictive and unfair clauses including a five-year prohibition on participating in any other pageant, mandatory management of professional affairs by the OP, a requirement to contribute to a specific social cause, and unilateral termination rights favoring the OP.

The CCI agreed, observing that the agreements between the Informant and the OP appeared to be vertical in nature, and clauses such as the exclusive dealing and tie-in arrangements could be examined under Section 3(4)(a) and 3(4)(b). The CCI further defined the relevant market as "*Market for services of beauty pageants for married women in India for sending its winners to major international beauty pageants*" and noted that the OP, with its exclusive international franchises, and significant media

presence appeared to hold a dominant position. The Commission found several clauses in the agreements to be prima facie exploitative, including those that prohibited participants from engaging with other pageants, requiring prior approval for all professional appearances, and contracts subjected to supplementary obligations like mandatory social cause contributions.

Consequently, the CCI concluded that a prima facie case of contravention was made out, and directed the Director General (**DG**) to conduct an investigation into the matter.

### **CCI PENALIZES ODISHA TRUCK ASSOCIATIONS FOR CARTELIZATION**

---

The CCI, vide Order dated [09<sup>th</sup> June 2026](#), penalized four truck associations operating in the mineral-rich regions of Odisha for fixing freight rates for transporting minerals that were substantially higher than the maximum rates prescribed by the State Transport Authority (**STA**) of Odisha. Additionally, the OPs were accused of mandating that only trucks registered with their associations could operate in the region, thereby excluding independent transporters and creating a monopoly.

The investigation conducted by the Director General (**DG**) found that the OPs were indeed issuing their own freight rate charts and resolutions to enforce these higher rates, often through concerted and collusive meetings, which in some instances exceeded the STA-prescribed rates by up to 500%. The DG also concluded that the OPs restricted market access by not allowing independent transporters to operate, as evidenced by resolutions granting exclusivity to association-registered trucks and admissions from office bearers that they deliberately excluded new entrants.

The Commission concurred with the DG's findings holding that the collective fixing of

freight rates by the associations constituted a clear case of price determination under Section 3(3)(a), and the exclusion of independent transporters amounted to limiting and controlling the market for services under Section 3(3)(b) of the Act. The CCI noted that the OPs conduct was deliberate and sustained, with no justifiable basis for the frequent and arbitrary rate revisions, especially since the STA's rates were statutorily mandated maximum ceilings. The Commission also rejected the OPs defences that they were merely welfare bodies or that the STA rates did not reflect real-world costs, emphasizing that individual transporters should independently set their prices.

Consequently, the Commission held all four Association in contravention including the office bearers of each association. As the financial details were yet to be submitted, the CCI stated that separate orders would be passed regarding penalties once the financial details had been received.

### **CCI EXONERATES AIOCD AND 33 PHARMA COMPANIES RE STOCKIST APPOINTMENT IN 2012 CASE**

The CCI, vide Order dated [29.06.2026](#), disposed of the information filed by the All India Chemist and Distributors Federation (**AICDF**) against 34 Opposite Parties (**OPs**), which included chemist and druggist associations (such as AIOCD and its regional affiliates), pharmaceutical manufacturers' associations (IDMA and OPPI), and 22 pharmaceutical companies. The Informant had alleged that the mandatory requirement of No Objection Certificates (**NOCs**) for appointing stockists, the collection of Product Information Service (**PIS**) charges for launching new products, the fixation of trade margins and boycott practices violated the Competition Act.

The Commission had in fact examined this issue in an earlier matter pertaining to the period 2009-2012 and levied penalties, instructing the associations not to engage in such behaviour. The investigation was held up

for over a decade due to a stay passed by the Karnataka High Court, which was eventually [dismissed in 2022](#). It noted that the DG had, in his investigation report dated 04.04.2024, found several OPs in contravention of Section 3.

The DG's investigation concluded that the practice of mandating NOCs contravened Section 3(3)(b), as did the mandatory PIS approval requirement based on MoUs entered into by the associations. The pharmaceutical companies were also liable as they had implemented these anti-competitive arrangements.

However, the CCI disagreed with the DG's findings. The Commission found that the evidence relied upon by the DG substantially pertained to the period between 2009 and 2012, which predated the compliance measures and undertakings accepted by the Commission in earlier cases. AIOCD had also issued circulars in 2013 clarifying that NOCs were not required and PIS charges were voluntary. The Commission observed that no evidence of any violation of this undertaking post-2014 had been demonstrated.

The Commission further noted that several pharmaceutical companies had placed material on record showing that stockists were appointed even without NOCs and that PIS payments, where made, were often voluntary for product awareness. The evidence did not conclusively establish that these practices were mandatory or uniformly enforced. Similarly, the allegations of a systematic boycott mechanism were not supported by consistent or cogent evidence, with many companies denying any experience of such practices.

Consequently, the Commission held that the findings of contravention against the chemist associations could not be sustained.

Regarding the pharmaceutical companies, the Commission concluded that the DG's findings were based on isolated correspondence and did not establish their active participation in any coercive or binding anti-competitive

arrangement. Accordingly, it set aside the findings against the OPs and closed the case.

### **CCI APPROVES TILAKNAGAR INDUSTRIES' ACQUISITION OF PERNOD RICARD'S IMPERIAL BRANDS BUSINESS**

---

The CCI, vide Order dated [07<sup>th</sup> October 2025](#) approved the proposed acquisition by Tilaknagar Industries Limited (**TIL**), a publicly listed company operating in the Indian Made Foreign Liquor (**IMFL**) segment of the production, bottling, marketing, and sale of alcoholic beverages under the 'Imperial Brands' from Pernod Ricard India Private Limited (**PRIPL**).

In its assessment, the Commission noted that at a broad level, the parties overlap in the manufacture and sale of whisky, and more narrowly in the value whisky segment, while no vertical or complementary linkages were identified between the Acquirer and the Target Business. The combined market share of the parties (by volume) in both the whisky and value whisky markets was found to be in the range of 5-10%, with an incremental share of only 0-5%.

Based on these factors, the Commission concluded that the proposed combination is not likely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition (AAEC) in India and consequently approved the combination.

### **CCI CLEARS KIMBERLY-CLARK'S ACQUISITION OF KENVUE**

---

Vide Order dated [12<sup>th</sup> May 2026](#), the CCI approved the proposed acquisition of Kenvue Inc. The Commission identified horizontal overlaps between the parties in the broader feminine hygiene products segment where Kimberly-Clark supplies menstrual pants under the Kotex brand and Kenvue supplies sanitary pads, panty liners, and tampons under Stayfree, Carefree, and o.b. brands. The CCI also examined a potential overlap in menstrual pants, where Kenvue planned to enter.

In assessing the broader feminine hygiene market, the Commission noted that Kenvue held a market share of 35-40% (2020-2022) and 30-35% (2023-2024), while Kimberly-Clark's share was under 5%, resulting in a post-combination combined share of 30-35% with an increment of only 0-5%. Given this insignificant increment and the continued competitive constraint from Procter & Gamble (Whisper brand) holding 45-50% market share, the Commission concluded that no appreciable adverse effect on competition in that segment would take place.

For the menstrual pants sub-segment, Procter & Gamble led with 45-50%, followed by Universal Corporation (Evervee) at 15-20% and Lagom Labs (Nua) at 10-15%, while Kimberly-Clark's share was under 5%, and Kenvue had not yet entered; thus, the potential overlap was not likely to eliminate competition or delay entry plans.

The Commission also examined portfolio effects between adjacent products, baby diapers and diaper pants (Kimberly-Clark) and baby and kid toiletries (Kenvue), but found no competitive concern given the Acquirer's weak presence in baby diapers, the presence of strong competitors like Unicharm (MamyPoko) and Procter & Gamble, and the absence of any indication that the combination would enable bundling, leveraging, or foreclosure. Ultimately, the Commission approved the combination.

### **CCI APPROVES LENEXIS FOODWORKS ACQUISITION OF BURGER KING'S INDIA FRANCHISE**

---

The CCI, vide Order dated [20<sup>th</sup> May 2026](#), approved the proposed combination involving Lenex's acquisition of the Restaurants Brands Asia Limited (**the Target**), which is the national master franchisee of the Burger King brand in India.

The combination entails the acquisition of up to approximately 61% of the Target's total equity share capital on a fully diluted basis through a multi-step process. The Acquirer Group

operates in various sectors including the quick service restaurant (**QSR**) business through LFPL, which runs brands such as Chinese WOK, The Momo Co., and Big Bowl Co., while the Target operates the Burger King chain in India.

The Commission noted horizontal overlaps between LFPL and the Target in the food services market and the QSR sub-segment in

India, observing that the combined market share of the parties in the food services market and its segments/sub-segments was miniscule (0-5% & 5-10% in most markets) in terms of volume and value. The Commission therefore concluded that the combination is not likely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition in India and consequently approved the combination.

## Key Contacts



**Abdullah Hussain**  
Partner

abdullah.hussain@dsklegal.com



**Kanika Chaudhary Nayar**  
Partner

kanika.nayar@dsklegal.com



**Abhishek Singh Baghel**  
Partner

abhisheksingh.baghel@dsklegal.com



### DSK Legal Knowledge Center

Contact Details for any queries: [knowledge.management@dsklegal.com](mailto:knowledge.management@dsklegal.com)

#### Mumbai

1701, One World Centre,  
Floor 17, Tower 2B,  
841, Senapati Bapat Marg,  
Mumbai - 400013.  
Tel +91 22 6658 8000

#### Mumbai

C-16, Dhanraj Mahal,  
3rd Floor,  
Apollo Bunder, Colaba,  
Mumbai - 400001.  
Tel +91 22 6152 6000

#### New Delhi

Max House, Level 5,  
Okhla Industrial Area,  
Phase 3,  
New Delhi - 110020.  
Tel +91 11 4661 6666

#### Dubai

Office No. 2103, Burj Al  
Salam, Trade Centre  
First – Plot No. 37-0,  
Dubai, United Arab Emirates  
Tel +91 970 04 546 55311

#### Bengaluru

201, 2nd floor, Prestige Loka,  
7/1 & 7/7, Brunton Road,  
Craig Park Layout, Ashok Nagar,  
Bengaluru - 560025.  
Tel +91 80 6954 8770

#### Chennai

No. 5, 1st Street,  
Subbarao Avenue,  
Nungambakkam,  
Chennai – 600 006

#### Pune

Ground Floor, 1 Modibaug,  
Ganesh Khind Road, Shivajinagar,  
Pune - 411016.  
Tel +91 20 6684 7600

#### Abu Dhabi

License #29073, 3112, 31 Tamouh  
Tower, ADGM, Abu Dhabi, Al  
Reem Island, United Arab Emirates  
Tel +91 970 50 450 4026

✉ [contactus@dsklegal.com](mailto:contactus@dsklegal.com)  
**in** DSK Legal  
🌐 [www.dsklegal.com](http://www.dsklegal.com)

### Disclaimer

This newsletter is only for general informational purposes, and nothing in this edition of newsletter could possibly constitute legal advice (which can only be given after being formally engaged and familiarizing ourselves with all the relevant facts). However, should you have any queries, require any assistance, or clarifications with regard to anything contained in this newsletter (or competition law in general), please feel free to reach out to any of the unique individuals above.