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Corporation council revokes decision on Digital City project

To invite fresh expression of interest from internet service providers

The Kozhikode Corporation council on Wednesday revoked its October 11 decision to entrust Jio Infocom with the 'Digital City' project and decided to invite a fresh expression of interest from internet service providers.

The decision follows the High Court's November 16 directive to ensure that Idea Cellular, which had moved the court over the project, be given a chance to take part in the bid.

A special meeting of the council was held on Wednesday to discuss the situation and to come up with a solution.

The bid in question had four participants including Jio Infocom and Idea Cellular Ltd. Three of them were disqualified to participate in the bidding process as they did not follow the rules set by the Corporation, and hence the project was granted to Jio Infocom.

However, Idea Cellular Ltd approached the High Court claiming that the Corporation refused to clarify some of the rules. The Court asked the Corporation to issue the clarification and ensure that all bidders had an equal opportunity.

Also, 13 councillors of the Opposition had submitted a Note of Dissent to the Corporation Secretary on the day the Council chose Jio Infocom for the project, alleging that the decision was not valid because there was only one bidder.

The Secretary had conducted an inquiry into this and found fault with the data provided by the Engineering wing, the implementing agency of the project.

Under the Digital City project, the selected internet service provider will have to set up high-mast light poles in select locations in the city. The poles will serve as the base for a Wi-Fi hotspot and surveillance cameras, connected to the police control room. The service providers will have to pay a monthly rent of Rs. 9,000 to the Corporation.

Besides, the Corporation can set up advertisement boards on the poles. The bids by the service providers other than Jio Infocom were rejected on grounds that they sought to share the poles with other service providers.

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