

**BEFORE THE HARYANA REAL ESTATE REGULATORY
AUTHORITY, GURUGRAM**

Complaint no. : 3477 of 2019
2759 of 2021
First date of hearing: 15.10.2019
Date of decision : 20.10.2022

Priya Bishnoi
R/O: B XI/8250, Vasant Kunj,
New Delhi-110070

Complainant

Versus

M/S Ireo Residencies Company Pvt. Ltd.
Regd. Office: C-4, 1st Floor, Malviya Nagar,
New Delhi-110017

Respondent

CORAM:

Shri Vijay Kumar Goyal
Shri Ashok Sangwan

**Member
Member**

APPEARANCE:

Shri Vishnu Anand
Shri M.K Dang

Advocate for the complainant
Advocate for the respondent

ORDER

1. The present complaint dated 06.09.2019 has been filed by the complainant/allottee under section 31 of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 (in short, the Act) read with Rule 28 of the Haryana Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Rules, 2017 (in short, the Rules) for violation of section 11(4)(a) of the Act wherein it is inter alia prescribed that the promoter shall be responsible for all obligations, responsibilities and functions under the provision of the Act or

the rules and regulations made thereunder or to the allottee as per the agreement for sale executed inter se.

A. Unit and project related details

2. The particulars of unit details, sale consideration, the amount paid by the complainant, date of proposed handing over the possession, delay period, if any, have been detailed in the following tabular form:

S. No.	Heads	Description
1.	Name of the project	"Grand Hyatt Gurgaon Residencies" at Sector-58, Gurgaon
2.	Nature of the project and location of the project	Luxury Residential
3.	Project area	17.224 acres
4.	DTCP license no. and validity status	Not Mentioned
5.	Name of the license holder	Not Mentioned
6.	RERA registration number	Not Mentioned
7.	Unit no.	T2-07-SS, 7th floor, Tower 2 (page no. 35 of complaint)
8.	Unit area admeasuring	4625 sq. ft. (page no. 35 of complaint)
9.	Date of approval of building plans	03.07.2013 (annexure R2 on page no. 57 of reply)
10.	Date of environment clearance	25.11.2013 (annexure R-3 on page no. 60 of reply)
11.	Date of builder buyer agreement	20.03.2014 (page no. 28 of complaint)

12.	Date of fire approval	08.01.2015 (annexure R-4 on page no. 65 of reply)
13.	Total consideration (Basic sale price)	Rs. 11,69,08,900/- [as per payment plan on page no. 83 of complaint]
14.	Total amount paid by the complainant	Rs. 10,72,88,573/- [as alleged by complainant and confirmed during the proceedings]
15.	Due date of delivery of possession as per the clause 14.3 mentioned in the agreement i.e., "The company proposes to offer the possession of the said Residence-unit to the allottee within a period of 48 months from the date of approval of building plan and/or fulfilment of the preconditions imposed thereunder. The allottee further agrees and understands that company shall additionally be entitled to a period of 180 days after expiry of the said commitment period to allow for unforeseen delays beyond the reasonable control of company."	03.07.2017 [calculated from the date of approval of building plans] Note: Grace Period is not allowed.
16.	Occupation certificate	Not yet obtained

17.	Offer of possession	Not offered
18.	Status of project	Ongoing

B. Facts of the complaint

The complainant has submitted as under: -

3. That on the representations made by the respondent she submitted an application form dated 31.12.2012 for allotment of residential unit and made a payment of Rs. 1,00,00,000/-.
4. That the respondent issued two (2) demand letters, dated 14.03.2013 and 10.12.2013, to her demanding a sum of Rs.1,33,75,783/- and Rs.93,87,784/- respectively towards the first and second installments of the unit.
5. That she duly complied with the aforesaid demand letters and made payment(s) of Rs.1,33,75,783 and Rs.1,00,00,000/- towards the demand letters, dated 14.03.2013 and 10.12.2013 respectively. The respondent company had also acknowledged the receipt of the aforesaid payments vide payment receipts, dated 13.05.2013 and 10.01.2014. It is pertinent to mention here that the complainant has made an excess payment of Rs.6,12,215/-, towards the demand letter, dated 10.12.2013.
6. That the respondent had received a sum of Rs.3,33,75,783/- as on 12.02.2013 - i.e., approximately 29% of the total sale consideration of the unit, even before the execution of the residence purchase agreement with the complainant.
7. That the residence purchase agreement, was executed between the complainant and the respondent on 20.03.2014.

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8. That the respondent raised various demand notices from time to time towards payment of installments of the said unit dated 20.04.2015, 07.01.2016, 15.03.2016, 25.11.2016, 14.12.2016, 16.02.2017, 29.05.2017, 04.09.2017 and 07.05.2018 respectively.
9. That the complainant, in terms of the aforesaid demand letters, made timely payments and there has been no wilful default whatsoever, on her part in making payments of any of the aforesaid demand notice(s), as raised by the respondent company.
10. That as on 05.06.2018, she has made a total payment of Rs.10,72,88,573/- to the respondent for the said unit.
11. That somewhere in 2017, the complainant had visited the project site, to pursue the progress of the said project and to her utter shock, it was noticed that the said project was far from completion.
12. That the respondent vide letter, dated 07.12.2017, stated that though the building plans were approved on 03.07.2013, the commitment period for delivery of possession of the said unit has to be calculated from 08.01.2015, when the last precondition was fulfilled- i.e., upon being granted the fire safety scheme approval. That approval of fire safety scheme is not mandatory for commencing the construction of a project. Admittedly, the respondent company obtained building plans on 03.07.2013 and also raised a demand, dated 10.12.2013, which was payable on "Commencement of Excavation" of the said project. This makes it obvious that the respondent

company had received all the requisite approvals for commencing the construction of the said project by 10.12.2013. Thus, the commitment period would begin with effect from December 2013. In addition to above, the complainant was apprised that the respondent company has applied for the RERA Registration of the said project and the same is pending for approval. It is respectfully submitted that till date, the RERA Registration of the said project has not been approved by HRERA, Gurugram.

13. That the period of commitment period expired in May 2018, however, till date, the respondent has neither handed over the possession of the said unit nor completed the construction of the said project. Moreover, the extended delay period has also expired in May 2019. Thus, till date neither the possession of the said unit has been offered nor the construction of the said project has been completed.

C. Relief sought by the complainant:

14. The complainant has sought following relief(s):

- **Refund the entire amount of Rs. 10,72,88,573/- paid by the complainant to the respondent for the said unit.**
- **Delayed interest @ 20% p.a. from the date of payment, till the actual date of handing over of possession.**

15. On the date of hearing, the authority explained to the respondent/promoter about the contraventions as alleged to have been committed in relation to section 11(4) (a) of the Act to plead guilty or not to plead guilty.

D. Reply by the respondent.

The respondent has contested the complaint on the following grounds: -

16. That the complaint is neither maintainable nor tenable and is liable to be out-rightly dismissed. The Residence Purchase Agreement was executed between the complainant and the respondent prior to the enactment of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 and the provisions laid down in the said Act cannot be applied retrospectively.
17. That there is no cause of action to file the present complaint.
18. That the complainant has no locus standi to file the present complaint.
19. That, according to the Booking Application Form and the Residence Purchase Agreement, the time period for offering the possession of the unit to the complainant has not yet elapsed and the complaint has been filed pre-maturely by her.
20. That the complaint is not maintainable for the reason that the agreement contains an arbitration clause which refers to the dispute resolution mechanism to be adopted by the parties in the event of any dispute i.e., clause 36 of the residence purchase agreement.
21. That the complainant has not approached this authority with clean hands and has intentionally suppressed and concealed the material facts in the present complaint. The present complaint has been filed by her maliciously with an ulterior motive and it

is nothing but a sheer abuse of the process of law. The true and correct facts are as follows:

- That the complainant, after checking the veracity of the project namely, 'Grand Hyatt, Gurugram had applied for allotment of an apartment vide booking application form. The complainant agreed to be bound by the terms and conditions of the booking application form.
- That the respondent allotted the complainant unit no. T2-7-SS having tentative super area of 4625 sq.ft for a sale consideration of Rs. 11,69,08,900/-. It is submitted that the complainant signed and executed the residence purchase agreement on 20.03.2014 and agreed to be bound by the terms contained therein.
- That the respondent raised payment demands from the complainant in accordance with the mutually agreed terms and conditions of the allotment as well as of the payment plan and she made the payment of certain instalments. The complainant has made the part-payment out of the total sale consideration and is bound to pay the remaining amount towards the total sale consideration of the unit along with applicable registration charges, stamp duty, service tax as well as other charges payable along with it at the applicable stage.
- That the possession of the unit is supposed to be offered to the complainant in accordance with the agreed terms

and conditions of the buyer's agreement. That the time was to be computed from the date of receipt of all requisite approvals. Even otherwise the construction can't be raised in the absence of the necessary approvals. It is pertinent to mention here that it has been specified in sub- clause (iv) of clause 17 of the approval of building plan dated 03.07.2013 of the said project that the clearance issued by the ministry of environment and Forest, Government of India has to be obtained before starting the construction of the project. The environment clearance for construction of the said project was granted on 25.11.2013. Furthermore, in clause 39 of part-A of the environment clearance dated 25.11.2013 it was stated that fire safety plan was to be duly approved by the fire department before the start of any construction work at site.

- That the last of the statutory approvals which forms a part of the pre-conditions was the fire scheme approval which was obtained on 08.01.2015 and that the time period for offering the possession, according to the agreed terms of the buyer's agreement, would have expired only on 08.07.2020.

22. That the implementation of the project was hampered due to non-payment of instalments by allottees on time and several other issues also materially affected the construction and progress of the project.



- Inability to undertake the construction for approx. 7-8 months due to Central Government's notification with regard to demonetization : The respondent had awarded the construction of the project to one of the leading construction companies of India. The said contractor/company could not implement the entire project for approx. 7-8 months w.e.f from 9-10 November 2016 the day when the central government issued notification with regard to demonetization. During this period, the contractor could not make payments to the labour in cash and as majority of casual labour force engaged in construction activities in India do not have bank accounts and were paid in cash on a daily basis. During demonetization the cash withdrawal limit for companies was capped at Rs. 24,000 per week initially whereas cash payments to labour on the site of the magnitude of the project in question are Rs. 3-4 lakhs per day. The work at site got almost halted for 7-8 months as bulk of the labour being unpaid went to their hometowns, which resulted into shortage of labour. Hence, the implementation of the project in question got delayed due on account of issues faced by contractor due to the said notification of central government.

There are also studies of Reserve Bank of India and independent studies undertaken by scholars of different institutes/universities and also newspaper reports of Reuters of the relevant period of 2016-17 on the impact

of demonetization on real estate industry and construction labour.

Thus, in view of the above studies and reports, the said event of demonetization was beyond the control of the respondent. Hence, the time period for offer of possession should be deemed to be extended for 6 months on account of the above.

- Orders passed by National Green Tribunal: In last four successive years i.e., 2015-2016-2017-2018, Hon'ble National Green Tribunal has been passing orders to protect the environment of the country and especially the NCR region. The Hon'ble NGT had passed orders governing the entry and exit of vehicles in NCR region. The Hon'ble NGT has passed orders with regard to phasing out the 10-year-old diesel vehicles from NCR. The pollution levels of NCR region have been quite high for couple of years at the time of change in weather in November every year. The contractor of respondent could not undertake construction for 3-4 months in compliance of the orders of Hon'ble National Green Tribunal. Due to that, there was a delay of 3-4 months as labour went back to their hometowns, which resulted in shortage of labour in April -May 2015, November-December 2016 and November- December 2017. The district administration issued the requisite directions in this regard.

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In view of the above, construction work remained badly affected for 6-12 months due to the above stated major events and conditions which were beyond the control of the respondent and the said period is also required to be added for calculating the delivery date of possession.

- Non-Payment of Instalments by Allottees: Several other allottees were in default of the agreed payment plan, and the payment of construction linked instalments was delayed or not made resulting in badly impacting and delaying the implementation of the entire project.
- Inclement weather conditions viz. Gurugram: Due to heavy rainfall in Gurugram in the year 2016 and unfavourable weather conditions, all the construction activities were badly affected as the whole town was waterlogged and gridlocked as a result of which the implementation of the project in question was delayed for many weeks. Even various institutions were ordered to be shut down/closed for many days during that year due to adverse/severe weather conditions.

23. That the complainant is a real estate investor who had booked the unit in question with a view to earn quick profit in a short period. However, it appears that her calculations have gone wrong on account of severe slump in the real estate market and she now wants to somehow get out of the concluded contract made by her on highly flimsy and baseless grounds. Such

malafide tactics of the complainant cannot be allowed to succeed.

24. Copies of all the relevant documents have been filed and placed on the record. Their authenticity is not in dispute. Hence, the complaint can be decided on the basis of these undisputed documents and submissions made by the parties.

E. Jurisdiction of the authority

25. The authority observes that it has territorial as well as subject matter jurisdiction to adjudicate the present complaint for the reasons given below.

E. I Territorial jurisdiction

26. As per notification no. 1/92/2017-1TCP dated 14.12.2017 issued by Town and Country Planning Department, the jurisdiction of Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Gurugram shall be entire Gurugram District for all purpose with offices situated in Gurugram. In the present case, the project in question is situated within the planning area of Gurugram District. Therefore, this authority has complete territorial jurisdiction to deal with the present complaint.

E. II Subject matter jurisdiction

27. The authority is well within its jurisdiction to proceed further in the matter to grant refund to the complainant in view of the recent judgement of the Hon'ble Apex court in the case of *"Newtech Promoters and Developers Private Limited Vs State of U.P. and Ors."* SC/1056/2021 decided on 11.11.2021 observing as under: -



“86. From the scheme of the Act of which a detailed reference has been made and taking note of power of adjudication delineated with the regulatory authority and adjudicating officer, what finally culls out is that although the Act indicates the distinct expressions like 'refund', 'interest', 'penalty' and 'compensation', a conjoint reading of Sections 18 and 19 clearly manifests that when it comes to refund of the amount, and interest on the refund amount, or directing payment of interest for delayed delivery of possession, or penalty and interest thereon, it is the regulatory authority which has the power to examine and determine the outcome of a complaint. At the same time, when it comes to a question of seeking the relief of adjudging compensation and interest thereon Under Sections 12, 14, 18 and 19, the adjudicating officer exclusively has the power to determine, keeping in view the collective reading of Section 71 read with Section 72 of the Act. If the adjudication Under Sections 12, 14, 18 and 19 other than compensation as envisaged, if extended to the adjudicating officer as prayed that, in our view, may intend to expand the ambit and scope of the powers and functions of the adjudicating officer Under Section 71 and that would be against the mandate of the Act 2016”

28. So, in view of the provisions of the Act quoted above, the authority has complete jurisdiction to decide the complaint regarding non-compliance of obligations by the promoter leaving aside compensation which is to be decided by the adjudicating officer if pursued by the complainant at a later stage.

F. Findings on the objections raised by the respondent.

F.I Objection regarding jurisdiction of the complaint w.r.t the apartment buyer's agreement executed prior to coming into force of the Act.

29. The respondent submitted that the complaint is neither maintainable nor tenable and is liable to be outrightly dismissed as the residence purchase agreement was executed between the complainant and the respondent prior to the

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enactment of the Act and the provision of the said Act cannot be applied retrospectively.

30. The authority is of the view that the provisions of the Act are quasi retroactive to some extent in operation and would be applicable to the agreements for sale entered into even prior to coming into operation of the Act where the transaction are still in the process of completion. The Act nowhere provides, nor can be so construed, that all previous agreements will be re-written after coming into force of the Act. Therefore, the provisions of the Act, rules and agreement have to be read and interpreted harmoniously. However, if the Act has provided for dealing with certain specific provisions/situation in a specific/particular manner, then that situation will be dealt with in accordance with the Act and the rules after the date of coming into force of the Act and the rules. The numerous provisions of the Act save the provisions of the agreements made between the buyers and sellers. The said contention has been upheld in the landmark judgment of **Neelkamal Realtors Suburban Pvt. Ltd. Vs. UOI and others. (W.P 2737 of 2017)** decided on 06.12.2017 which provides as under:

"119. Under the provisions of Section 18, the delay in handing over the possession would be counted from the date mentioned in the agreement for sale entered into by the promoter and the allottee prior to its registration under RERA. Under the provisions of RERA, the promoter is given a facility to revise the date of completion of project and declare the same under Section 4. The RERA does not contemplate rewriting of contract between the flat purchaser and the promoter...

122. We have already discussed that above stated provisions of the RERA are not retrospective in nature. They may to

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some extent be having a retroactive or quasi retroactive effect but then on that ground the validity of the provisions of RERA cannot be challenged. The Parliament is competent enough to legislate law having retrospective or retroactive effect. A law can be even framed to affect subsisting / existing contractual rights between the parties in the larger public interest. We do not have any doubt in our mind that the RERA has been framed in the larger public interest after a thorough study and discussion made at the highest level by the Standing Committee and Select Committee, which submitted its detailed reports."

31. Also, in appeal no. 173 of 2019 titled as ***Magic Eye Developer Pvt. Ltd. Vs. Ishwer Singh Dahiya***, in order dated 17.12.2019 the Haryana Real Estate Appellate Tribunal has observed-

"34. Thus, keeping in view our aforesaid discussion, we are of the considered opinion that the provisions of the Act are quasi retroactive to some extent in operation and will be applicable to the agreements for sale entered into even prior to coming into operation of the Act where the transaction are still in the process of completion. Hence in case of delay in the offer/delivery of possession as per the terms and conditions of the agreement for sale the allottee shall be entitled to the interest/delayed possession charges on the reasonable rate of interest as provided in Rule 15 of the rules and one sided, unfair and unreasonable rate of compensation mentioned in the agreement for sale is liable to be ignored."

32. The agreements are sacrosanct save and except for the provisions which have been abrogated by the Act itself. Further, it is noted that the builder-buyer agreements have been executed in the manner that there is no scope left to the allottee to negotiate any of the clauses contained therein. Therefore, the authority is of the view that the charges payable under various heads shall be payable as per the agreed terms and conditions of the agreement subject to the condition that the same are in accordance with the plans/permissions approved by the

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respective departments/competent authorities and are not in contravention of any other Act, rules and regulations made thereunder and are not unreasonable or exorbitant in nature. Hence, in the light of above-mentioned reasons, the contention of the respondent w.r.t. jurisdiction stands rejected.

F.II Objection regarding complainant is in breach of agreement for non-invocation of arbitration

33. The respondent submitted that the complaint is not maintainable for the reason that the agreement contains an arbitration clause which refers to the dispute resolution mechanism to be adopted by the parties in the event of any dispute and the same is reproduced below for the ready reference:

"36. Dispute Resolution by Arbitration

"All or any disputes arising out or touching upon in relation to the terms of this Agreement or its termination including the interpretation and validity of the terms thereof and the respective rights and obligations of the parties shall be settled amicably by mutual discussions failing which the same shall be settled through reference to a sole Arbitrator to be appointed by a resolution of the Board of Directors of the Company, whose decision shall be final and binding upon the parties. The allottee hereby confirms that it shall have no objection to the appointment of such sole Arbitrator even if the person so appointed, is an employee or Advocate of the Company or is otherwise connected to the Company and the Allottee hereby accepts and agrees that this alone shall not constitute a ground for challenge to the independence or impartiality of the said sole Arbitrator to conduct the arbitration. The arbitration proceedings shall be governed by the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 or any statutory amendments/modifications thereto and shall be held at the Company's offices or at a location designated by the said sole Arbitrator in Gurgaon. The language of the arbitration proceedings and the

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Award shall be in English. The company and the allottee will share the fees of the Arbitrator in equal proportion".

34. The authority is of the opinion that the jurisdiction of the authority cannot be fettered by the existence of an arbitration clause in the buyer's agreement as it may be noted that section 79 of the Act bars the jurisdiction of civil courts about any matter which falls within the purview of this authority, or the Real Estate Appellate Tribunal. Thus, the intention to render such disputes as non-arbitrable seems to be clear. Also, section 88 of the Act says that the provisions of this Act shall be in addition to and not in derogation of the provisions of any other law for the time being in force. Further, the authority puts reliance on catena of judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, particularly in ***National Seeds Corporation Limited v. M. Madhusudhan Reddy & Anr. (2012) 2 SCC 506***, wherein it has been held that the remedies provided under the Consumer Protection Act are in addition to and not in derogation of the other laws in force, consequently the authority would not be bound to refer parties to arbitration even if the agreement between the parties had an arbitration clause.

35. Further, in ***Aftab Singh and ors. v. Emaar MGF Land Ltd and ors., Consumer case no. 701 of 2015 decided on 13.07.2017***, the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, New Delhi (NCDRC) has held that the arbitration clause in agreements between the complainant and builder could not circumscribe the jurisdiction of a consumer. The relevant paras are reproduced below:

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"49. Support to the above view is also lent by Section 79 of the recently enacted Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 (for short "the Real Estate Act"). Section 79 of the said Act reads as follows:-

"79. Bar of jurisdiction - No civil court shall have jurisdiction to entertain any suit or proceeding in respect of any matter which the Authority or the adjudicating officer or the Appellate Tribunal is empowered by or under this Act to determine and no injunction shall be granted by any court or other authority in respect of any action taken or to be taken in pursuance of any power conferred by or under this Act."

It can thus, be seen that the said provision expressly ousts the jurisdiction of the Civil Court in respect of any matter which the Real Estate Regulatory Authority, established under Sub-section (1) of Section 20 or the Adjudicating Officer, appointed under Sub-section (1) of Section 71 or the Real Estate Appellate Tribunal established under Section 43 of the Real Estate Act, is empowered to determine. Hence, in view of the binding dictum of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in A. Ayyaswamy (supra), the matters/disputes, which the Authorities under the Real Estate Act are empowered to decide, are non-arbitrable, notwithstanding an Arbitration Agreement between the parties to such matters, which, to a large extent, are similar to the disputes falling for resolution under the Consumer Act.

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56. Consequently, we unhesitatingly reject the arguments on behalf of the Builder and hold that an Arbitration Clause in the afore-stated kind of Agreements between the Complainants and the Builder cannot circumscribe the jurisdiction of a Consumer Fora, notwithstanding the amendments made to Section 8 of the Arbitration Act."

36. While considering the issue of maintainability of a complaint before a consumer forum/commission in the fact of an existing arbitration clause in the builder buyer agreement, the Hon'ble Supreme Court in case titled as **M/s Emaar MGF Land Ltd. V. Aftab Singh in revision petition no. 2629-30/2018 in civil appeal no. 23512-23513 of 2017 decided on 10.12.2018** has upheld the aforesaid judgement of NCDRC and as provided in Article 141 of the Constitution of India, the law declared by the

Supreme Court shall be binding on all courts within the territory of India and accordingly, the authority is bound by the aforesaid view. The relevant para of the judgement passed by the Supreme Court is reproduced below:

"25. This Court in the series of judgments as noticed above considered the provisions of Consumer Protection Act, 1986 as well as Arbitration Act, 1996 and laid down that complaint under Consumer Protection Act being a special remedy, despite there being an arbitration agreement the proceedings before Consumer Forum have to go on and no error committed by Consumer Forum on rejecting the application. There is reason for not interjecting proceedings under Consumer Protection Act on the strength an arbitration agreement by Act, 1996. The remedy under Consumer Protection Act is a remedy provided to a consumer when there is a defect in any goods or services. The complaint means any allegation in writing made by a complainant has also been explained in Section 2(c) of the Act. The remedy under the Consumer Protection Act is confined to complaint by consumer as defined under the Act for defect or deficiencies caused by a service provider, the cheap and a quick remedy has been provided to the consumer which is the object and purpose of the Act as noticed above."

37. Therefore, in view of the above judgements and considering the provisions of the Act, the authority is of the view that complainant is well within a right to seek a special remedy available in a beneficial Act such as the Consumer Protection Act and RERA Act, 2016 instead of going in for an arbitration. Hence, we have no hesitation in holding that this authority has the requisite jurisdiction to entertain the complaint and that the dispute does not require to be referred to arbitration necessarily. In the light of the above-mentioned reasons, the authority is of the view that the objection of the respondent stands rejected.

F.III Objections regarding force majeure



38. The respondents-promoter has raised the contention that the construction of the tower in which the unit of the complainants is situated, has been delayed due to force majeure circumstances such as orders passed by National Green Tribunal to stop construction during 2015-2016-2017-2018, dispute with contractor, non-payment of instalment by allottees and demonetization. The plea of the respondent regarding various orders of the NGT and demonetisation but all the pleas advanced in this regard are devoid of merit. The orders passed by NGT banning construction in the NCR region was for a very short period of time and thus, cannot be said to impact the respondent-builder leading to such a delay in the completion. The plea regarding demonetisation is also devoid of merit. Further, any contract and dispute between contractor and the builder cannot be considered as a ground for delayed completion of project as the allottee was not a party to any such contract. Also, there may be cases where allottees has not paid instalments regularly but all the allottees cannot be expected to suffer because of few allottees. Thus, the promoter respondent cannot be given any leniency on based of aforesaid reasons and it is well settled principle that a person cannot take benefit of his own wrong.

G. Findings on the relief sought by the complainant.

Relief sought by the complainant: The complainant has sought following relief(s):



- i. Refund the entire amount of Rs. 10,72,88,573/- paid by the complainant to the respondent for the said unit.**
- ii. Delayed interest @ 20% p.a. from the date of payment, till the actual date of handing over of possession.**

39. That the complainant booked a luxury residential apartment in the project of the respondent named as "Grand Hyatt" situated at sector 58, Gurgaon, Haryana for a total sale consideration of Rs. 11,69,08,900/-. The apartment buyer agreement was executed between the parties on 20.03.2014.

40. The respondent promoter vide clause 14.3 of the buyer's agreement executed inter se parties, has proposed to handover the possession of the subject apartment within a period of 48 months from the date of approval of building plans and/or fulfilment of the preconditions imposed thereunder plus 180 days grace period for unforeseen delays beyond the reasonable control of the company i.e., the respondents/promoters.

41. The residence buyer's agreement is a pivotal legal document which should ensure that the rights and liabilities of both builder/promoter and buyer/allottee are protected candidly. The buyer's agreement lays down the terms that govern the sale of different kinds of properties like residentials, commercials etc. between the buyer and builder. It is in the interest of both the parties to have a well-drafted buyer's agreement which would thereby protect the rights of both the builder and buyer in the unfortunate event of a dispute that may arise. It should be

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drafted in the simple and unambiguous language which may be understood by a common man with an ordinary educational background. It should contain a provision with regard to stipulated time of delivery of possession of the apartment, plot or building, as the case may be and the right of the buyer/allottee in case of delay in possession of the unit. In pre-RERA period it was a general practice among the promoter/developer to invariably draft the terms of the apartment buyer's agreement in a manner that benefited only the promoter/developer. It had arbitrary, unilateral, and unclear clauses that either blatantly favoured the promoter/developer or gave them the benefit of doubt because of the total absence of clarity over the matter.

42. It is contended on behalf of the respondent that the due date for delivery of possession of the allotted unit should be calculated from the date of fire approval i.e., 08.01.2015 and in this regard, the counsel for the respondent placed reliance on case titled as **Ireo Grace Realtech Pvt. Ltd. Versus Abhishek Khanna and Ors.** passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in Civil Appeal no. 5785 of 2019.
43. The counsel for the complainant while rebutting the claim of the respondent submitted that the case cited by the counsel for the respondent relates to the project namely, "The Corridors" however, in the present matter, the subject unit is of the project "Grand Hyatt Gurgaon Residencies" sector-58, Gurugram.
44. The authority is of the considered view that every case needs to be considered in the light of the facts and circumstance of that

case. The nature and extent of relief are always fact dependent and vary from case to case. Further, it is pertinent to mention here that in the case cited above it is a matter of fact that on 23.07.2013, the building plans of the project were sanctioned by the Directorate of Town and Country Planning, Haryana. Clause 3 of the sanctioned plan stipulated that an NOC/ clearance from the fire authority shall be submitted within 90 days from the of issuance of the sanctioned building plans which expired on 23.10.2013. But it is pertinent to mention over here that the developer applied for the provisional fire approval on 24.10.2013 (as contented by the respondents herein the matter of Civil Appeal no. 5785 of 2019 titled as '**IREO Grace Realtech Pvt. Ltd. v/s Abhishek Khanna and Ors.**') after the expiry of the mandatory 90 days period got over. The application filed was deficient and casual and did not provide the requisite. The respondents submitted the corrected sets of drawings as per the NBC-2005 fire scheme only on 13.10.2014 which reflected the laxity of the developers in obtaining the fire NOC. The approval of the fire safety scheme took more than 16 months from the date of the building plan approval i.e., from 23.07.2013 to 27.11.2014. The builders failed to give any explanation for the inordinate delay in obtaining the fire NOC.

45. In view of the above, in complaints bearing nos. CR/1091/2021 CR/4325/2020, CR/3020/2020, CR/3361/2020, CR/5003/2020, CR/2549/2020, the authority had struck down the ambiguous possession clause of the buyer's agreement and

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calculated the due date of handing over possession from the date of approval of building plan.

46. The authority has gone through the possession clause of the agreement in the present matter. On a bare reading of the said clause of the agreement reproduced above, it becomes clear that the possession in the present case is linked to the "fulfilment of the preconditions" which is so vague and ambiguous in itself. Nowhere in the agreement it has been defined that fulfilment of which condition forms a part of the pre-conditions, to which the due date of possession is subjected to in the said possession clause. If the said possession clause is read in entirety, the time period of handing over possession is only a tentative period for completion of the construction of the flat in question and the promoter is aiming to extend this time period indefinitely on one eventuality or the other. Moreover, the said clause is an inclusive clause wherein the "fulfilment of the preconditions" has been mentioned for the timely delivery of the subject apartment. It seems to be just a way to evade the liability towards the timely delivery of the subject apartment. According to the established principles of law and the principles of natural justice when a certain glaring illegality or irregularity comes to the notice of the adjudicator, the adjudicator can take cognizance of the same and adjudicate upon it. The inclusion of such vague and ambiguous type of clauses in the agreement which are totally arbitrary, one sided and totally against the interests of the allottees must be ignored and discarded in their totality. In the light of the above-mentioned reasons, the

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authority is of the view that the date of sanction of building plans ought to be taken as the date for determining the due date of possession of the unit in question to the complainant. Accordingly, in the present matter the due date of possession is calculated from the date of approval of building plan i.e., 03.07.2013 which comes out to be 03.07.2017.

47. Keeping in view the fact that the allottee complainant wishes to withdraw from the project and is demanding return of the amount received by the promoter in respect of the unit with interest on failure of the promoter to complete or inability to give possession of the unit in accordance with the terms of agreement for sale or duly completed by the date specified therein. The matter is covered under section 18(1) of the Act of 2016.
48. The due date of possession as per agreement for sale as mentioned in the table above is 03.07.2017 and there is delay of 2 years 2 month 03 days on the date of filing of the complaint.
49. The occupation certificate/completion certificate of the project where the unit is situated has still not been obtained by the respondent-promoter. The authority is of the view that the allottee cannot be expected to wait endlessly for taking possession of the allotted unit and for which he has paid a considerable amount towards the sale consideration and as observed by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in **Ireo Grace Realtech Pvt. Ltd. Vs. Abhishek Khanna & Ors., civil appeal no. 5785 of 2019**, decided on 11.01.2021

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“ ... The occupation certificate is not available even as on date, which clearly amounts to deficiency of service. The allottees cannot be made to wait indefinitely for possession of the apartments allotted to them, nor can they be bound to take the apartments in Phase 1 of the project.....”

50. Further in the judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the cases of **Newtech Promoters and Developers Private Limited Vs State of U.P. and Ors.** Decided on 11.11.2021 reiterated in case of **M/s Sana Realtors Private Limited & other Vs Union of India & others SLP (Civil) No. 13005 of 2020** decided on 12.05.2022. it was observed

25. The unqualified right of the allottee to seek refund referred Under Section 18(1)(a) and Section 19(4) of the Act is not dependent on any contingencies or stipulations thereof. It appears that the legislature has consciously provided this right of refund on demand as an unconditional absolute right to the allottee, if the promoter fails to give possession of the apartment, plot or building within the time stipulated under the terms of the agreement regardless of unforeseen events or stay orders of the Court/Tribunal, which is in either way not attributable to the allottee/home buyer, the promoter is under an obligation to refund the amount on demand with interest at the rate prescribed by the State Government including compensation in the manner provided under the Act with the proviso that if the allottee does not wish to withdraw from the project, he shall be entitled for interest for the period of delay till handing over possession at the rate prescribed.

51. The promoter is responsible for all obligations, responsibilities, and functions under the provisions of the Act of 2016, or the rules and regulations made thereunder or to the allottee as per agreement for sale under section 11(4)(a). The promoter has

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failed to complete or unable to give possession of the unit in accordance with the terms of agreement for sale or duly completed by the date specified therein. Accordingly, the promoter is liable to the allottee, as she wishes to withdraw from the project, without prejudice to any other remedy available, to return the amount received by him in respect of the unit with interest at such rate as may be prescribed.

52. This is without prejudice to any other remedy available to the allottee including compensation for which she may file an application for adjudging compensation with the adjudicating officer under sections 71 & 72 read with section 31(1) of the Act of 2016.

53. The authority hereby directs the promoter to return the paid up amount received by him i.e., Rs. 10,72,88,573/- with interest at the rate of 10.25% (the State Bank of India highest marginal cost of lending rate (MCLR) applicable as on date +2%) as prescribed under rule 15 of the Haryana Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Rules, 2017 from the date of each payment till the actual date of refund of the amount within the timelines provided in rule 16 of the Haryana Rules 2017 *ibid*.

- **Compensation of Rs. 10,00,000/- on account of mental agony.**
- **Cost of litigation**

54. The complainant in the aforesaid relief is seeking relief w.r.t compensation. Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in case titled as

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M/s Newtech Promoters and Developers Pvt. Ltd. V/s State of UP & Ors. (Supra) has held that an allottee is entitled to claim compensation under sections 12, 14, 18 and section 19 which is to be decided by the adjudicating officer as per section 71 and the quantum of compensation shall be adjudged by the adjudicating officer having due regard to the factors mentioned in section 72. The adjudicating officer has exclusive jurisdiction to deal with the complaints in respect of compensation. Therefore, the complainant is advised to approach the adjudicating officer for seeking the relief of compensation.

H. Directions of the authority

55. Hence, the authority hereby passes this order and issues the following directions under section 37 of the Act to ensure compliance of obligations cast upon the promoter as per the function entrusted to the authority under section 34(f):


- (i) The respondent/promoter is directed to refund the amount i.e., Rs 10,72,88,573/-received by him to the complainant with interest at the rate of 10.25% as prescribed under rule 15 of the Haryana Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Rules, 2017 from the date of each payment till the actual date of refund of the amount.
- (ii) A period of 90 days is given to the respondent to comply with the directions given in this order and failing which legal consequences would follow.

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(iii) The respondent is further directed not to create any third-party rights against the subject unit before full realization of the paid-up amount along with interest thereon to the complainant, and even if, any transfer is initiated with respect to subject unit, the receivable shall be first utilized for clearing dues of allottee-complainant.

56. Complaint stands disposed of.

57. File be consigned to registry.


(Ashok Sangwan)
Member


(Vijay Kumar Goyal)
Member

Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Gurugram
Date 20.10.2022