

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

Date of decision: 07.08.2024

NAME OF THE BUILDER		RAHEJA DEVELOPERS LIMITED.	
PROJECT NAME		"RAHEJA REVANTA"	
S. No.	Case No.	Case title	APPEARANCE
1.	CR/3848/2023	M/s Sentac India Company Pvt. Ltd. V/s Raheja Developers Limited	Nilotpal Shyam (Advocate) and Garvit Gupta (Advocate)
2.	CR/3849/2023	M/s Sentac India Company Pvt. Ltd. V/s Raheja Developers Limited	Nilotpal Shyam (Advocate) and Garvit Gupta (Advocate)

CORAM:

Ashok Sangwan

Member

ORDER

1. This order shall dispose of all the 2 complaints titled as above filed before the authority under section 31 of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 (hereinafter referred as "the Act") read with rule 28 of the Haryana Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Rules, 2017 (hereinafter referred as "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 its obligations, responsibilities and functions to the allottees as per the agreement for sale executed inter se between parties.
2. The core issues emanating from them are similar in nature and the complainant(s) in the above referred matters are allottees of the project, namely, "Raheja Revanta" (residential group housing colony) being developed by the same respondent/promoter i.e., M/s Raheja Developers



Limited. The terms and conditions of the agreement to sell and allotment letter against the allotment of units in the upcoming project of the respondent/builder and fulcrum of the issues involved in both the cases pertains to failure on the part of the promoter to deliver timely possession of the units in question, seeking award of refund the entire amount along with interest and the compensation.

3. The details of the complaints, reply to status, unit no., date of agreement, possession clause, due date of possession, total sale consideration, total paid amount, and relief sought are given in the table below:

Project Name and Location	"Raheja Revanta" situated in Sector 78, Gurugram, Haryana.
<p>Possession Clause: -</p> <p>4.2 Possession Time and Compensation</p> <p><i>That the Seller shall sincerely endeavor to give possession of the Unit to the purchaser within thirty-six (36) months in respect of 'TAPAS' Independent Floors and twenty four (24) months in respect of 'SURYA TOWER' from the date of the execution of the Agreement to sell and after providing of necessary infrastructure specially road sewer & water in the sector by the Government, but subject to force majeure conditions or any Government/Regulatory authority's action, inaction or omission and reasons beyond the control of the Seller. However, the seller shall be entitled for compensation free grace period of six (6) months in case the construction is not completed within the time period mentioned above. The seller on obtaining certificate for occupation and use by the Competent Authorities shall hand over the Unit to the Purchaser for this occupation and use and subject to the Purchaser having complied with all the terms and conditions of this application form & Agreement To sell. In the event of his failure to take over and /or occupy and use the unit provisionally and/or finally allotted within 30 days from the date of intimation in writing by the seller, then the same shall lie at his/her risk and cost and the Purchaser shall be liable to compensation @ Rs.7/- per sq. ft. of the super area per month as holding charges for the entire period of such delay....."</i></p>	



Sr. No	Complaint No., Case Title, and Date of filing of complaint	Reply status	Unit No.	Date of execution of agreement to sell	Due date of possession	Total Consideration/Total Amount paid by the complainants in Rs.
1.	CR/3848/2023 M/s Sentac India Company Pvt. Ltd. V/S Raheja Developers Limited. Date of Filing of complaint 28.08.2023	Reply received on 28.02.2024	A-225, 22 nd floor, Tower/block-A (Page no. 37 of the complaint)	17.01.2017 (Page no. 35 of the complaint)	17.07.2019 (24 months from date of agreement + 6 months grace period) {inadvertently calculated as 17.07.2021 on proceedings dated 22.05.2024}	TSC: - 2,72,21,200/- AP: - 1,88,89,764/- (As per customer ledger dated 19.07.2023 on page no. 78-79 of the complaint)
2.	CR/3849/2023 M/s Sentac India Company Pvt. Ltd. V/S Raheja Developers Limited. Date of Filing of complaint 28.08.2023	Reply received on 28.02.2024	A-301, 30 th floor, Tower/block-A (Page no. 33 of the complaint)	17.01.2017 (Page no. 31 of the complaint)	17.07.2019 (24 months from date of agreement + 6 months grace period) {inadvertently calculated as 17.07.2021 on proceedings dated 22.05.2024}	TSC: - 2,06,30,249/- AP: - 1,43,26,771/- (As per customer ledger dated 19.07.2023 on page no. 73-74 of the complaint)

The complainants in the above complaints have sought the following reliefs:

1. Direct the respondent to refund the entire paid-up amount along with interest at the prescribed rate.
2. Direct the respondent company to pay a cost of Rs.1,00,000/- towards the cost of the litigation.

Note: In the table referred above, certain abbreviations have been used. They

are elaborated as follows:

Abbreviation Full form

TSC Total Sale consideration

AP Amount paid by the allottee(s)

4. The aforesaid complaints were filed against the promoter on account of violation of the agreement to sell and allotment letter against the allotment of units in the upcoming project of the respondent/builder and for not handing over the possession by the due date, seeking award of refund the entire paid-up amount along with interest and compensation.
5. It has been decided to treat the said complaints as an application for non-compliance of statutory obligations on the part of the promoter/respondent in terms of section 34(f) of the Act which mandates the authority to ensure compliance of the obligations cast upon the promoters, the allottee(s) and the real estate agents under the Act, the rules and the regulations made thereunder.
6. The facts of all the complaints filed by the complainant(s)/allottee(s) are also similar. Out of the above-mentioned case, the particulars of lead case ***CR/3848/2023 case titled as M/s Sentac India Company Pvt. Ltd. V/s Raheja Developers Limited*** are being taken into consideration for determining the rights of the allottee(s) qua refund the entire paid-up amount along with interest and others.

A. Project and unit related details

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

CR/3848/2023 case titled as M/s Sentac India Company Pvt. Ltd. V/s Raheja Developers Limited.

S. N.	Particulars	Details
1.	Name of the project	"Raheja Revanta", Sector 78, Gurugram



2.	Project area	18.7213 acres
3.	Nature of the project	Residential group housing colony
4.	DTCP license no. and validity status	49 of 2011 dated 01.06.2011 valid up to 31.05.2021
5.	Name of licensee	Sh. Ram Chander, Ram Sawroop and 4 Others
6.	RERA Registered/ not registered	Registered vide no. 32 of 2017 dated 04.08.2017
7.	RERA registration valid up to	04.02.2023 5 Years from the date of revised Environment Clearance
8.	Unit no.	A-225, 22 nd floor, Tower/block- A (Page no. 37 of the complaint)
9.	Unit area admeasuring	3442.57 sq. ft. (super area) (Page no. 37 of the complaint)
10.	Allotment letter	Not provided
11.	Date of execution of agreement to sell	17.01.2017 (Page no. 35 of the complaint)
12.	Possession clause	4.2 Possession Time and Compensation <i>That the Seller shall sincerely endeavor to give possession of the Unit to the purchaser within thirty-six (36) months in respect of 'TAPAS' Independent Floors and twenty four (24) months in respect of 'SURYA TOWER' from the date of the execution of the Agreement to sell and after providing of necessary infrastructure specially road sewer & water in the sector by the Government, but subject to force majeure conditions or any Government/ Regulatory authority's action, inaction or omission and reasons beyond the control of the Seller. However, the seller shall be entitled for compensation free grace period of six (6) months in case the construction is not completed within the time period mentioned above. The seller on obtaining certificate for occupation and use by the Competent Authorities shall hand over the</i>

		<p><i>Unit to the Purchaser for this occupation and use and subject to the Purchaser having complied with all the terms and conditions of this application form & Agreement To sell. In the event of his failure to take over and /or occupy and use the unit provisionally and/or finally allotted within 30 days from the date of intimation in writing by the seller, then the same shall lie at his/her risk and cost and the Purchaser shall be liable to compensation @ Rs.7/- per sq. ft. of the super area per month as holding charges for the entire period of such delay....."</i></p>
13.	Grace period	<p>Allowed As per clause 4.2 of the agreement to sell, the possession of the allotted unit was supposed to be offered within a stipulated timeframe of 24 months plus 6 months of grace period. It is a matter of fact that the respondent has not completed the project in which the allotted unit is situated and has not obtained the occupation certificate by January 2019. As per agreement to sell, the construction of the project is to be completed by January 2019 which is not completed till date. Accordingly, in the present case the grace period of 6 months is allowed.</p>
14.	Due date of possession	<p>17.07.2019 (Note: - 24 months from date of agreement + 6 months grace period) {inadvertently on proceedings dated 22.05.2024, 24 months was mistyped as 48 months in possession clause due to which the due date has been calculated as 17.07.2021}</p>
15.	Total sale consideration	<p>Rs.2,72,21,200/- (as per customer ledger at page no. 78 of complaint)</p>

16.	Amount paid by the complainant	Rs.1,88,89,764/- (as per customer ledger at page no. 79 of complaint)
17.	Occupation certificate /Completion certificate	Not received
18.	Offer of possession	Not offered

B. Facts of the complaint

8. The complainant has made the following submissions in the complaint: -
- I. That the complainant was allotted a unit bearing no. A225 in 22nd Floor Tower A in project of the respondent named "Raheja Revanta" Sector 78, Gurgaon vide agreement to sell dated 17.01.2017 for a total sale consideration of Rs.2,66,61,925/- plus applicable taxes against which the complainant has already paid a sum of Rs.1,88,89,764/- in all.
 - II. That as per clause 4.2 of the agreement to sell executed between the parties, the respondent has committed to handover the possession of the impugned unit within 2 years from the date of execution of the agreement to sell with a grace period of 6 month.
 - III. That the respondent failed to keep their promised of delivery of the said unit within the time prescribed under the agreement to sell and not even bothered to give reason about such unreasonable delays in handing over of possession to the complainant.
 - IV. That the complainant has paid over 66% of the total demand made as per demand letter issued by the respondent in accordance with the payment plan annexed in Annexure-A of the agreement to sell. However, the respondent completely failed to the deliver the possession of impugned unit even within the extended time schedule also which was supposed to be taken for getting the occupancy certificate after completion of the



construction. Now, the respondent has come with a new deadline which is nothing but highly farcical and blatant abuse of complainant money who has hoped to get the possession of impugned unit. Due to such an unreasonable delay, the complainant has been waiting for the possession of the impugned for almost 4 years now with no hope for the future.

- V. That the respondent was under a contractual obligation to obtain the occupancy certificate. This reason of more three years in obtaining the occupancy certificate/possession is itself a ground for refund of money in accordance with Haryana Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Rules, 2017. This present complaint shall be treated as a demand of refund/intent to withdraw from the impugned project of Respondent(s) in accordance with Section 18 of RERA Act, 2016 read with Section 19(4) of the RERA Act, 2016.
- VI. That without prejudice to the above, the complainant was compelled to pay Rs 3,50,000/- for covered parking charges along with applicable charges over and above the basic sale price for the impugned flat. However, the respondent cannot charge any consideration for parking spaces since it is part of common area which cannot be sold by the builder. Therefore, the respondent is under a legal obligation to refund Rs.3,50,000/- paid as consideration towards the parking charges.
- VII. That respondent company is also liable to refund the service tax charged in earlier demand in view of the judgment of Hon'ble Delhi High Court in *Suresh Kumar Bansal v. Union of India & Ors.* 2016[43] S.T.R.3(Del.) and which has been followed by Hon'ble Punjab and Haryana High Court in *Balvinder Singh v. Union of India* CWP No. 23404 of 2016, decision dated 25.09.2018.

VIII. That in addition to the relief sought in the instant complaint, the complainant is entitled to seek inter alia compensation under Section 71 read with Section 72 of the RERA Act. Accordingly, the complainant shall also be granted liberty to pursue its claim for compensation before the Adjudicating Authority under Section 71 read with Section 72 of the RERA Act.

C. Relief sought by the complainant: -

9. The complainant has sought following relief(s)
 - a. Direct the respondent to refund the entire paid-up amount along with interest at the prescribed rate.
 - b. Direct the respondent company to pay a cost of Rs.1,00,000/- towards the cost of the litigation.
10. On the date of hearing, the authority explained to the respondent /promoter on the contravention 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

11. The respondent contested the complaint on the following grounds: -
 - i. That the agreement to sell 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 enforced retrospectively. Although the provisions of the RERA Act, 2016 are not applicable to the facts of the present case in hand yet without prejudice and in order to avoid complications later on, the respondent has registered the project vide registration no. 32 of 2017 dated 04.08.2017 with the Authority.

- ii. 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 60 of the booking application form and clause 14.2 of the buyer's agreement.
- iii. That the complainant had applied for allotment of a plot in the project named "Raheja's Revanta" at Sector 78, Gurgaon Haryana vide his booking application form. Thereafter, an agreement to sell was executed between the parties for unit no. A-301 and the complainant agreed to be bound by the terms contained therein.
- iv. That the possession of the unit was supposed to be offered to the complainant in accordance with the agreed terms and conditions of the buyer's agreement as stated in clause 21 of the booking application form and clause 4.2 of the agreement to sell.
- v. That despite the respondent fulfilling all its obligations as per the provisions laid down by law, the government agencies have failed miserably to provide essential basic infrastructure facilities such as roads, sewerage line, water and electricity supply in the sector where the said project is being developed. Thus, the respondent cannot be held liable on account of non-performance by the concerned governmental authorities.
- vi. That the time period for calculating the due date of possession shall start only when the necessary infrastructure facilities will be provided by the governmental authorities and the same was known to the complainant from the very inception. It is submitted that non-availability of the infrastructure facilities is beyond the control of the respondent and the



- same also falls within the ambit of the definition of 'Force Majeure' condition as stipulated in clause 4.4 of the agreement to sell.
- vii. That furthermore two high tension cable lines were passing through the project site which were clearly shown and visible in the zoning plan dated 06.06.2011. Hence, the respondent got the overhead wires shifted underground at its own cost and only after adopting all necessary processes and procedures and handed over the same to the HVPNL and the same was brought to the notice of District Town Planner vide letter dated 28.10.2014 requesting to apprise DGTCP, Haryana for the same.
- viii. That as multiple government and regulatory agencies and their clearances were in involved/required and frequent shut down of the high-tension supplies was involved, it took considerable time/efforts, investment and resources which falls within the ambit of the force majeure condition. Further, the GMDA, Office of Engineer-VI, Gurugram vide letter dated 3.12.2019 has intimated the respondent that the land of sector dividing road 77/78 has not been acquired and sewer line has not been laid. So, the respondent has written on several occasions to the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) to expedite the provisioning of the infrastructure facilities at the said project site so that possession can be handed over to the allottees. However, the Authorities have paid no heed to or request till date.
- ix. That the construction of the tower in which the unit allotted to the complainant is located is 80% complete and the respondent shall hand over the possession of the same to the complainant after its completion subject to the complainant making the payment of the due installments amount and on availability of infrastructure facilities such as sector road



and laying providing basic external infrastructure such as water, sewer, electricity etc. as per terms of the application and agreement to sell and due to the above-mentioned conditions which were beyond the reasonable control of the respondent, the construction of the project in question has not been completed and the respondent cannot be held liable for the same.

- x. That the construction of the tower in which the floor is allotted to the complainant is located already complete and the respondent shall hand over the possession of the same to the complainant after getting the occupation certificate subject to the complainant making the payment of the due installments amount as per terms of the application and agreement to sell.
 - xi. That the respondent cannot be held responsible for no fault of theirs. There is no failure on the part of the respondent to hand over the possession of the plot as per the agreement to sell. Furthermore, the Hon'ble Punjab and Haryana High Court vide its order dated 12.01.2023 in CWP no. 609 of 2023 has directed the State of Haryana not to take any coercive steps against the respondent till 20.07.2023.
12. 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

13. The authority has complete territorial and subject matter jurisdiction to adjudicate the present complaint for the reasons given below.

E.I Territorial jurisdiction

14. As per notification no. 1/92/2017-1TCP dated 14.12.2017 issued by Town and Country Planning Department, Haryana the jurisdiction of Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Gurugram shall be entire Gurugram district for all purposes. 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

15. Section 11(4)(a) of the Act, 2016 provides that the promoter shall be responsible to the allottee as per agreement for sale. Section 11(4)(a) is reproduced as hereunder:

Section 11

.....

(4) The promoter shall-

(a) be responsible for all obligations, responsibilities and functions under the provisions of this Act or the rules and regulations made thereunder or to the allottees as per the agreement for sale, or to the association of allottees, as the case may be, till the conveyance of all the apartments, plots or buildings, as the case may be, to the allottees, or the common areas to the association of allottees or the competent authority, as the case may be;

Section 34-Functions of the Authority:

34(f) of the Act provides to ensure compliance of the obligations cast upon the promoters, the allottees and the real estate agents under this Act and the rules and regulations made thereunder.

16. 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 authority w.r.t. buyer's agreement executed prior to coming into force of the Act.

17. The respondent has contended that the authority is deprived of the jurisdiction to go into the interpretation of, or rights of the parties inter-se in accordance with the buyer's agreement executed between the parties prior to the enactment of the Act and the provision of the said Act cannot be applied retrospectively. The authority is of the view that 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. 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 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."

18. 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."

19. The agreements are sacrosanct save and except for the provisions which have been abrogated by the Act itself. Further, it is noted that the 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 respective departments/competent authorities and are not in contravention of any other Act, rules, statutes, instructions, directions issued 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 agreements contains an arbitration clause which refers to the dispute resolution system mentioned in agreement

20. The agreement to sell entered into between the parties dated 17.01.2017 contains a clause 14.2 relating to dispute resolution between the parties.

The clause reads as under: -

"All or any disputes arising out or touching upon in relation to the terms of this Application/Agreement to Sell/ Conveyance Deed including the interpretation and validity of the terms thereof and the respective rights and obligations of the parties shall be settled through arbitration. The arbitration proceedings shall be governed by the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 or any statutory amendments/ modifications thereof for the time being in force. The arbitration proceedings shall be held at the office of the seller in New Delhi by a sole arbitrator who shall be appointed by mutual consent of the parties. If there is no consensus on appointment of the Arbitrator, the matter will be referred to the concerned court for the same. In case of any proceeding, reference etc. touching upon the arbitrator subject including any award, the territorial jurisdiction of the Courts shall be Gurgaon as well as of Punjab and Haryana High Court at Chandigarh".

21. 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. Therefore, by applying same analogy the presence of arbitration clause could not be construed to take away the jurisdiction of the authority.

22. 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 complainants and builders could not circumscribe the jurisdiction of a consumer. Further, 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. Therefore, in view of the above judgements and considering the provision of the Act, the authority is of the view that complainant is well within his 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.

F.III Objections regarding the circumstances being 'force majeure'.

23. The respondent has contended that the project was delayed because of the 'force majeure' situations like delay on part of government authorities in granting approvals, passing of HT lines over the project etc. which were beyond the control of respondent. However, all the pleas advanced in this regard are devoid of merits. First of all, the possession of the unit in question was to be offered by 17.07.2019. Further, the time taken in getting governmental approvals/clearances cannot be attributed as reason for delay in project. Moreover, some of the events mentioned above are of routine in nature happening annually and the promoter is required to take the same into consideration while launching the project. Thus, the promoter-respondent cannot be given any leniency on based of aforesaid reasons and it is a well settled principle that a person cannot take benefit of his own wrong and the objection of the respondent that the project was delayed due to circumstances being force majeure stands rejected.

G. Findings on the relief sought by the complainant.

G.I. Direct the respondent to refund the entire paid-up amount along with interest at the prescribed rate.

24. In the present complaint, the complainant intends to withdraw from the project and is seeking return of the amount paid by it in respect of subject unit along with interest at the prescribed rate as provided under section 18(1) of the Act. Sec. 18(1) of the Act is reproduced below for ready reference.

“Section 18: - Return of amount and compensation

18(1). If the promoter fails to complete or is unable to give possession of an apartment, plot, or building.-

(a) in accordance with the terms of the agreement for sale or, as the case may be, duly completed by the date specified therein; or

(b) due to discontinuance of his business as a developer on account of suspension or revocation of the registration under this Act or for any other reason,

he shall be liable on demand to the allottees, in case the allottee wishes to withdraw from the project, without prejudice to any other remedy available, to return the amount received by him in respect of that apartment, plot, building, as the case may be, with interest at such rate as may be prescribed in this behalf including compensation in the manner as provided under this Act:

Provided that where an allottee does not intend to withdraw from the project, he shall be paid, by the promoter, interest for every month of delay, till the handing over of the possession, at such rate as may be prescribed.”

सत्यमेव जयते (Emphasis supplied)

25. Clause 4.2 of the agreement to sell dated 17.01.2017 provides for handing over of possession and is reproduced below:

4.2 Possession Time and Compensation

That the Seller shall sincerely endeavor to give possession of the Unit to the purchaser **within thirty-six (36) months in respect of ‘TAPAS’ Independent Floors and twenty four (24) months in respect of ‘SURYA TOWER’ from the date of the execution of the Agreement to sell and after providing of necessary infrastructure specially road sewer & water in the sector by the Government, but subject to force majeure conditions or any Government/ Regulatory authority’s action, inaction or omission and reasons beyond the control of the Seller. However, the seller shall be entitled for compensation free grace period of six (6) months in case the construction is not completed within the time period mentioned above.** The seller on obtaining certificate for occupation and use by the Competent Authorities shall hand over the Unit to the Purchaser for this occupation and use and subject to the Purchaser having complied with all the terms and conditions of this application form & Agreement To sell. In the event of his failure to take over and /or occupy and use the unit provisionally and/or finally allotted within 30 days from the date of intimation in writing by the

seller, then the same shall lie at his/her risk and cost and the Purchaser shall be liable to compensation @ Rs.7/- per sq. ft. of the super area per month as holding charges for the entire period of such delay.....”

26. At the outset, it is relevant to comment on the preset possession clause of the agreement wherein the possession has been subjected to providing necessary infrastructure specially road, sewer & water in the sector by the government, but subject to force majeure conditions or any government/regulatory authority's action, inaction or omission and reason beyond the control of the seller. The drafting of this clause and incorporation of such conditions are not only vague and uncertain but so heavily loaded in favour of the promoter and against the allottee that even a single default by the allottee in making payment as per the plan may make the possession clause irrelevant for the purpose of allottee and the commitment date for handing over possession loses its meaning. The incorporation of such a clause in the agreement to sell by the promoter is just to evade the liability towards timely delivery of subject unit and to deprive the allottee of his right accruing after delay in possession. This is just to comment as to how the builder has misused his dominant position and drafted such a mischievous clause in the agreement and the allottee is left with no option but to sign on the dotted lines.
27. **Due date of handing over possession and admissibility of grace period:** As per clause 4.2 of the agreement to sell, the possession of the allotted unit was supposed to be offered within a stipulated timeframe of 24 months plus 6 months of grace period, in case the construction is not complete within the time frame specified. It is a matter of fact that the respondent has not completed the project in which the allotted unit is situated and has not obtained the occupation certificate by January 2019.



However, the fact cannot be ignored that there were circumstances beyond the control of the respondent which led to delay in completion of the project. Accordingly, in the present case the grace period of 6 months is allowed.

28. **Admissibility of refund along with prescribed rate of interest:** The complainant intends to withdraw from the project and is seeking refund of the amount paid by it in respect of the subject unit with interest at prescribed rate as provided under rule 15 of the rules. Rule 15 has been reproduced as under:

Rule 15. Prescribed rate of interest- [Proviso to section 12, section 18 and sub-section (4) and subsection (7) of section 19]

(1) For the purpose of proviso to section 12; section 18; and sub-sections (4) and (7) of section 19, the "interest at the rate prescribed" shall be the State Bank of India highest marginal cost of lending rate +2%.

Provided that in case the State Bank of India marginal cost of lending rate (MCLR) is not in use, it shall be replaced by such benchmark lending rates which the State Bank of India may fix from time to time for lending to the general public.

29. The legislature in its wisdom in the subordinate legislation under the provision of rule 15 of the rules, has determined the prescribed rate of interest. The rate of interest so determined by the legislature, is reasonable and if the said rule is followed to award the interest, it will ensure uniform practice in all the cases.
30. Consequently, as per website of the State Bank of India i.e., <https://sbi.co.in>, the marginal cost of lending rate (in short, MCLR) as on date i.e., 07.08.2024 is 9%. Accordingly, the prescribed rate of interest will be marginal cost of lending rate +2% i.e., 11%.
31. On consideration of the documents available on record as well as submissions made by the parties, the Authority is satisfied that the



respondent is in contravention of the provisions of the Act. By virtue of clause 4.2 of the agreement to sell executed between the parties on 17.01.2017, the possession of the subject unit was to be delivered within a period of 24 months from the date of execution of buyer's agreement which comes out to be 17.01.2019. As far as grace period is concerned, the same is allowed for the reasons quoted above. Therefore, the due date of handing over of possession is 17.07.2019.

32. Keeping in view the fact that the allottee/complainant wishes to withdraw from the project and 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.
33. The due date of possession as per agreement for sale as mentioned in the table above is 17.07.2019. The authority has further, observes that even after a passage of 5 years till date neither the construction is complete nor the offer of possession of the allotted unit has been made to the allottee by the respondent/promoter. The authority is of the view that the allottee cannot be expected to wait endlessly for taking possession of the unit which is allotted to it and for which it has paid a considerable amount of money towards the sale consideration. Further, the authority observes that there is no document placed on record from which it can be ascertained that whether the respondent has applied for occupation certificate/part occupation certificate or what is the status of construction of the project. In view of the above-mentioned fact, the

allottee intend to withdraw from the project and is well within the right to do the same in view of section 18(1) of the Act, 2016.

34. Moreover, 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***

"... 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....."

35. 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. 2021-2022(1) RCR (C), 357*** 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."

36. 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 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 the allottee wishes to withdraw from the project, without prejudice to any other remedy available, to return the amount received by it in respect of the unit with interest at such rate as may be prescribed.
37. Accordingly, the non-compliance of the mandate contained in section 11(4)(a) read with section 18(1) of the Act on the part of the respondent is established. As such, the complainant is entitled to refund of the entire amount paid by it at the prescribed rate of interest i.e., @11% p.a. (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*.

G. II Direct the respondent company to pay a cost of Rs.1,00,000/- towards the cost of the litigation.

38. The complainant is seeking above mentioned relief w.r.t. compensation. Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in civil appeal nos. 6745-6749 of 2021 titled as *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 and litigation charges 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 and litigation expense 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 and litigation expenses.

H. Directions of the authority

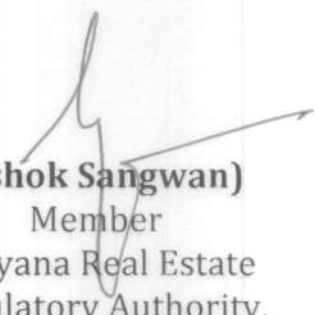
39. Hence, the authority hereby passes this order and issues the following directions under section 37 of the Act to ensure compliance of obligations cast upon the promoter as per the function entrusted to the authority under section 34(f):

- i. The respondent/promoter is directed to refund the amount received by it from each of the complainant(s) along with interest at the rate of 11% p.a. 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 deposited 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.
- 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(s), and even if, any transfer is initiated with respect to subject unit, the

receivable shall be first utilized for clearing dues of allottee/complainant(s).

40. This decision shall mutatis mutandis apply to cases mentioned in para 3 of this order.
41. Complaint stands disposed off.
42. File be consigned to registry.

Dated: 07.08.2024


(Ashok Sangwan)
Member
Haryana Real Estate
Regulatory Authority,
Gurugram



HARERA
GURUGRAM