

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

Complaint no.:	730 of 2024
Date of filing of complaint:	07.03.2024
Date of order:	22.11.2024

Nitin Jain s/o Om Prakash Jain R/o - B-36, Block - D, Vasant Vihar, Delhi - 110057	Complainant
Versus	
Signature Global (India) Pvt. Ltd., Regd. Office: - 1302, 13 th Floor, Tower - A, Signature Tower, South City - 1, Gurugram, Haryana - 122001	Respondent
CORAM:	
Shri Vijay Kumar Goyal	Member
APPEARANCE:	
Mr. Akash Godhwani Advocate	Complainant
Mr. Mintu Kumar A.R.	Respondent

ORDER

1. The present complaint 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

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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 there under or to the allottee as per the agreement for sale executed inter se.

A. Unit and project related details

2. The particulars of flat 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	Information
1.	Name and location of the project	"The Millennia", Sector-37D, Gurugram
2.	Project area	9.701 acres
3.	Nature of the project	Residential - Affordable housing
4.	DTCP license no. and validity status	4 of 2017 dated 02.02.2017 valid upto 01.02.2022
5.	Name of the Licensee	Signature Global India Pvt. Ltd.
6.	RERA registered/ not registered and validity status	Registered vide no. 03 of 2017 dated 20.06.2017
7.	Allotment letter	01.11.2017 (Page 26 of complaint)
8.	Unit no.	7-1206, Block and Tower - 7 (Page 31 of complaint)
9.	Unit admeasuring	Carpet area - 585.944 sq. ft.

		Balcony area - 79.5 sq. ft. (Page 31 of complaint)
10.	Date of flat buyer's agreement	01.08.2019 (Page 28 of complaint)
11.	Payment plan	Time linked payment plan (Page 65 of complaint)
12.	Total consideration	Rs. 23,83,548/- (as on page 37 of complaint)
13.	Total amount paid by the complainants	Rs.23,83,548/- (As alleged by complainant on page 24 of the complaint)
14.	Possession clause	5.1 <i>The developer shall offer possession of the said flat to the allottee within a period of 4(four) years from the date of approval of building plans or grant of environment clearance, Whichever is later</i> (Emphasis supplied)
15.	Date of approval of building plans	08.06.2017 (Page 31 of complaint)
16.	Date of environment clearance	21.08.2017 (Page 197 of reply)
17.	Due date of delivery of possession	21.02.2022 21.08.2021 + 6 months of COVID (Calculated from the date of environment clearance, being later)

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18.	Occupation certificate	Obtained as on 25.01.2023 (Page 196 of reply)
19.	Offer of possession	28.03.2023 (Page 200 of reply)
20.	Possession certificate	19.09.2023 (Page 66 of complaint)

B. Facts of the complaint

- I. In 2017, the respondent issued an advertisement announcing a residential group housing project called 'The Millenia' Sector 37D, Gurugram, Haryana in terms of the provisions of Affordable Group Housing Policy 2013 and thereby invited applications from prospective buyers for the purchase of allotments in the said project. The complainant received an allotment letter for the subject unit bearing No. T7-1206.
- II. That the complainant caught in the web of lies and false promises of the respondent company thereby duly executed the flat buyer agreement on 1st of August 2019.
- III. That the complainant against the demand notices raised by the respondent has paid a total sum of Rs. 23,83,548/- to it.
- IV. That as per clause 6.1(i) of the flat buyer's agreement on 1st August 2019, the possession of the said unit was supposed to be delivered by 20.08.2021. It would be appreciated here to mention here that the actual habitable possession was given to complainant on 19.09.2023.
- V. That as per section 18 of the RERA 2016, the respondent is liable to pay interest to the allottees of an apartment, building

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or project for a delay or failure in handing over of such possession as per the terms and agreement of the sale. It is pertinent to note that the respondent has issued final demand notice wherein the respondent has made various unnecessary demands which are not as per the flat buyer agreement and hence are baseless, unfounded, unlawful, untenable, unsustainable, grossly misconceived, illegal and unwarranted including the advance maintenance charges.

C. Relief Sought

3. This Authority may be pleased to direct the respondent as follows:
- Direct the respondent to pay the delayed possession charges along with interest @15% per annum to the complainant.
 - Direct the respondent to refund the skyfull maintenance charges.
 - Direct the respondent to not to charge the amount of skyfull maintenance charges for a period of 5 years.
 - Direct the respondent to refund charges which are not as per agreement.

D. Reply by the respondent

- I. That the complainant was allotted a flat bearing no. T7-1206 having carpet area of 585.944 sq.ft. and balcony area 79.545 sq. ft through draw of lots held on 27.10.2017 under the Affordable Group Housing Policy 2013 notified by Government of Haryana as applicable at relevant point of time. Subsequent to the allotment of the said flat he entered into flat buyer agreement dated 01.08.2019 with the respondent for the delivery of possession of the said flat on the terms and conditions as contained therein.
- II. That the delivery of the possession of the said flat was agreed to be offered within 4 (four) years, from the approval of

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- building plans or grant of environmental clearance, whichever is later. However, the delivery of possession was subject to force majeure circumstances, receipt of occupancy certificate and allottee(s) having timely completed with all its obligations.
- III. That the outbreak of Covid-19 has been declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organization Advisories/ directions including lockdown/ restrictions have been issued by the Govt. of India as also State Govt. The said pandemic has had serious consequences and was so deadly and contagious that complete lockdown was imposed several times not only in Haryana but in India and rest of the world also. That even though lockdown was withdrawn various restrictions continued to be imposed.
- IV. That it is also matter of record that Gurugram falls within the area of NCR and different competent authorities such as the Hon'ble Supreme Court, National Green Tribunal (NGT), Municipal Corporation Gurugram (MCG), HSPCB etc. had directed ban on construction activities in Delhi NCR due to rise in pollution level mainly in festive season/ winter season for various periods thereby severely affecting the regular development of the real estate projects.
- V. That the Hon'ble Supreme Court banned all construction and demolition in Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) in the leading Writ Petition(s)(Civil) No(s). 13029/1985 on November 04, 2019 and the same was lifted completely in February 2020

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- VI. That it is respectfully submitted the Hon'ble Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority vide order no.9/3-2020 HARERA/GGM (Admn) dated 26.05.2020 published date of completion for all real estate projects registered under Real Estate Regulation and Development Act, where completion date, revised completion date or extended completion date was to expire on or after 25th of March, 2020 automatically by 6 months, due to outbreak of the COVID -19 (Corona Virus), which is calamity caused by nature and is adversely affecting regular development of real estate projects by invoking "force majeure" clause.
- VII. That the Commissioner of Municipal Corporation Gurugram. Vide order dated 11.10.2019 issued direction to issue challan for construction activities & lodging of FIR from 11th October to 31 December 2019 as per the direction issued by the chairman of EPCA vide letter EPCA-R/2019/L-42 dated October 09, 2019.
- VIII. That the pandemic and bans on construction activity by competent authorities are force majeure events which are beyond the control of the parties to prevent the same or its consequences and as such in view of clause 19.1(f) of the FBA, the respondent is entitled to exclusion of period where the constructions of the project was affected due to orders/directions of Statutory Authority/Court Orders/Government Orders etc.
- IX. That in the light of aforesaid facts and legal provisions/ notifications/ judicial pronouncements, it is submitted that

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the respondent is entitled for grant of exclusion of the period of delay caused due to 2nd wave of Covid-19 Pandemic and construction ban imposed by competent authorities being decisions affecting the regular development of the real estate project for a period of at least Nine (9) months in addition to six months extension of Covid-19.

4. All the averments made in the complaint were denied in toto.
5. Copies of all the relevant documents have been duly 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

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

6. 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

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The 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)(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 promoter, the allottees and the real estate agents under this Act and the rules and regulations made thereunder.

7. 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 delay due to force majeure circumstances.

8. The respondent-promoter raised a contention that the construction of the project was delayed due to force majeure conditions such as various orders passed by the Haryana State Pollution Control Board from 01.11.2018 to 10.11.2018, lockdown due to outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic which further led to shortage of labour and orders passed by

National Green Tribunal (hereinafter, referred as NGT). But all the pleas advanced in this regard are devoid of merit. The passing of various orders passed by NGT during the month of November is an annual feature and the respondent should have taken the same into consideration before fixing the due date. Similarly, the various orders passed by other authorities cannot be taken as an excuse for delay.

9. Further, the authority has gone through the possession clause of the agreement and observed that the respondent-developer proposes to handover the possession of the allotted flat within a period of four years from the date of approval of building plan or from the date of grant of environment clearance, whichever is later. In the present case, the date of approval of building plan is 08.06.2017 and date of environment clearance is 21.08.2017 as taken from the documents on record. The due date is calculated from the date of environmental clearance being later, so, the due date of subject flat comes out to be 21.08.2021. ***Further as per HARERA notification no. 9/3-2020 dated 26.05.2020, an extension of 6 months is granted for the projects having completion/due date on or after 25.03.2020.*** The completion date of the aforesaid project in which the subject flat is located is 21.08.2021 which is after 25.03.2020. Therefore, an extension of 6 months is to be given over and above the due date of handing over possession in view of notification no. 9/3-2020 dated 26.05.2020, on account of force majeure conditions due to outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. So, in such case the due date for handing over of possession comes out to **21.02.2022.**

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G. Findings on the relief sought by the complainant:

G.I Direct the respondent to pay the delayed possession charges along with interest @15% per annum to the complainant.

10. In the present complaint, the complainant intends to continue with the project and is seeking delay possession charges as provided under the provisions of section 18(1) of the Act which reads as under.

"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, —

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."

11. The flat buyer's agreement was executed between the parties on 01.08.2019. As per clause 5.1 of the agreement, the possession was to be handed over within a period of four years from the date of approval of building plan or from the date of grant of environment clearance, whichever is later with a grace period of 6 months (COVID-19). The clause 5.1 of the flat buyer's agreement is reproduced below:

5.1 Possession

Subject to Force Majeure circumstances, receipt of occupation certificate and allottee having timely complied with all its obligations, formalities or documentation, as prescribed by Developer in terms of agreement and not being in default under any part hereof, including but not limited to the timely payment of instalments as per the payment plan, Stamp Duty and registration charges, the Developer proposes to offer possession of the Said Flat to the Allottee within a period of 4 (four) years from the date of approval of building plans or grant of environment clearance, (hereinafter referred to as the "Commencement Date"), whichever is later (Emphasis supplied)



12. At the outset, it is relevant to comment on the preset possession clause of the agreement wherein the possession has been subjected to all kinds of terms and conditions of this agreement, and the complainant not being in default under any provisions of this agreement and compliance with all provisions, formalities and documentation as prescribed by the promoter. The drafting of this clause and incorporation of such conditions is not only vague and uncertain but so heavily loaded in favour of the promoter and against the allottee that even a single default by him in fulfilling formalities and documentations etc. as prescribed by the promoter may make the possession clause irrelevant for the purpose of allottees and the commitment time period for handing over possession loses its meaning. The incorporation of such clause in the buyer's agreement by the promoter is just to evade the liability towards timely delivery of subject flat and to deprive the allottees of their right accruing after delay in possession. This is just to comment as to how the builder has misused its dominant position and drafted such mischievous clause in the agreement and the allottees is left with no option but to sign on the dotted lines.
13. **Admissibility of grace period:** As per clause 5.1 of buyer's agreement, the respondent promoter has proposed to handover the possession was to be handed over within a period of four years from the date of approval of building plan or from the date of grant of environment clearance, whichever is later with a grace period of 6 months (COVID-19). Accordingly, the authority in view of notification no. 9/3-2020 dated 26.05.2020, on account of force majeure conditions due to outbreak of

Covid-19 pandemic allows the grace period of 6 months to the promoter at this stage.

14. **Admissibility of delay possession charges at prescribed rate of interest:** The complainant is seeking delay possession charges. However, proviso to section 18 provides that where an allottee(s) 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 possession, at such rate as may be prescribed and it has been prescribed 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.

The legislature in its wisdom in the subordinate legislation under the rule 15 of the rules has determined the prescribed rate of interest.

15. 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., 22.11.2024 is 9.10%. Accordingly, the prescribed rate of interest will be marginal cost of lending rate +2% i.e., 11.10%.
16. The definition of term 'interest' as defined under section 2(za) of the Act provides that the rate of interest chargeable from the allottee by the promoter, in case of default, shall be equal to the rate of interest which the

promoter shall be liable to pay the allottee, in case of default. The relevant section is reproduced below:

"(za) "interest" means the rates of interest payable by the promoter or the allottee, as the case may be.

Explanation. —For the purpose of this clause—

- (i) the rate of interest chargeable from the allottee by the promoter, in case of default, shall be equal to the rate of interest which the promoter shall be liable to pay the allottee, in case of default;*
- (ii) the interest payable by the promoter to the allottee shall be from the date the promoter received the amount or any part thereof till the date the amount or part thereof and interest thereon is refunded, and the interest payable by the allottee to the promoter shall be from the date the allottee defaults in payment to the promoter till the date it is paid;"*

17. On consideration of the documents available on record and submissions made regarding contravention of provisions of the Act, the authority is satisfied that the respondent is in contravention of the section 11(4)(a) of the Act by not handing over possession by the due date as per the agreement. By virtue of clause 5.1 of the buyer's agreement executed between the parties, the possession of the subject flat was to be delivered within a period of four years from the date of approval of building plan or from the date of grant of environment clearance, whichever is later with a grace period of 6 months (COVID-19). As such the due date of handing over of possession comes out to be 21.02.2022.

18. Section 19(10) of the Act obligates the allottee to take possession of the subject flat within 2 months from the date of receipt of occupation certificate. In the present complaint, the occupation certificate was granted by the competent authority on 25.01.2023. The respondent has offered the possession of the subject flat(s) to the respective complainant after obtaining occupation certificate from competent authority.

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Therefore, in the interest of natural justice, the complainant should be given 2 months' time from the date of offer of possession. This 2 months' of reasonable time is being given to the complainant keeping in mind that even after intimation of possession practically he has to arrange a lot of logistics and requisite documents including but not limited to inspection of the completely finished flat but this is subject to that the flat being handed over at the time of taking possession is in habitable condition. It is further clarified that the delay possession charges shall be payable from the due date of possession i.e., 21.02.2022 till the expiry of 2 months from the date of offer of possession plus two months or date of actual handing over of possession, whichever is earlier. In the present case the complainant is entitled for delayed possession charges from 21.02.2022 till offer of possession (being earlier) plus two months 28.05.2023.

19. Vide proceeding dated 13.09.2024, it has been stated at bar by the counsel for the complainant that unit was actually handed over to the complainant on 19.09.2023 and requested that the DPC should be paid till that date. On the contrary the AR of the respondent pointed out that the possession certificate which is affixed in its reply through which it was confirmed by the complainant that he had no claims whatsoever against the company with respect to the allotted unit. It is evident from the documents placed on record that offer of possession w.r.t. allotted unit has been made earlier so the respondent is liable to pay delayed period interest till offer of possession i.e., 28.03.2023 plus two months (28.05.2023).

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20. Accordingly, it is the failure of the promoter to fulfil its obligations and responsibilities as per the flat buyer's agreement to hand over the possession within the stipulated period. Accordingly, the non-compliance of the mandate contained in section 11(4)(a) read with proviso to section 18(1) of the Act on the part of the respondent is established. As such, the allottees shall be paid, by the promoter, interest for every month of delay from due date of possession i.e., 21.02.2022 till the expiry of 2 months from the date of offer of possession plus two months i.e, 28.05.2023, at the prescribed rate i.e., 11.10 % p.a. as per proviso to section 18(1) of the Act read with rule 15 of the rules.

G.II Direct the respondent to refund the skyfull maintenance charges.

G.III Direct the respondent to not to charge the amount of skyfull maintenance charges for a period of 5 years.

21. The above-mentioned reliefs no. G II and G.III as sought by the complainant are being taken together as they are interconnected.
22. The respondent in the present matter has demanded skyfull maintenance charges from the complainant at the time of offer of possession. "The authority observes that clause 4(v) of the policy, 2013 talks about maintenance of colony after completion of project: A commercial component of 4% is being allowed in the project to enable the coloniser to maintain the colony free-of-cost for a period of five years from the date of grant of occupation certificate, after which the colony shall stand transferred to the "association of apartment owners" constituted under the Haryana Apartment Ownership Act 1983, for maintenance. The

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coloniser shall not be allowed to retain the maintenance of the colony either directly or indirectly (through any of its agencies) after the end of the said five years period. Engaging any agency for such maintenance works shall be at the sole discretion and terms and conditions finalised by the "association of apartment owners" constituted under the Apartment Ownership Act 1983, 42. As per the order issued by DTCP, Haryana vide clarification no. PF27AI2024/3676 dated 31.01.2024, it has been very clearly mentioned that the utility charges (which includes electricity bill, water bill, property tax waste collection charges or any repair inside the individual flat etc.) can be charged from the allottees as per consumptions. Accordingly, the respondent is directed to charge the maintenance/use/utility charges from the complainant-allottee as per clarification by the Directorate of Town and Country Planning, Haryana vide clarification dated 31.01.2024.

G.IV Direct the respondent to refund charges which are not as per agreement.

23. The complainant has failed to specify the details of charges levied by the respondent which otherwise do not form part of the buyer's agreement and hence no direction to this effect.
24. The authority vide order dated 09.12.2022, passed in case bearing no.4147 of 2021 titled as, "*Vineet Choubey V/s Pareena Infrastructure Private Limited*" and also in the complaint bearing no. 4031 of 2019 titled as, "*Varun Gupta V/s Emaar MGF Land Limited*", has already decided that the promoter cannot charge anything which is not part of the

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buyer's agreement subject to the condition that the same are in accordance with the prevailing law. The respondent shall not charge anything from the complainant which is not the part of the buyer's agreement and the provisions of Affordable Group Housing Policy of 2013 and is directed to charge the demands relying on the above said orders.

H. Directions of the Authority

25. Hence, the authority hereby passes this order and issue 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 is directed to pay delayed possession charges at the prescribed rate of interest i.e., 11.10% p.a. for every month of delay on the amount paid by the complainant to the respondent from the due date of possession i.e., 21.02.2022 till the expiry of 2 months from the date of offer of possession plus two months i.e., 28.05.2023.
 - ii. The respondent is directed to pay arrears of interest accrued within 90 days from the date of order of this order as per rule 16(2) of the rules.
 - iii. The complainant is directed to pay outstanding dues, if any, after adjustment of interest for the delayed period.
 - iv. The rate of interest chargeable from the allottees by the promoter, in case of default shall be charged at the prescribed rate i.e., 11.10% by the

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respondent/promoter which is the same rate of interest which the promoter shall be liable to pay the allottees, in case of default i.e., the delayed possession charges as per section 2(za) of the Act.

- v. The respondent shall not charge anything from the complainant which is not the part of the flat buyer's agreement.

26. Complaint stands disposed of.

27. File be consigned to registry.




(Vijay Kumar Goyal)
Member

Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Gurugram

Dated: 22.11.2024

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GURUGRAM