Reportable

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION

CIVIL APPEAL NOS.2285-2330 OF 2019

(Arising out of Special Leave Petition (Civil) Nos.928-930, 932 TO 938, 940 TO 967 AND 969 TO 976 of 2019)

DLF HOMES PANCHKULA (P) LTD. THROUGH ITS AUTHORISED SIGNATORY MR. SHIV KUMAR

...Appellant

VERSUS

SUSHILA DEVI AND ANR. ETC.

...Respondents

WITH

SPECIAL LEAVE PETITION (CIVIL) NOS.931, 939 AND 968 OF 2019

DLF HOMES PANCHKULA (P) LTD. THROUGH ITS AUTHORISED SIGNATORY MR. SHIV KUMAR

...Petitioner

VERSUS

MRIDULA SOOD ETC..

...Respondent

WITH

CIVIL APPEAL NO.2354 OF 2019 (Arising out of Special Leave Petition (Civil) No.26519 of 2018)

RAVI DATT AGGARWAL AND ORS.

...

Appellants

VERSUS

DLF HOMES PANCHKULA PVT. LTD. AND ORS.

...Respondents

JUDGMENT

Uday Umesh Lalit, J.

1. Leave granted in all matters, except Special Leave Petition (Civil) Nos.931 of 2019, 939 of 2019 and 968 of 2019.

Re: **Appeals arising** out of Special Leave Petition (Civil) Nos.928-976 of 2019¹ (DLF Homes Panchkula (P) Ltd. Through its Authorised Signatory Mr. Shiv Kumar v. Sushila Devi and another²

[Except Special Leave Petition (Civil) Nos.931 of 2019, 939 of 2019 and 968 of 2019]

2. These appeals are directed against the final judgment and order dated passed by the National 07.09.2018 Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, New Delhi (hereinafter referred to as ʻthe National Commission') in First Appeal Nos.382/2016, 447/2016, 453/2017, 648/2016, 649/2016, 650/2016, 651/2016, 767/2016, 879/2016, 881/2016, 1145/2016, 1146/2016, 1147/2016, 1158/2016, 1315/2016, 1347/2016, 1348/2016, 1349/2016, 1351/2016, 1352/2016, 1576/2016, 1577/2016, 1578/2016, 1579/2016, 1580/2016, 1581/2016, 1582/2016, 1583/2016, 1584/2016, 1586/2016, 1587/2016, 1589/2016, 1590/2016, 1591/2016, 1592/2016,

² (Appeals by the Developer)

1593/2016, 1594/2016, 1595/2016, 1598/2016, 1599/2016, 1600/2016, 1601/2016, 1622/2016, 1623/2016, 1625/2016 and 1643/2017.

- 3. The original complainants had booked apartments in a project titled "DLF Valley, Panchkula" situated in Panchkula, Haryana, which was to be developed by the Developer. The Developer had promised to handover possession within 24 months from the date of signing of the agreement. Various complaints came to be filed by the Complainants submitting that despite period of two years being over there was no substantial progress and as such, the Developer was deficient in rendering service. Some of the Complainants prayed for refund of all the moneys they had deposited from time to time along with interest and compensation while others sought relief in the nature of compensation for delayed delivery of possession but insisted that the possession of the apartments be handed over to them.
- 4. The State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, UT, Chandigarh (hereinafter referred to as 'the State Commission') by its various orders allowed the complaints and directed refund of the amounts deposited by the concerned Complainants with interest @ 15% per annum in some cases and with lesser rate in others and compensation. Similar directions were passed in cases of delayed delivery of possession. These orders passed by the

State Commission were challenged by the Developer by filing aforementioned First Appeals in the National Commission which were disposed of by the National Commission vide its common order dated 07.09.2018. The National Commission affirmed the view taken by the State Commission and dismissed all the appeals. Aggrieved thereby the present appeals by special leave were filed by the Developer.

Re: Appeal arising out of Special Leave Petition (Civil) No.26519 of 2018 (Ravi Datt Aggarwal and others v. DLF Homes Panchkula Pvt. Ltd. and others³

5. While the appeals as aforesaid were pending before the National Commission, it was submitted by the Developer that there had to be at least one Judicial Member on the Bench and in cases where there was not even one Judicial Member on the Bench, the appeals could not and ought not to be proceeded with. After hearing all submissions, the National Commission by its order dated 01.08.2018 reserved the matters for orders. Thereafter, Review Petitions were filed by the Developer which were rejected on 08.08.2018. The Developer then filed a petition under Article 227 of the Constitution being CM(M)No.951 of 2018 in the High Court of Delhi questioning said orders dated 01.08.2018 and 08.08.2018. While issuing

³ Appeals by original Complainants

notice, the High Court by its order dated 20.08.2018 stayed the operation of the order dated 08.08.2018 passed by the National Commission. The National Commission, thereafter, passed a reasoned judgment on 07.09.2018 rejecting all the submissions. However, in view of the fact that the order dated 08.08.2018 was stayed by the High Court, it observed that the operation of the Judgment dated 07.09.2018 would remain stayed till further orders by the High Court.

- 6. Some of the Complainants, being aggrieved, approached this Court by filing Special Leave Petition (c)No.26519 of 2018 in which, while issuing notice on 22.10.2018, this Court stayed the operation of the order dated 20.08.2018 passed by the High Court.
- 7. Thereafter, the appeals filed by the Developer and the Complainants were taken-up together.
- 8. It may be mentioned that matters where the Developer had challenged similar directions issued in other cases namely Civil Appeal Nos. 11097-11138 of 2018, were disposed of by this Court on 19.11.2018. In those cases, (Himanshu Arora case, for short) the State Commission had awarded interest

- @ 12% which was reduced by the National Commission to 9%. After hearing learned counsel for both sides, this Court had passed following directions: -
 - "8. Having regard to the above submission, we indicated to the learned counsel appearing on behalf of the flat purchasers that it would be appropriate if the interest as ordered by NCDRC at 9% per annum is made payable over the period which was determined by the Order of the SCDRC. There is no objection by the flat purchasers to the aforesaid modification being made. Even otherwise, we are of the view that such a modification would be required in the interests of justice since it was the appellants who had questioned the Order of the SCDRC before the NCDRC.
 - 9. In the above facts and circumstances, we confirm the direction of the NCDRC that the appellants shall pay interest @ 9 per cent per annum. However, the period over which interest shall be payable will be in conformity with the order passed by the SCDRC.
 - 10. We also direct that in computing the interest payable in terms of the Order of the NCDRC to the extent modified above, the appellants would be entitled to credit for the compensation, if any, which has been paid to any flat buyer in terms of Clause 15 of the flat purchase agreements. In other words, the amount of interest payable shall be computed after deducting any amount that has been paid to the concerned flat buyer under Clause 15 of the agreement.
 - 11. The amount which has been deposited in this Court in pursuance of the order dated 18.5.2018, shall be transferred by the Registry to the Registrar of the SCDRC, Chandigarh. The appellants shall, within a period of two weeks from today, file a detailed computation with reference to each of the flat buyers and the amount which is due and payable in pursuance

of the above directions. The amount shall be duly verified before disbursal, on proper identification, to each of the flat buyers. After completing the above exercise, in the event, that any amount (inclusive of the accrued interest) remains surplus, it shall be refunded to the appellants.

12. Upon the transfer of the amount, the SCDRC shall keep the amount in a short term fixed deposit until the stage of disbursement is reached.

The civil appeals are disposed of."

- 9. When the present appeals were taken up, all the parties agreed that these appeals be disposed of in terms with the directions issued by this Court in *Himanshu Arora's* case. We, therefore, directed the Developer to file a Chart in consultation with all the complainants and indicate what modalities be adopted. After such Chart was filed, it was agreed that wherever compensation was to be awarded, it should be in the form of interest @ 9% and the governing principles be as under:-
 - (a) In all Refund cases, the award of interest @ 9% would be payable in respect of deposits from the day they were made till the date of refund.
 - (b) In cases where, upon transfer, a subsequent purchaser had stepped into the shoes of the original allottee and had prayed for Refund, the reckoning date for computing the interest be from the date of his transfer in respect of all the amounts that were deposited by the original allottee

and if any subsequent deposits were made by the transferee, from the dates of such deposits;

- (c) In cases where Possession was sought, the period available to the Developer under the agreement being three years (that is to say original period of two years which was extendable, at the option of the Developer, by further period of one year) ought not to be computed while calculating compensation in the form of interest. Therefore, the period to be reckoned shall be after expiry of three years from the date of agreement and in respect of such period the compensation shall be at the same rate of 9%.
- (d) In Possession cases, if there was any transfer and the transferee had stepped into the shoes of the original allottee, the compensation shall be paid from the date of expiry of three years from the agreement as aforesaid or from the date of transfer, whichever is later.
- 10. The matter was, thereafter, adjourned so that the parties could check and reconcile all the concerned amounts and present a mutually acceptable statement of figures. Accordingly, the Chart has been presented which is appended to this Judgment as Annexure-A.

11. Column No.13 of the tabulated chart denotes element of interest @ 9% while Column No.16 denotes the amount that had been received by the Developer. Column No.14 shows the amounts of FDRs deposited by the Developer in respect of every Complainant, while Column No.17 shows amount payable to every Complainant or recoverable from such Complainant wherever excess amount was deposited. According to the Chart, Serial Nos.1 to 17 are Refund cases where Possession was not prayed for. Out of these 17 cases, those at serial nos. 9 and 16 were already settled and as such their cases⁴ shall not form part of this group of appeals. Case at serial no.17 was a transfer case in the category of Refund cases and as such would be governed by principle (b) as stated hereabove. Rest of the cases in the Refund category will be governed by principle (a) stated hereinabove except the case of Colonel Naresh Kumar Kohli, whose name is at Serial No.14 which will be subject to modification as stated hereafter.

12. According to Colonel Kohli, the fact that he had deposited Rs.62,04,014/- was not disputed at any juncture either before the State Commission or the National Commission and in fact FDR in that sum already stood deposited by the Developer. However, in his case Column No.16 wrongly mentioned figure of Rs.60,54,812/- and consequently the amount

⁴ SLP (C) No.931 and 939 of 2019

payable in Column No.17 was wrongly shown as Rs.24,60,356/-. We heard learned counsel for the Developer and Colonel Kohli on this issue and find that the submission made by Colonel Kohli deserves acceptance. We, therefore, correct the figures in Column Nos.16 and 17 to be Rs.62,04,014/- and Rs.26,09,558/- respectively. He shall be entitled, over and above the amount deposited in FD namely Rs.62,04,014/-, an amount of Rs.26,09,558/- as well.

- 13. We now turn to Possession cases which are tabulated from serial nos. 18 to 48 (except case at serial no. 32). Let the case of Mr. Gautam Kashyup at Serial No.32, namely Special Leave Petition (Civil)No. 968 of 2019 be listed before a regular Court. All other matters in Possession category stand disposed of in terms of the directions (c) and (d) as issued above.
- 14. Except to the extent any exception or modification stated in this Judgment every person in Refund and Possession categories is aggregable to the disposal of their matters in terms of the understanding as above and the governing principles set out earlier.
- 15. It is directed that, on the strength of this order and upon proper identification to the satisfaction of the State Commission, the amounts standing in Fixed Deposit Receipts against each of the Complainant along

with interest, if any, accrued thereon be made over to said complainant within six weeks from today. We also direct the Developer to make over to each complainant the amount in Column No.17 marked as "Amount Recoverable/Payable" within six weeks. In two cases i.e. in appeals arising out of Special Leave Petition (Civil)Nos.928 of 2019 and 936 of 2019 where the excess amount has been deposited, the Developer will be entitled to have such excess amount recovered from the amounts presently lying in deposit.

16. In respect of the matter at serial No.8 relating to original allottee named Arun Yadav, certain additional directions are called for. Said original allottee is no more. While making the booking he had mentioned the name of his wife as a nominee. He has left behind his widow, two children and mother. The widow and the mother are individually claiming refund of the amount deposited by him. At this stage, the entitlement of either side cannot be gone into and the parties must be left to agitate this issue in a properly instituted matter before a competent court. However, considering the fact that the mother, the widow and two children, going by normal law relating to intestate succession for Hindus, would share the property of the deceased person equally, we direct ¾ of the sum to be made over to the widow who shall take said sum for herself and on behalf of two children while the remaining ¼ of the sum shall be made over to the mother. They must however execute

indemnity bonds agreeing to return the sum that they had received in whole or in part, in case a declaration as to their entitlement by a competent court were

to go against them.

17. Since, the matters are being disposed of on an agreed understanding

and since no order of compensation was passed in Himanshu Arora, no

compensation other than what has been dealt with earlier, need be paid to the

Complainants.

18. Finally, we direct:-

(a) SLP(C) Nos.931 and 939 of 2019 stand disposed of as having been settled by the parties.

(b) SLP(C) No.968 of 2019 be listed for consideration before appropriate Bench in due course.

(c) All the appeals stand disposed of in terms indicated above.

(d) No costs.

J. (Uday Umesh Lalit)
J.

(Hemant Gupta)

New Delhi, February 26, 2019.

ANNEXURE-A (2 Pages)

																1	EXURE	_ 0/
			- 1				7	2	9	10	11	12						C
1	1	2	3	4	5	6	DLF HOM	IES PANCH	IKULA PV	T. LTD D	DETAILS OF 4	48 CASES	13	14	15	16	17	18
											Compensation @9% after 2+1 years of Agreement till 2	Refund @9% from date of			Total	Amount	Date of Deposit of	
	Sr.			Possession	Refund/	Original/		Date of	Date of	of	offer of	deposit in	FDR Amount	Total Sale	Amount			
L		Name of the Allottee	Prop. No.		Compensation			Agreement		Possession		court	Deposited	Value	Received	Payable Payable	in Court	Remarks
				taken			928 of 2019		N/A	02-04-2016	N/A	1,803,924	6,737,063	5,395,172			08.03.2017	Entitre decretal amount deposited
2	72.			taken					N/A	N/A	N/A	2,376,117	2,595,868	7,295,393	5,191,736	4,971,985	02.09.2016	Half of the Principal Amount
				taken					N/A	N/A	N/A	2,574,116		8,397,855	6,160,570	2,574,116		Principal Amount deposited
				taken					N/A	N/A	N/A	1,979,792		8,083,837	6,343,959	1,979,792		Principal Amount deposited
				taken			932 of 2019		N/A	N/A	N/A	2,162,480		7,150,990	5,655,916	2,121,483	16.09.2016	Principal Amount deposited
				taken			933 of 2019		N/A	N/A	N/A	2,259,524	7,780,217	10,439,307	7,780,217		09.09.2016	Principal Amount deposited
				taken					N/A	N/A	N/A	2,677,813	8,763,867	10,705,394	8,763,867		09.09.2016	Principal Amount deposited
				taken			935 of 2019 939 of 2019		N/A N/A	N/A	N/A	2,455,812	7,541,249	9,897,644	7,541,249			Principal Amount deposited
-				taken			941 of 2019			N/A 02-04-2016	N/A N/A	1,728,839	4,680,871 4,241,103	6,778,956 5,132,672	4,677,173 4,241,101			Principal Amount deposited
	11	Parveen Arora		taken	2.6.4													Principal Amount deposited Refund Subsequent allottee - Interest from the date of transfer @9%.
		Ms. Anoop Singh & Anr		taken			942 of 2019		N/A	N/A	N/A	1,987,353	5,095,652	7,309,254	5,095,162			Principal Amount deposited
			1	taken			944 of 2019			14-03-2016	N/A	1,919,896	4,304,729	5,135,321	4,082,314		21.04.2017	Principal Amount deposited
1		Col. Naresh Kumar Kohli		taken		4/4	936 of 2019			19-08-2016	N/A	1,035,887	4,676,341	3,885,223			26.08.2016	Entitre decretal amount deposited
			1	taken			943 of 2019		N/A	N/A	N/A	2,609,558	6,204,014	8,604,289	6,054,812		06.04.2017	Principal Amount deposited
			. 1	taken			930 of 2019 931 of 2019			14-01-2017	N/A	2,032,629	5,063,446	6,411,412	5,063,447		24.07.2017	Principal Amount deposited
			1	taken		Transfer Case			N/A 07/06/2013	09-12-2016 N/A	N/A	1,643,831	3,397,330	4,149,955	3,397,330			Principal Amount deposited
			1	taken			*			N/A 14-01-2017	N/A 913,689	1,272,159 N/A	4,484,142	6,029,716	4,484,142			Principal Amount deposited
	19 S	Sudha Rani								14-12-2016	941,615		500,000 500,000	4,147,605 4,785,121	3,574,523		15.02.2017	
		Nihal Singh	DVF-D6/7-FF			Original Case			N/A	09-12-2016	822,962	N/A	500,000	4,147,605	4,224,535 4,126,120	322,962		
	21 In	Indu Dadhwal	DVF-E2/17-SF	Possession not taken	Compensation					02-04-2016	820,873		500,000	5,395,172	5,088,836		15.02.2017 15.02.2017	
	0	Oberoi			Compensation			17/01/2011	N/A	02-04-2016	635,984	N/A	500,000	4,347,371	4,366,259	135,984	15.02.2017	
_							950 of 2019			14-01-2017	882,035	N/A	500,000	4,522,471	4,700,226	382,035	27.01.2017	
								21/12/2010	_	07-08-2016	674,349	N/A	500,000	3,885,223	4,215,971		25.01.2017	
								23/12/2010		02-04-2016	763,676		500,000	5,135,321	4,748,019		27.01.2017	
-								11/02/2011		30-07-2017	2,241,499		500,000	9,262,221	7,709,486	1,741,499	27.01.2017	
								31/12/2010		18-12-2016	779,468		500,000	3,913,705	3,932,055	279,468	27.01.2017	
								09/02/2011		14-04-2017	2,248,502		500,000	10,355,968	10,566,153	1,748,502	27.01.2017	
								03/02/2012		07-08-2016	679,020		500,000	6,357,672	6,639,420	179,020	27.01.2017	
L	30	Marrisher Singir		Possession not taken	Compensation	Original Case	965 of 2019	01/02/2011	N/A	14-04-2017	837,678	N/A	500,000	3,997,171	4,097,310		27.01.2017	

Refund

1	2	3	L	5	6	7	8	9	10	11 =	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	31 Surender Singh Sangwa	DVF-C3/14-SF	Possession not taken	Compensation	Original Case	966 of 2019	21/01/2011	N/A	14-01-2017	773,508	N/A	500,000	3,997,171	4,008,791		27.01.2017	18
	32 Gautam Kashyup	DVF-A1/6-SF	13/07/2017	Compensation	Original Case	968 of 2019	22/02/2011	N/A	21-05-2017	1,712,519	N/A		7,731,874	9 206 027	4 740 540		
	33 Krishan Lal	DVF-A1/12-FF	28/11/2017		Original Case	-	22/02/2011	N/A	14-04-2017	1,879,491	N/A	500,000	8,358,346	8,206,927	1,712,519	,	1
	34 Jasbir Sheokhand	DVF-C3/4-SF	26/02/2017		Original Case	972 of 2019	15/12/2010	N/A	14-01-2017	796,844	N/A			8,854,622		20.01.2017	
3	Brig. Jitendra Dixit	DVF-A1/71-GF	26/12/2016		Original Case		24/12/2010	N/A	14-01-2017	1,585,009	N/A	500,000 500,000	3,997,171 6,911,611	4,111,276 5,788,837		27.01.2017 22.11.2018	
_																Directly paid to customer	
	6 Dr. Rajni Kaushik	DVF-C3/10-FF	Possession not taken	Compensation	Original Case	952 of 2019	28/12/2010	N/A	14-01-2017	867,203	N/A	500,000	4,345,172	3,437,985	367,203	27.01.2017	
	Nikhil Goel	DVF-C3/14-GF	05/07/2017	Compensation	Original Case	970 of 2019	30/12/2010	N/A	14-01-2017	982,065	N/A	500,000	4 970 674	4 405 400	100.000		
3	8 Anoop Cheturvedi	DVF-E6/22-FF	Possession not taken			971 of 2019		N/A	25-12-2016	1,200,318	N/A	500,000 500,000	4,872,671 5,960,352	4,465,460 4,665,025		27.01.2017 27.01.2017	
3	9 Vaibhav Kumar	DVF-D7/18-SF	21/09/2018	Compensation	Original Case	973 of 2019	31/01/2011	N/A	14-01-2017	713,883	NI/A		0.500.500				of war to
4	0 Col. Shiv Kumar Rai	DVF-D6/7-SF	29/01/2017				07/04/2011		09-12-2016		N/A	-	3,596,706	3,230,160	713,883	N/A	
4	1 Sanjiv Sharma (Settled)	DVF-A1/62-GF	28/07/2018	Compensation	Transfer Case		25/11/2010		14-01-2017	743,296	N/A	500,000	3,832,805	4,303,113	243,296	27.01.2017	
	2 Kavita Thapa	DVF-E2/5-GF	07/09/2016	Compensation			13/12/2010		02-04-2016	940.070	N/A	-	7,394,213	7,362,033	-		
4	3 Arun Kumar	DVF-D1/1-FF	11/02/2018	Compensation	Transfer Case		24/02/2011		25-12-2016	810,879	N/A	500,000	5,135,321	5,388,202		27.01.2017	
4	4 Vijay Pal Punia	DVF-D6/1-GF	06/04/2018	Compensation		960 of 2019	15/03/2011		09-12-2016	1,644,016	N/A	500,000	8,003,089	8,773,686		27.01.2017	4
	5 Ravi Datt Aggarwal	DVF-E7/17-FF	26/05/2017	Compensation			09/02/2011		14-01-2017	1,437,509	N/A	500,000	6,276,205	7,383,610		27.01.2017	
	6 Neetu	DVF-D4/4-GF	05/08/2017	Compensation			04/05/2012		07-08-2016	766,973	N/A	500,000	4,147,605	4,371,076		25.01.2017	
4	7 Parminder Kumar	DVF-D2/17-SF	Possession not taken	Compensation		967 of 2019	17/01/2012	30/09/2014	18-04-2017	437,947 946,554	N/A N/A	500,000 500,000	4,870,321 5,623,843	5,313,038 6,146,042		27.01.2017 25.01.2017	
4	8 Manju Saini	DVF-E5/7-SF		Compensation	Transfer Case	975 of 2019	17/01/2011	29/03/2012	09-12-2016	855,100	N/A	-	3,832,805	4,151,815	855,100	N/A	Amount no
										31,394,467	34 215 675	107,267,334	280 042 202	259,224,159	49,616,356		deposited

*Possession Cases -

i) Original Allottees - Compensation calculated @9% from 3 years (2+1) from date of agreement till 2 months after offer of possession.
ii) Subsequent Allottees - Compensation calculated @9% from 3 years (2+1) from date of agreement till 2 months after offer of possession or from the date of transfer whichever is later.

**Refund Cases -

i) Original Allottees - Principal amount + interest @9% from the date of deposit made to the Company till the date Company has deposited the amount in the court.

ii) Subsequent Allottees - Principal amount + interest 9% from the date of transfer (so on all the previous payments the interest will start from the date Company has deposited the amount in the court. In the case if any there is any balance principal amount (which has not been deposited in court), interest calculated @9% from the date of deposit with the Company till 31 Jan 2019.