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## : Complaints regarding aero-dynamic design and windows destroyed during Amphan Cyclone in Urbana.

1 message

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<svp@urbana.co.in>

Wed, Jun 24, 2020 at 2:49 PM

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Cc: moumita@urbana.co.in

Dear Sir/ Madam/s,

Hope this mail finds you in best of your health under this pandemic Covid 19. We wish you a healthy and blessed life ahead.

This refers to your emails dated 23rd May, 2020 and 27th May, 2020, regarding the aero-dynamic design of Urbana and window system of some flats in Urbana and requesting us to repair the damaged windows, flooring and false ceiling after the Amphan Cyclone.

In this connection kindly note that we at BNRI, have always prided on giving our residents the best residential project in this part of the country in terms of value for money, planning, design, execution, aesthetics, specification, workmanship, attention to details, and the overall experience – the Urbana experience. It is no wonder that our project has been rewarded with glowing accolades and prestigious awards and recognitions including the following:

- Ø Best Luxury Apartment Project by Best Real Estate Brands Awards 2018
- Ø Best Residential High-rise Project by Best Real Estate Brands Awards 2018
- Ø Luxury Project of the Year by Kolkata Real Estate Leadership Awards 2018
- Ø Best Real Estate Project of the Year by Times Network, National Awards for Marketing Excellence, 2018
- Ø Best Luxury Project Award of the Year by BAM Award, 2018
- Ø Residential Property of the Year by ET Now Real Estate Awards, 2018
- Ø Luxury Project of the Year by ET Now Real Estate Awards, 2018
- Ø The Best Luxury Project by CMO Asia Real Estate Excellence Awards 2017, Singapore
- Ø The Best Residential Property by CMO Asia Real Estate Excellence Awards 2017, Singapore
- Ø Best Luxury Housing Project by CREDAI Bengal Awards, 2017
- Ø High-rise Project of the Year by Construction Week India Awards, 2017

Our project is indeed the best in its class, in Eastern India and rather the whole of India. Having said that, what happened on the evening of 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2020 was something not seen in the recorded Indian history, and India Today in its news report dated 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2020 carried the headline that Amphan is the worst storm since 1737.

Kolkata witnessed the onslaught of the Super-Cyclone Amphan, for almost 6 (six) hours (5 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.) which claimed several innocent lives, uprooted countless trees, flooded vast stretches of the city, and collapsed many electricity poles and mobile towers. About 14 million people in Kolkata were left without electricity for several days. It may be noted that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, (NASA) has declared "Amphan" equivalent to a Category 5 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane wind scale. Needless to say, that it was one of the most devastating cyclones that has hit the coast of West Bengal in recent history.

The air speeds recorded near Dum Dum on the fatal day were around 133 kmph at ground level while high rises such as Urbana bore the brunt of fiercer wind speeds easily exceeding 160 kmph. Our project lay in the path of the cyclone which affected more severely the south-eastern parts of the city. The towers in the path of the wind were affected the most and several of our management team members who reside in the project shared with all of you, the experiences of the howling winds and the fierce storms and rains which came with it. We salute all our residents for holding out through this inclement weather, which is really an unprecedented natural disaster.

Even amidst the adversity, the senior management team of BNRI along with the facility team took up necessary restoration operations on a war footing no sooner that the storm subsided. Since the evening of 20<sup>th</sup> May itself they took steps to ensure that the residents have uninterrupted water supply, continued operation of the service lift and generator backup for electricity. The DG system installed in the towers had provided support for almost 18 (eighteen) hours barring a few apartments where the change-over system was unfortunately damaged by the wrecking winds.

You must bear in mind that this was possible due to the fact that we had appointed globally acclaimed engineers and architects for the development of Urbana as well as the excellence in implementation and now, facility management. Unlike regular residential projects, Urbana's structural design is based on 3D dynamic analysis program called ETABS. The development of the structural design was entrusted to an internationally proclaimed engineer Mr. Predrag Eror, the Principal Engineer of M/s. Derby Design Engineering based in Dubai and was assisted by Mr. Suvra Narayan Sil, a reputed Kolkata based structural consultant, who has provided his expertise for many reputed high rises across the city. The Initial Wind Tunnel Test in 2008 was conducted by CPP Inc., Colorado, a reputed U.S. based Wind Engineering & Air Quality Consultants with more than fifty years of experience in the field of dynamic analysis, for all the towers to ensure stability against the wind force. We would like to draw your attention to the fact that the tender for supply and installation of aluminum framed window and sliding doors were floated along with technical specification, design criteria (wind load) and window typology on the advice of Mr. Predrag Eror and Mr. S.N. Sil duly considering the load criteria and technical details as per relevant ASTM and IS standards and also on the advice and suggestions given by our internationally acclaimed Principal Architect, Mr. Stephen Coates, Founder of aCTa, Singapore. In furtherance of such tender based on the technical specifications as advised, specialized window contractor namely Aesthetic Engineers Private Limited, manufacturer of aluminum windows and doors, was appointed for Tower 1, Tower 2, Tower 3 and Tower 5. Aesthetic Engineers has a tie up with M/s Alutec Systems (India) Private Limited, Mumbai, a subsidiary of Alutec S.R.L Italy, a renowned international manufacturer of window sections, ensuring quality design of window the window system. Another specialized Kolkata based window contractor namely Nitson and Amitsu (NAPL), with rich and wide experience in construction projects was appointed for Tower 4, Tower 6 and Tower 7, to ensure specialized and quality design of the windows therein.

Successful performance testing based on design criteria was conducted by international testing agencies namely Façade India Testing Inc. For the sample design by Aesthetic Engineers and TECHNAL Innovation and Test Center, a reputed French company for the sample design by NAPL. The successful testing of the Wind Tunnel Test at a peak wind load of 3.5 Km/ Sq.m. assured that the towers are resistant to earthquakes and wind loads and compliant with the National Building Code, 2016.

The depth of research as well as appointment of world renowned specialists would make it abundantly clear that we have at all times taken due care in providing the best quality design to the residents of Urbana Residential Towers, and have ensured that the materials used are compliant with the IS Codes. The safety of the residents has guided our decisions from the very inception of the project, as we have taken all reasonable and due care that is expected to be taken by a builder, to ensure that the project is safe and habitable and the owners and occupiers of the constructed spaces therein do not suffer any losses arising out from faulty construction. All the above clearly leave no room for any aerodynamic design fault in the building.

We have however received few number of complaints regarding problems in the windows in the last 2 to 3 years which could have been due to normal wear and tear or other usage reasons also, all of which we have promptly taken up and provided all necessary corrective and preventive measures. Technicians were also called from TECHNAL for further investigation. Most of these issues faced by the residents from time to time have been addressed and resolved.

It is unfortunate that even after taking due and reasonable care, appointing reputed consultants, engaging suppliers who have tie ups with the best manufacturers of windows, conducting all necessary and specialized tests, a number of windows in several towers were damaged due to the heavy gusts of wind moving at a speed of almost 160 KMPH on that fateful day. This was really an act of God beyond our control.

We are however pleased to inform you that though the defect liability period of 12 months is long over, keeping in mind the cordial and long lasting relationship shared with our valuable residents, we have already engaged technical experts to provide relief to the residents affected due to the damage to the windows, amidst the acute scarcity of resources due to extensive restrictions imposed by the Central and State Government in view of Covid-19 pandemic.

It may be noted that it is felt that the damage caused to the window shutters was inevitable due to the severe magnitude of the cyclone, even though all the precautionary measures had been undertaken already. In furtherance of the visit of the technical team, it has been observed that most of the damages to the windows were due to failure of locks which can be a combination of lock problem or human errors in closing the windows properly, which only attributes or highlights the fact that the windows are not structurally defective or faulty.

**In spite of severe constraints of resources due to COVID 19 and restriction of movements post Amphan, the Company has immediately taken the following actions :**

**§ Immediate deployment of resources to temporarily close all affected windows**

**§ Deployment of agencies for assessment of damages jointly with BNRI Team**

**§ M/s Aesthetic and M/s NAPL teams, the original window erectors, along with BNRI started working daily basis to address critical cases**

**§ Glasses ordered, mobilised and fixing is on to close damaged fixed glasses**

**§ Since most of the hardware are imported and quantity is large, ordering process initiated and materials are due to reach by June, 2020 end. Efforts are continuously made to arrange from local stock from vendors', pan India, to address as many problems as possible**

**§ Though no structural failure observed, BNRI engaged Mr Praveen Choubey, a facade consultant from Mumbai, to have his independent study. He visited the site 12/06/2020. His preliminary report also indicates that there is no structural failure. However, he is working on methods of strengthening locking system and additional measures to arrest leakages. BNRI is committed to duly incorporate any modifications as may be suggested by such consultant to the greater interest of a more stronger window system**

We assure you that there are no defects in the aero-dynamic design of the residential towers and the window structures. The structural designs and construction were under the expertise of reputed organizations, which had conducted various tests before and after construction. All safety measures were in place but the destruction caused by Amphan could not have been avoided even after taking reasonable and due care. The actual or primary cause of the damage can only be attributed to the Super Cyclone and is not attributable to any faulty construction as alleged or at all. The damage caused was beyond human control and could not have been avoided. Except to the extent caused by improper locking by residents, no degree of skill or precautions could perhaps have stopped the occurrence of the damage to the window systems in the affected apartments. All reasonable measures were already in place in case of an emergency situation, but the assumption that it would be so calamitous could not have been expected.

You will further be happy to note that we have already taken steps to arrange for cradles, however the same could not be executed due to the Lockdown imposed by the Central and the State Governments due to the Covid-19 pandemic crisis since March 24, 2020. With reference to your request for access to all the certificates of tests, kindly note that all tests have been done with utmost competence and the reports have been kept for records. We assure you that we are trying to overcome the situation and address your grievances as soon as possible.

**Your comfort and safety are of paramount significance to us and at the same time look forward to your cooperation into making living at Urbana the best experience for all.**

Yours faithfully,

On behalf of the Management & Directors

From the office of Bengal NRI Complex Ltd

Debjani Mookherjee

(Authorized Signatory)

