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# Realty biggies back civic plan for DC rules

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**Mumbai:** Two leading industrialists, who have diversified into property development, have backed municipal commissioner Subodh Kumar's new Development Control Rules (DCR), stating that they will create a "transparent and objective approval system".

In a joint statement issued exclusively to TOI, Piramal Group chairman Ajay Piramal and Godrej Group chairman Adi Godrej said in the past, vested interests secured concessions and extra areas, which flouted norms. "The modified DCRs will minimize subjectivity and discretion in sanctions, reduce time to sanction and bring about transparency and efficiency in the system," they said.

Kumar's proposal seeks to curb the malpractices in the building approvals system in the BMC and curtail discretionary powers vested in the municipal commissioner to grant arbitrary concessions to builders. Many developers misuse these concessions and sell spaces, which are not part of the apartment, to buyers. Developers encourage buyers to

illegally amalgamate spaces such as flower beds, voids, terraces, into their apartments to make them bigger. Kumar wants to halt this by charging the developer a hefty premium for these spaces.

The two industrialists said that the new rules would "help in moving towards speedier online approvals".

Piramal told TOI, "The mess in the real estate sector is mainly due to rampant misuse of rules. In such an environment, people like us could nev-

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er compete. We support this policy because it will remove the discretionary powers."

Their joint statement said the proposed changes will create a level playing field by reducing discretionary grant of FSI and make rules more objective. However, Godrej and Piramal recommended some modifications "considering the practical issues that developers face".

They said the compensatory FSI against premium be restricted to 25% for residential buildings with sub-limits defined for specific uses like bal-

cony (10%), flower beds (10%), pocket terraces, etc against a 100% premium.

"It is fair to restrict these to 40% of the permissible FSI and another 10% balcony area. Further a 25% premium will ensure that developers do not pass this cost to the buyer and cause a further increase in real estate rates," they said.

They also opposed the commissioner's proposal to reduce maximum floor height from 4.2 m to 3.6 m. "This will leave very little room for false ceiling, AC ducts and concealed electrical services. In highrise buildings, there are deeper beams and this will kill the sense of space for residents. We recommend that the limit of 4.2m is maintained as it is not possible to create mezzanine floors in this height," they said.

"The proposed restrictions on window shades, ledges and ornamental projections will restrict design freedom and place constraints, especially for highrises. This should be left to the architect's discretion as long as it is at the periphery and can't be merged with the house. Alternatively, 1.2m average projection should be allowed," they added.