



IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

117

CWP-24999-2025

Date of Decision: 10.09.2025

UNION OF INDIA AND OTHERS

...Petitioners

Versus

SANDEEP SINGH

...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARSIMRAN SINGH SETHI
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE VIKAS SURI

Present:- Mr. N.K. Verma, Senior Panel Counsel,
for the petitioners.

HARSIMRAN SINGH SETHI, J. (ORAL)

1. In the present petition, the challenge is to the impugned order dated 03.01.2023 (Annexure P-1) passed by the learned Armed Forces Tribunal, Regional Bench, Chandigarh (hereinafter referred to as 'Tribunal'), by which, the respondent has been allowed the benefit of disability pension by rounding off the disability element from 10 % to 50 % for life keeping in view the facts and circumstances of the present case, on the ground that the same is perverse.

2. Learned counsel for the petitioners places reliance upon the report of Release Medical Board of the respondent to hold that though the disability of "*Hypothyroidism*" assessed @ 10% for life has been found in respondent, but the same has been held by the Release Medical Board to be 'neither attributable to Military Service nor aggravated by the Military service'. Hence, the grant of benefit of disability pension to respondent by



the tribunal vide order dated 03.01.2023 (Annexure P-1) by placing reliance upon the judgment of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in **Sukhvinder Singh vs. Union of India and others, (2014) 14 SCC 364** and **Dharamvir Singh versus Union of India and others, (2013) 7 SCC 316**, is incorrect.

3. We have heard learned counsel for the petitioners and have gone through the case file with his able assistance.

4. It is a conceded fact that at the time when the respondent was relieved from service i.e. 31.08.2019 after being placed in low medical category, he had already rendered about 20 years of service with the petitioner-Union of India. It is also a conceded fact that at the time when the respondent joined the armed forces i.e. 24.12.1999, he was medically examined and was not found suffering from any such disease, on the basis of which, respondent was ultimately discharged from service.

5. As per the judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in **Sukhvinder Singh's** case (supra), it has been held that in case an officer is being invalidated out on the basis of the disability, the same has to be presumed at minimum disability of 20%. The relevant para of the said judgment is as under:-

“11. We are of the persuasion, therefore, that firstly, any disability not recorded at the time of recruitment must be presumed to have been caused subsequently and unless proved to the contrary to be a consequence of military service. The benefit of doubt is rightly extended in favour of the member of the Armed Forces; any other conclusion would be tantamount to granting a premium to the Recruitment Medical Board for their own negligence. Secondly, the morale of the Armed Forces requires absolute and undiluted



protection and if an injury leads to loss of service without any recompense, this morale would be severely undermined. Thirdly, there appears to be no provisions authorising the discharge or invaliding out of service where the disability is below twenty per cent and seems to us to be logically so. Fourthly, wherever a member of the Armed Forces is invalided out of service, it perforce has to be assumed that his disability was found to be above twenty per cent. Fifthly, as per the extant Rules/Regulations, a disability leading to invaliding out of service would attract the grant of fifty per cent disability pension.”

6. In light of the judgment of the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India in *Sukhvinder Singh’s* case (supra), the fact that respondent’s disability element percentage is 10% does not disentitle him from the disability pension as whenever a member of the Armed Forces is invalided out of service, it has to be presumed that his disability was found to be above 20%.

7. Further, as per the settled principle of law settled by Hon’ble Supreme Court of India in *Union of India and others vs. Ram Avtar*, 2014 SCC Online SC 1761, any officer serving in the Armed Forces, who had undergone the medical examination at the time of his/her selection and was found fit, subsequently upon suffering a disability, is entitled to the benefit of disability pension by rounding off the same as the presumption would be that the disability suffered is attributable to the Military service. Relevant paras of the judgment in *Ram Avtar’s* case (supra) are as under:-

“4. By the present set of appeals the appellant(s) raise the question, whether or not, an individual, who has retired on attaining the age of superannuation or



on completion of his tenure of engagement, if found to be suffering from some disability which is attributable to or aggravated by the military service, is entitled to be granted the benefit of rounding-off of disability pension. The appellant(s) herein would contend that, on the basis of Circular No. 1(2)/97/D(Pen-C) issued by the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, dated 31.01.2001, the aforesaid benefit is made available only to an Armed Forces Personnel who is invalidated out of service, and not to any other category of Armed Forces Personnel mentioned hereinabove.

5. We have heard learned counsel for the parties to the lis.

6. We do not see any error in the impugned judgment(s) and order(s) and therefore all the appeals which pertain to the concept of rounding-off of the disability pension are dismissed, with no order as to costs.

7. The dismissal of these matters will be taken note of by the High Courts as well as by the Tribunals in granting appropriate relief to the pensioners before them, if any, who are getting or are entitled to the disability pension.”

8. The Hon’ble Supreme Court of India in recent judgment passed in Civil Appeal No.11311 of 2025 decided on 01.09.2025 titled as **Union of India and others vs. Reet MP Singh and another**, the grant of benefit of rounding off the disability as per ***Ram Avtar’s*** case (supra) has again been upheld, which fact has gone un-rebutted at the hands of the petitioners.

9. Further, as per the recent judgment of the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India in **Bijender Singh versus Union of India and others, 2025**



SCC OnLine SC 895, the same issue has been considered again and it has been held that onus of proving that disability is not attributed to military service is upon employer and the report of Medical Board cannot be accepted especially when no disability was detected at the time of entry into service, relevant paras are as under:-

- “46.** Referring back to the impugned order dated 26.02.2016, we find that the Tribunal simply went by the remarks of the Invaliding Medical Board and Re-Survey Medical Boards to hold that since the disability of the appellant was less than 20%, he would not be entitled to the disability element of the disability pension. Tribunal did not examine the issue as to whether the disability was attributable to or aggravated by military service. In the instant case neither has it been mentioned by the Invaliding Medical Board nor by the Re-Survey Medical Boards that the disease for which the appellant was invalided out of service could not be detected at the time of entry into military service. As a matter of fact, the Invaliding Medical Board was quite categorical that no disability of the appellant existed before entering service. As would be evident from the aforesaid decisions of this Court, the law has by now crystalized that if there is no note or report of the Medical Board at the time of entry into service that the member suffered from any particular disease, the presumption would be that the member got afflicted by the said disease because of military service. Therefore the burden of proving that the disease is not attributable to or aggravated by military service rest entirely on the employer. Further, any disease or disability for which a member of the armed forces is invalided out of service would have to be assumed to be above 20% and attract grant of 50% disability pension.
- 47.** Thus having regard to the discussions made above, we are of the considered view that the impugned orders of the Tribunal are wholly unsustainable in law. That being the position, impugned orders dated 22.01.2018 and 26.02.2016 are hereby set aside. Consequently, respondents are directed to grant the disability element of disability pension to the appellant at the rate of 50% with effect from 01.01.1996 onwards for life. The arrears shall carry interest at the rate of 6% per annum till payment. The above directions shall be carried out by the respondents within three months from today.”



10. Hence, rounding off the disability of 20% to 50% is as per settled principle of law.

11. Learned counsel for the petitioners has not been able to dispute the said proposition of law having been settled by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in **Ram Avtar's** case (supra), **Sukhvinder Singh's** case (supra), **Bijender Singh's** case (supra) and **Reet MP Singh's** case (supra).

12. Keeping in view the settled principle of law settled in **Ram Avtar's** case (supra), **Sukhvinder Singh's** case (supra), **Bijender Singh's** case (supra) and **Reet MP Singh's** case (supra) as well as the facts and circumstances of the present case that at the time of selection, the respondent was medically examined and was found fit in all respects and it was only after respondent rendered service for 20 years with the petitioner-UOI, he was found to be suffering from Hypothyroidism along with the fact that no cogent evidence/material or detailed medical record has been brought on record to show this Court that the disability is not attributable to military service. That being so, the said disability has to be attributed to the military service and the report of Medical Board cannot take away the right of respondent to claim the benefit of 20% disability pension which is rightly rounded off to 50%, is correct.

13. No other argument has been raised.

14. Hence, in the absence of any perversity being pointed out in the impugned order dated 03.01.2023 (Annexure P-1) either on the basis of the facts or the settled principle of law, no ground is made out for any interference by this Court in the facts and circumstances of the present case.

15. Accordingly, the writ petition is dismissed.



16. Pending application(s), if any, stands disposed of.

(HARSIMRAN SINGH SETHI)
JUDGE

September 10, 2025
harish

(VIKAS SURI)
JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned	Yes
Whether reportable	No