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**IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH**

(115)

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Date of Decision : March 24, 2026

Union of India and others

.. Petitioners

Versus

Colonel Harkirpal Singh Toor and another

.. Respondents

**CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARSIMRAN SINGH SETHI
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE PARMOD GOYAL**

Present: Mr. Vishal Garg, Advocate, for the petitioners-UOI.

HARSIMRAN SINGH SETHI J. (ORAL)

1. In the present writ petition, the challenge is to the impugned order dated 27.08.2024 (Annexure P-1) passed by respondent No.2-Armed Forces Tribunal, Chandigarh, (hereinafter referred to as 'the Tribunal') by which, respondent No.1 has been allowed the benefit of rounding off of the disability element of disability pension @ 50% as against 20% w.e.f. 01.01.2006 to 31.12.2015 and thereafter, w.e.f. 01.01.2016 as per the Policy of Government of India, Ministry of Defence, letter No. 17 (0)2017 (02)/D LO (Pension/policy) dated 05.09.2017 on the ground that the same is perverse.

2. Learned counsel for the petitioners places reliance upon the report of medical examination of respondent No. 1 to contend that though the disability of "(i) Primary Hypertension (ii) Obesity and (iii) IQT" as assessed @ 30% has been found in respondent No.1, but he has been discharged from service on 31.05.2006 in low medical category on completion of his terms of engagement under Army Rules. Hence, the grant of benefit of rounding off of the disability element @ 50% as against 20% by placing reliance upon the

judgment of in ***Civil Appeal No.418-2012 Union of India and others vs. Ram***



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Avtar, decided on 10.12.2014 is incorrect and the facts of the present case have not been appreciated in correct perspective by the Tribunal while passing the impugned order dated 27.08.2024 (Annexure P-1). Learned counsel for the petitioners has further argued that the benefit of arrears granted to respondent No.1, in pursuance to granting the benefit of rounding off disability pension from 20% to 50%, which has been granted to respondent No.1 for whole of the intervening period, 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 conceded fact that at the time when respondent No.1 was discharged from service on 31.05.2006 on completion of his terms of engagement under Army Rules, he had already rendered 34 years of service with the petitioners-Union of India. It is also a conceded fact that at the time when respondent No. 1 joined the armed forces i.e. 31.03.1972, he was medically examined and was not found suffering from any such disease.

5. With regard to grievance of the petitioners qua grant of benefit of rounding off of disability element, as per the settled principle of law settled by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in ***Ram Avtar's case (supra)***, it has been held that an Armed Forces personnel is entitled to be granted the benefit of rounding off with regard to disability pension, irrespective of the fact that he was invalidated out of service, or retired on attaining the age of superannuation or on completion of his tenure of his engagement, if found to be suffering from some disability which is attributable or aggravated by 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



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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.”*

6. 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.

7. With regard to the grievance of petitioners qua grant of benefit of arrears for whole of the intervening period, as per the settled principle of law settled by the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India in ***Civil Appeal No.3086 of 2012 titled “Balbir Singh vs. Union of India and others”, decided on 08.04.2016***, wherein also the question for consideration was regarding limiting the benefits of arrears admissible for a period of three years, wherein the benefit of arrears for the entire period, as was being claimed by the claimant was granted to the claimant, the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India held as under:

“XXX....The Tribunal was therefore justified in restoring the service element of the pension in favour of the appellant. The



question however is whether the arrears could have been restricted to three years only. The Tribunal in our view need not have done so. That is because the appellant had a right to receive service element of the pension in light of Regulation 186 (supra), which right was valuable and ought to have been protected.

We accordingly allow this appeal and modify the order passed by the Tribunal with the direction that the appellant shall be paid service element of the pension with effect from the date the said payment was stopped by the respondents. We however grant to the respondents three months time to calculate and release the arrears in favour of the appellant. In case the needful is not done within the time stipulated, the arrears payable to the appellant shall start earning interest at the rate of 9% from the date the period of three months expires till actual payment of the amount.”

8. Further, the issue of grant of arrears to the army personnel, which issue has been in dispute somewhat, has been settled by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in a recently passed judgment in **Civil Appeal Nos. 6820-6824 of 2018 titled as Union of India through Secretary and others vs. SGT Girish Kumar and others, decided on 12.02.2026**, whereby the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has held that " pensionary entitlements partake the character of property and same is neither a bounty nor ex-gratia payment and same cannot be withheld, reduced or extinguished except by authority of law. The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has further held that UOI has taken a conscious policy decision so as to grant benefit of arrears of disability pension to all eligible ex-servicemen from 01.01.1996 or 01.01.2006 as the case may be, which is clear from para 2 of letter dated 15.09.2014 issued by Deputy Secretary (Pension), Government of India and by letter dated 10.10.2018 issued by Director, Department of Pension and Pensioner's Welfare, wherein also same benefit was granted to all eligible from 01.01.1996 or 01.01.2006, as the case may be.



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9. Furthermore, in view of judgment passed in **Ram Avtar's case (supra)** an order dated 18.04.2016 passed by Government of India also approved for implementation of broad banding of disability element and granting said benefit from date stipulated in judicial orders. In said order, addressed to Chiefs of all forces, it has been clearly stipulated that arrears of disability pension are to flow from 01.01.1996 without any curtailment as the case may be. The relevant paragraphs No. 15 to 21 of the judgment in **SGT Girish Kumar and others' case (supra)** are as under:-

“15. Pension, as authoritatively settled by this Court, is neither a bounty nor an ex gratia payment dependent upon the grace of the State. It is a deferred portion of compensation for past service and, upon fulfilment of the governing conditions, matures into a vested and enforceable right. Pensionary entitlements, therefore, partake the character of property, and cannot be withheld, reduced, or extinguished except by authority of law. This principle applies with full vigour to disability pension, which is grounded not merely in length of service, but in the impairment suffered by a member of the Armed Forces in the course of, or attributable to, the service rendered to the nation. The disability pension is not a matter of largesse, but a recognition of sacrifice made in service of the nation.

16. The Union of India, as a model employer, is expected to act with fairness, consistency and even-handedness in the administration of benefits conferred upon those who have served the nation. When a benefit is recognised by a policy and affirmed by judicial pronouncement, its application cannot be selective or uneven. The judgment rendered by a three-Judge Bench of this Court in Ram Avtar's case (supra) was a judgment in rem and, therefore, the benefit of same ought to have been extended by Union of India to the eligible ex-servicemen instead of requiring them to file original applications before the Tribunal seeking their entitlement.



17. It is pertinent to note that the Union of India itself had taken a conscious policy decision to pay arrears of disability pension to *D.S. Nakara v Union of India*, 1983 AIR SC 130, *State of Jharkhand & Ors. v. Jitendra Kumar Srivastava & Anr.*, AIR 2013 SC 3383, *Vijay Kumar v. Central Bank of India & Ors.*, 2025 INSC 848 all eligible ex-servicemen from 01.01.1996 or 01.01.2006, as the case may be. This position is clearly borne out from paragraph 2 of the letter dated 15.09.2014 issued by Deputy Secretary (Pension), Government of India, to Chiefs of Army, Navy and Air Force. The similar intent is also evident from paras 3 and 6 of the letter dated 10.10.2018 issued by Director, Department of Pension and Pensioner's Welfare, Government of India, wherein civilian Medical Officers were granted revised disability benefit from 01.01.1996 or 01.01.2006.

18. The aforesaid communications reflect a conscious and deliberate policy choice on the part of Union of India to confer upon all eligible pensioners the benefit of arrears of disability pension with effect from 01.01.1996 or 01.01.2006, as the case may be. In view of decision of this Court in *Ram Avtar* (supra), the Government of India, by an order dated 18.04.2016, expressly conveyed its approval to the Chiefs of the Army, Navy and Air Force for implementation of the directions issued by the Courts and Tribunals granting the benefit of broad banding of the disability element to Armed Forces Personnel who had retired or were discharged on completion of engagement with disability, attributable to or aggravated by military service, from the date specified in the respective judicial orders.

19. The order dated 18.04.2016 was a conscious policy determination taken with full financial concurrence. Thus, where the State itself, by a conscious policy decision, has determined that arrears of disability pension are payable from a specified cut off date, it is not open to it to subsequently resile and contend that such arrears ought to be confined to a period of three years preceding the claim. To permit such a course, would amount to



acknowledging the right in principle while denying its substantive content in effect. Any such deprivation of accrued arrears which has become due to ex-servicemen in view of judicial determination as well as policy decision taken by the Union of India itself, would constitute deprivation of property and would amount to infraction of [Article 300A](#) of the Constitution of India.

20. This Court has, in a consistent line of decisions, recognised that right to receive disability pension is a valuable right and once found due, the benefit of the same has to be given from the date it became due. The same cannot be curtailed by restricting [K.J.S. Bhuttar v. Union of India & Anr.](#), (supra); [Davinder Singh v. Union of India & Ors.](#) (supra); [Madan Prasad Sinha v. Union of India & Ors.](#), (supra); Piyush Bahuguna (Order dated 25.03.2022 passed in Diary No.10713/2021) and [Bijender Singh v. Union of India](#) (supra) the benefit to a period of three years preceding the filing of the original application. In the absence of any compelling reason to take a different view, we find no justification to depart from the view consistently taken by this Court.

21. The contention advanced on behalf of the Union of India that the claim for arrears of disability pension is barred by [Limitation Act](#), cannot be accepted. The issue with regard to broad banding of disability pension attained finality only on 10.12.2014. Thereafter, Union of India in the order dated 18.04.2016 addressed to Chiefs of Army, Navy and Air Force acknowledged in clear terms that arrears of disability pension were to flow from 01.01.1996 without any curtailment.

Therefore, in the facts and circumstances of the case, the contention that the claims of ex-servicemen were barred by limitation does not deserve acceptance.”

10. Keeping in view the facts and circumstances of the present case as well as settled principle of law settled in **Ram Avtar’s case (supra)**, **Reet MP**

Singh’s case (supra), **SGT Girish Kumar’s case (supra)** and **Balbir Singh’s**

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case (supra), claim of respondent No.1 for the benefit of rounding off of the disability from 20% to 50% and for grant of arrears has rightly been allowed by the Tribunal.

11. No other argument has been raised.

12. Hence, in the absence of any perversity being pointed out in the impugned order dated 27.08.2024 (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 and the writ petition is accordingly dismissed.

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

(HARSIMRAN SINGH SETHI)
JUDGE

March 24, 2026
harsha

(PARMOD GOYAL)
JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes
Whether reportable : No