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

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CWP-13224-2026

Date of Decision : 30.04.2026

UNION OF INDIA AND OTHERS**.. Petitioners****Versus****SADA RAM AND ANOTHER****.. Respondents**

**CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARSIMRAN SINGH SETHI
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE DEEPAK MANCHANDA**

Present: Ms. Bhavana Datta, Senior Panel Counsel
for the petitioners-UOI.

HARSIMRAN SINGH SETHI J. (ORAL)

1. In the present writ petition, the challenge is to the impugned order dated 12.07.2024 (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. 01.01.2002 to 31.12.2015 and benefit of arrears from the year 2002 which grant of arrears from said date is in dispute.

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 "*Fracture Tibia Upper 1/3 (LT) (N823 E819)*" as assessed @ 20% and attributable to military service has been found to be existing in respondent No.1, but he has been discharged from service on 31.12.2001 in 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% from a date prior to the year 2016 by placing

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reliance upon the judgment of in ***Civil Appeal No.418-2012 Union of India and others vs. Ram Avtar, decided on 10.12.2014*** and instructions issued by Government of India 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 12.07.2024 (Annexure P-1).

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

4. A perusal of the impugned order would show that therein learned counsel appearing on behalf of Union has himself conceded the factum that respondent No.1 is entitled for grant of benefit of rounding off which issue/grant of benefit cannot be brought for consideration before this Court once same was agreed to be granted by learned counsel for the petitioners and the only dispute which exists as of now is as to from which date such benefit is admissible so as to grant the benefit of arrears from such date.

5. The issue of grant of arrears to the army personnel, which 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

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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. 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

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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 decisions⁶, 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

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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.”

6. Keeping in view the facts and circumstances of the present case as well as settled principle of law settled in ***SGT Girish Kumar (supra)*** claim of respondent No.1 for the benefit of arrears from the year 2002 has rightly been allowed by the Tribunal in favour of respondent No.1.

7. No other argument has been raised.

8. Hence, in the absence of any perversity being pointed out in the impugned order dated 12.07.2024 (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.

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

(HARSIMRAN SINGH SETHI)
JUDGE

30.04.2026
sapna adhikari

(DEEPAK MANCHANDAI)
JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes
Whether reportable : No