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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

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Date of Decision : 20.03.2026

+ **W.P.(C) 3595/2026 CM APPL. 17451-17452/2026**

UNION OF INDIA AND ORS.**.....Petitioners**

Through: Ms. Arunima Dwivedi, CGSC with
Ms. Himanshi Singh and Ms.
Monalisha Pradhan, advs.

versus

**626838 HFO KAMAL DEO MISHRA
(RETD.)**

.....Respondent

Through: appearance not given

CORAM:**HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE V. KAMESWAR RAO****HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE MANMEET PRITAM SINGH ARORA****MANMEET PRITAM SINGH ARORA, J. (ORAL)****CM APPL. 17452/2026 (for exemption)**

1. Allowed, subject to just exceptions.
2. The application is disposed of.

W.P.(C) 3595/2026

3. This is a writ petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India against the order dated 30.05.2023 ['impugned order'] passed by the Armed Forces Tribunal Principal Bench, New Delhi ['Tribunal'] in Original Application ['O.A.'] No. 2083 of 2022 titled as **HFO Kamal Deo Mishra (Retd) v. Union of India & Ors.**, wherein the Respondent has been granted



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the benefit of the disability element of pension for Primary Hypertension (Old) I 10, Z09.0 assessed at 30%, rounded off to 50% for life, from the date of his discharge from the service.

4. The facts giving rise to the present petition are that the Respondent was discharged from the service in the Indian Air Force ['IAF'] on 30.04.2020 on attaining the age of superannuation.

5. The Release Medical Board ['RMB'] held on 20.05.2019 assessed the disability i.e., Primary Hypertension (Old) I 10, Z09.0 at 30% for life and opined that since the disease is a lifestyle disorder and the onset of the disease was at a time when the Respondent was serving at the peace station, i.e., October 2016 in Bangalore, the aforesaid disability is neither attributable to nor aggravated ['NANA'] by the military service as per the Para 43 of GMO (Mil Pen) 2008.

The Respondent's claim of disability pension was rejected by the Petitioner vide letter dated 19.09.2019, as the disability was held to be NANA.

6. The Respondent filed an O.A. No. 2083 of 2022 before the Tribunal for the grant of disability element of pension. By the impugned order, the Tribunal after referring to the judgments of the Supreme Court in **Dharamvir Singh v. Union of India and Ors.**¹ and **Union of India v. Ram Avtar**² granted the relief of disability pension to the Respondent.

7. The submission made by the learned counsel for the Petitioners is that the reliance placed by the Tribunal on the judgment of **Dharamvir Singh v.**

¹ 2013 (7) SCC 361

² 2014 SCC OnLine SC 1761



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Union of India and Ors. (supra) is totally misplaced as in the said case the Supreme Court was concerned with the Entitlement Rules for Casualty Pensionary Awards, 1982 ['Entitlement Rules, 1982'], whereas the case of the Respondent needs to be considered under the Entitlement Rules for Casualty Pensionary Awards to Armed Forces Personnel, 2008 ['Entitlement Rules, 2008'].

7.1. She contends that the Tribunal has overlooked the Entitlement Rules, 2008, which govern attributability and aggravation and no longer permit a blanket presumption in favour of the claimant/officer; and since the RMB has opined the disease to be NANA, the Tribunal could not have presumed a causal connection between the disease and the service. She states in the facts of this case, Respondent was discharged from services on 30.04.2020 and therefore, the Respondent would be governed by Entitlement Rules, 2008. She states that the impugned order incorrectly applies the presumption under the repealed Entitlement Rules, 1982, ignoring the amended regime under Entitlement Rules, 2008. She states that the Entitlement Rules, 2008, have done away with the general presumption to be drawn to ascertain the principle of 'attributable to or aggravated by military service'.

8. Having perused the reasons recorded in the RMB, we are unable to agree with the submissions made by the learned counsel for the Petitioners that the Tribunal committed any error in granting relief to this Respondent.

9. Since the Respondent was discharged from the service on 30.04.2020, he would be governed with the Entitlement Rules 2008

In another petition, i.e., W.P.(C) 88/2026 titled **Union of India v. 781466 Ex. SGT Krishna Kumar Dwivedi**, decided by this Bench on



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06.01.2026, our attention was drawn to the authoritative judgments of the coordinate Benches of this Court passed in W.P.(C) 3545/2025 titled **Union of India v. Ex. Sub Gawas Anil Madso**³ and W.P.(C) 140/2024 titled **Union of India vs. Col. Balbir Singh (Retd.) and other connected matters**⁴, which have conclusively held that even under Entitlement Rules, 2008 an officer, who suffers from a disease at the time of his release and applies for disability pension within 15 years from release of service, is ordinarily entitled to disability pension and he does not have any onus to prove the said entitlement. The said judgments emphatically hold that even under the Entitlement Rules, 2008, the onus to prove a causal connection between the disability and military service is not on the officer but on the administration. The Entitlement Rules, 2008, however, contemplate that in the event the Medical Board concludes that the disease, though contracted during the tenure of military service, was NANA by military service, it would have to give cogent reasons and identify the cause, other than military service, to which the ailment or disability can be attributed. The said judgments hold that a bald statement in the report of the Medical Board opining 'onset in peace station' or 'lifestyle disorder' would not be sufficient for the military department to deny the claim of disability pension; and rejected the opinions of the Medical Board. The said judgments hold that the burden to prove the disentitlement of pension therefore remains on the military department even under the Entitlement Rules, 2008; and emphasise on the significance of the Medical Board giving specific reasons to justify

³ 2025: DHC: 2021-DB

⁴ 2025: DHC: 5082-DB



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their opinion for denial of this beneficial provision to the officer.

10. On the issue of establishing causal connection of the disease with factors other than military service, we also note that the Supreme Court in its recent judgment in the case of **Bijender Singh vs. Union of India**⁵ has reiterated that it is incumbent upon the Medical Board to furnish reasons for opining that a disease is NANA and the burden to prove the causal connection (as other than military service) is on the Military Establishment.

The character of reasons to be recorded by the Medical Board has been succinctly explained by the Supreme Court in another recent decision of **Rajumon T.M. v. Union of India**⁶. The Supreme Court held that merely stating an opinion, such as 'Constitutional Personality Disorder' without giving reasons or causative factors to support such an opinion, is an unreasoned medical opinion and thus invalid. The Supreme Court explained that the said opinion of the Medical Board was merely a conclusion and would not qualify as a reasoned opinion for holding the disease/disability to be NANA.

11. In this background of settled law holding that the onus to prove disentitlement remains on military establishment even vis-à-vis Entitlement Rules, 2008 and the Medical Board must give cogent reasons for denying attributability and aggravation, we have examined the facts of this case.

12. The Respondent was enrolled in the IAF on 23.04.1981 and the disease Primary Hypertension (Old) I 10, Z09.0 was discovered in the year 2016 [after 35 years of service], while he was serving at peace station and

⁵ 2025 SCC OnLine SC 895 at paragraphs 45.1, 46 and 47

⁶ 2025 SCC OnLine SC 1064 at paragraphs 25, 26, 32 and 36



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therefore, the disease has indisputably arisen during his military service. The Respondent was discharged from service on 30.04.2020.

13. The Petitioners have raised the issue of non-entitlement of the disability element of the pension on the ground that the Medical Board has held that the disease is NANA by the military service. The opinion rendered by the RMB is extracted as under: -

PART V				
OPINION OF THE MEDICAL BOARD				
(Not to be communicated to the individual)				
I. Casual Relationship of the Disability with Service conditions or otherwise				
Disability	Attributable to service Y/N	Aggravated by service (Y/N)	Not connected with service (Y/N)	Reason/cause/specific condition and period in service
Primary Hypertension (Old) 110, 209.0	No	No	Yes	A life style related disorder. Onset in peace station (Bangalore). No delay in diagnosis and proper treatment. No close time association with stress and strain of military service in Field/CI Ops/HAA hence neither attributable nor aggravated by service as per para 43 of GMO (Mil Pen) 2008.

Note: A disability "not connected with service" would be neither attributable nor aggravated by

14. The Petitioners contend that the disease has been classified as NANA, on the ground that it is a lifestyle-related disorder, its onset occurred in a peace area, and it was not attributable to any stress or exigency of military service.

15. These very reasons have been specifically rejected by the coordinate Bench of this Court in **Col. Balbir Singh (Retd.)** (supra)⁷, while similarly granting disability pension to the officer suffering therein from Primary Hypertension, and have been held to be invalid grounds for denying

⁷ At paragraph nos. 66 to 74



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attributability to the military service. The Division Bench in the said decision after taking note of Regulation 423(a) of the Regulations for the Medical Services of the Armed Forces, 2010 held that the fact that the disability occurred in normal peace conditions is immaterial and by itself is not sufficient to deny disability pension to the officer.

The ground 'onset in peace station' in view of the settled legal possession, is thus, an invalid ground and cannot be relied upon by the petitioner to justify NANA.

16. The Division Bench in **Col. Balbir Singh (Retd.)** (supra)⁸ also held that a mere statement that a disease is a lifestyle disorder cannot be a sufficient reason to deny the grant of disability pension.

We note that no causative factors have been enlisted in the report by the subject RMB for concluding that the disease is a 'lifestyle disorder'. In fact, the RMB herein categorically records in response to the question no. 2, that the Respondent did not have this disability before entering into service at internal page 5 of RMB⁹ and also to the response of question no. 5 (a) and (b), that the disability is not attributable or aggravated to the officer's own negligence or misconduct. The conclusion in the RMB that the disease is a lifestyle disorder is therefore contradictory and bereft of reasoning.

17. No other ground has been cited in the RMB report of the Respondent for opining NANA. In these facts, since no other causal connection for the disease has been found to exist by the RMB, the claim of disability pension has been wrongly rejected by the Military establishment, and the officer

⁸ At paragraph no. 71

⁹ Page 74 of the paper book



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would be entitled to disability pension as it is attributable to/or aggravated by the military services.

18. Additionally, we note that the impugned order is dated 30.05.2023 and the Petitioner was obliged to comply with the order forthwith. However, the petition has been filed after 2½ years, without any explanation for such a delay. It appears from the record that the Petitioner has not complied with the said order. The Petitioner ought to have approach this Court immediately and cannot elect to sleep over compliance of the impugned order of the Tribunal. We hold that filing of this petition is also grossly barred by delay and laches.

The Petitioner is directed to comply with the order of the Tribunal forthwith.

19. In view of the aforesaid findings, the Petitioners' challenge to the grant of disability element of pension to the Respondent, is without any merits. The Respondent has been rightly held to be entitled to the disability pension under the Entitlement Rules, 2008 by the Tribunal in the impugned order.

20. We therefore find no merit in this petition; the petition is dismissed. No costs.

MANMEET PRITAM SINGH ARORA, J

V. KAMESWAR RAO, J

MARCH 20, 2026/AJ/rhc