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

+ **W.P.(C) 4917/2026 & CM APPL. 24117/2026**

JAGRATI DEVI

.....Petitioner

Through: Ms. Ritu Reniwal, Mr. Mahendru
Kumawat and Ms. Ritu Reniwal,
Advocates.

versus

PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK & ORS.

.....Respondents

Through: Mr. Rajesh Kumar Gautam, Ms. Azal
Aekram and Ms. Likivi K. Jakhalu,
Advocates for PNB.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANJEEV NARULA

ORDER

% **13.04.2026**

1. This writ petition assails the promotion-cum-transfer order dated 8th April, 2026, issued by the Respondent Bank, whereby the Petitioner has been promoted from Scale-I (Deputy Manager) to Scale-II (Manager) and transferred from Delhi to Chennai.
2. The Petitioner submits that, in the course of the promotion process, the Respondent Bank had invited "options" for posting. In response, the Petitioner indicated her preferences for Delhi, Rohtak, Rewari, Panipat, Alwar, Bharatpur, Muradabad, Saharanpur, Agra and Gwalior, namely, locations within or reasonably proximate to her place of residence, while excluding her parent district/zone. It is submitted that, notwithstanding the said exercise, the Petitioner has been posted to Chennai, a station neither opted for by her nor situated within reasonable geographical proximity.
3. It is further contended that the impugned order runs contrary to the



Guidelines dated 8th August, 2014 issued by the Ministry of Finance, which envisage, *inter alia*, that female employees should, as far as possible, be posted at the same station as their spouses or in proximity to their families so as to minimise hardship.

4. Counsel representing the Petitioner emphasises that the Petitioner is a single, divorced woman bearing substantial family responsibilities in Delhi, including care of aged parents and school-going children. In these circumstances, the decision to transfer her to Chennai, which is approximately 2,200 kilometres away, without due regard to available vacancies in the regions opted by her, is arbitrary and violative of Articles 14, 15(3) and 21 of the Constitution of India.

5. The Court has considered the aforesaid submissions. At the outset, it must be noticed that the impugned order forms part of a larger exercise of circle allocation of mainstream candidates approved for promotion from JMG Scale-I to MMG Scale-II under the 15th Selection Process for the Financial Year 2026-27, involving as many as 1,290 employees across the country. As explained by Mr. Rajesh Kumar Gautam, counsel for the Respondent Bank, the said exercise concerns not only employees transferred on promotion, but also those liable to transfer under the applicable policy, including on account of completion of tenure at a particular station.

6. In that backdrop, it must first be noted that the Petitioner's transfer arises in the context of a promotion and not as routine transfer. Further, any interference by this Court in the individual case of the Petitioner at this stage may potentially unsettle and have a cascading effect on the wider allocation exercise. This Court is, therefore, not inclined to tinker with the same, particularly bearing in mind the settled position that transfer is an incident of



service and that no employee can claim, as a matter of right, indefinite continuance at a particular station.¹ Equally, the furnishing of preferences, by itself, does not create an enforceable entitlement to be posted to one of the chosen stations. Preferences are only meant to assist administration.

7. During the course of hearing, counsel, on instructions, stated that if the Bank is unable to accommodate the Petitioner at or around the stations indicated by her, she is not willing to accept the promotion. Since such a statement has civil consequences, the Court considered it appropriate to interact with the Petitioner's counsel to satisfy itself that the stand is deliberate and not impulsive. Upon such interaction, counsel, on clear and unequivocal instructions, reiterated that the Petitioner is unwilling to accept the promotion if it necessarily entails relocation outside Delhi, in view of responsibilities which, in her present circumstances, she cannot realistically abandon.

8. Once that position is placed on record, the present controversy becomes narrower. This Court is not required to adjudicate upon a broad challenge to the transfer policy, nor to decide whether Chennai was the best or only available station in the promotion exercise. The immediate issue is more limited: what should follow when the Petitioner declines the promotion and does not wish to avail the benefit on the terms on which it has been offered.

9. In that regard, Mr. Gautam submits that, even *dehors* the promotion, the Petitioner has already spent about six years at her present station and may be liable to movement under the applicable transfer policy. That submission cannot be brushed aside. The Respondent Bank is entitled to

¹ National Hydroelectric Power Corpn. Ltd. v. Shri Bhagwan, (2001) 8 SCC 574.



regulate postings in accordance with its policy and administrative requirements. At the same time, Mr. Gautam fairly states that if the Petitioner declines the promotion, the Bank shall re-examine the matter and take an appropriate decision regarding her posting in accordance with the extant policy and governing guidelines.

10. In view of the above, the petition is disposed of with the following terms:

- (i). The statement made on behalf of the Petitioner that she declines the promotion from Scale-I to Scale-II is taken on record.
- (ii) The Petitioner shall submit an appropriate representation to the competent authority of the Respondent Bank within one week from today, expressly communicating the above position and setting out the submissions she may wish to urge.
- (iii) On receipt of the representation, the Respondent Bank shall consider the same in accordance with the applicable transfer policy, the governing administrative guidelines, and the facts peculiar to the Petitioner, and shall pass a reasoned decision within two weeks thereafter.
- (iv) Till such time as the above decision is taken and communicated, the Petitioner shall not be relieved from her present place of posting.

11. It is clarified that this Court has not examined the comparative merits of possible stations of posting, nor has it expressed any view on the Petitioner's claim for continued posting at Delhi or any near station, as a matter of right. All that is directed is that, in view of the stand now taken by the Petitioner declining the promotion, the Respondent Bank shall reconsider the matter in the altered factual position and take an appropriate decision, in accordance with law and policy.



12. The writ petition, along with pending application(s), stands disposed of in the above terms.

SANJEEV NARULA, J

APRIL 13, 2026

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