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IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI

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Date of Decision : 11.02.2026

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W.P.(C) 601/2026 & CM APPL. 2974/2026 CM APPL. 2975/2026**UNION OF INDIA & ORS.****.....Petitioners**

Through: Dr. B. Ramaswamy, CGSC with Sgt
Mritunjay and Sgt Karani Singh
Rathore, DAV Legal Cell Airforce

versus

SGT AMAR LAL RETD.**.....Respondent**

Through: None

CORAM:**HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE V. KAMESWAR RAO****HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE MANMEET PRITAM SINGH ARORA****MANMEET PRITAM SINGH ARORA, J. (ORAL)****CM APPL. 2975/2026(for exemption)**

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

W.P.(C) 601/2026 & CM APPL. 2974/2026(stay)

3. This is a writ petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India against the order dated 06.08.2024 ['impugned order'] passed by the Armed Forces Tribunal, Principal Bench, New Delhi ['Tribunal'] in Original Application ['O.A.'] No. 1473/2022 titled as **(656746) Sgt Amar Lal**



(Retd) vs Union Of India & Ors, wherein the Respondent has been granted the benefit of the disability element of pension for Primary Hypertension (Old) assessed at 30% for life, 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 on 31.03.2016 under the clause 'on fulfilling the conditions of enrolment' after rendering a total of 26 years and 20 days of regular service.

5. The Release Medical Board ['RMB'], held on 06.05.2015, assessed his disabilities, i.e., Primary Hypertension (Old) 10.0 & Z 09.0 at 30% for life. The RMB opined that since the onset of the disease was at the time when the Respondent was serving at the peace station, i.e. 5 AFH Jorhat, in June 2011 and was due to the lifestyle disorder, therefore, the aforesaid disability was neither attributable to nor aggravated ['NANA'] by the military service.

6. The Respondent's claim of disability pension was rejected and the same was communicated to the Respondent vide letter dated 27.01.2016, stating that as the disability was opined NANA by the service. The Respondent's first appeal challenging the said rejection by the Appellate Committee of First Appeal ('AFCA').

7. The Respondent filed O.A. No. 1473/2022 before the Tribunal for the grant of disability element of pension. By the impugned order, the Tribunal, while 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

¹ 2013 (7) SCC 361

² 2014 SCC Online SC 1761



relief of disability pension to the Respondent.

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

9. Learned counsel for the Petitioner contends that the Tribunal has overlooked the Entitlement Rules, 2008, which governs attributability and aggravation and no longer permit a blanket presumption in favour of the claimant/officer and since the RMB has opined the diseases to be NANA, the Tribunal could not have presumed a causal connection between the disease and the service. He states in the facts of this case, the Respondent retired on 31.01.2019 and therefore, the Respondent would be governed by the Entitlement Rules, 2008. He states that the impugned order incorrectly applies the presumption under the repealed Entitlement Rules, 1982, ignoring the amended regime under Entitlement Rules, 2008. He 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'.

10. Having perused the reasons recorded in the opinion of 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.



11. 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 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 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 proceeded to reject the opinions of the Medical Board as invalid. The judgments hold that the burden to prove the disentitlement of pension therefore remains on the military department even

³ 2025: DHC: 2021-DB

⁴ 2025: DHC: 5082-DB



under the Entitlement Rules, 2008; and emphasise on the significance of the Medical Board giving specific reasons to justify their opinion for denial of this beneficial provision to the officer.

12. For reference, 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 same is on the Military Establishment.

The requirement 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 to state 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. The 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 to be NANA.

13. In this background of law, it is well settled that onus to prove disentitlement remains with military establishment vis-à-vis Entitlement Rules, 2008 and we have accordingly examined the facts of this case. The opinion in the RMB relied upon by the Petitioner in these proceedings similarly fails the test of a reasoned opinion as stipulated in the aforesaid judgments of the Supreme Court and this Court.

14. The Respondent was enrolled in the Indian Air Force on 24.03.1984 and the disease/disability Primary Hypertension (Old) was discovered in the

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



year 2011 [after 27 years of service], while he was serving at peace station and therefore, the disease has indisputably arisen during his military service. The Respondent was discharged from service on 31.03.2016, as the RMB recommended his release on account of his low medical category A4G2(P).

15. The Petitioners have raised the issue of non-entitlement of the disability element of the pension solely 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

1. 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) I 10.0 & Z 08.0	NO	NO	YES	<i>Onset before (Pre-military)</i> primary hypertension is a lifestyle disorders with known familial clustering, hence is conceded not attributable to service. onset of ID was in peace station and continued in peace till discharge. Hence ID (I) conceded NANA. (Para 43, Chap VI, GMO 2002, amendment 2008).
Note: A disability "Not connected with service" would be neither Attributable nor Aggravated by Service (This is in accordance with instructions contained in Guide to Medical Officers (Mil Pension) – 2002)				

16. The Petitioners contend that the onset of the disease was at a peace station and that there was no stress of the military service; and the disease was due to the lifestyle disorder of the officer.

17. These precise reasons and more specifically onset at peace station have been specifically rejected by the coordinate Bench of this Court in **Col. Balbir Singh (Retd.) (supra)**⁷ and **Union of India and Others v. Col.**

⁷ At paragraph nos. 66 to 74



Koutharapu Srinivasa Retd.⁸ have been held to be invalid grounds for denying attributability to the military service. In these judgments as well, the officer therein was suffering from Primary Hypertension and the officer was held entitled to disability pension.

18. In **Col. Koutharapu Srinivasa Retd.** (supra), the Court further held that merely stating that the disease is a lifestyle disorder will not prove/confirm that the disease was not attributable to military service. The Court opined that in case the lifestyle of the officer is the cause of the disease, the medical opinion must reflect the causative lifestyle factors (i.e., enlist the reasons for such an opinion). The Court rejected the opinion of the Medical Board and the decision of the military authorities rejecting the entitlement of the officer on a mere conclusion i.e., lifestyle disorder.

In the present case, as well the RMB has merely classified the Respondent's disease of Primary Hypertension as a lifestyle disorder with known familial clustering. The RMB declares nothing about the specific lifestyle or familial factors of the Respondent, which led to the cause of the disease.

In contrast, the RMB herein categorically records in response to question no. 2 that the disability did not exist before the Respondent entered military service and in response to question no. 5(a) and (b) that the disability is not attributable to the officer's own negligence or misconduct, at internal page 10 of the RMB⁹. The answers to this question 5(b) show that the opinion of the Medical Board that it is a lifestyle disorder is a conclusion, which is negated and even otherwise not substantiated by any

⁸ 2025 SCC OnLine Del 4292 at paragraphs 5 and 16

⁹ Page 68 of the paper-book



reasons. So also, there is nothing in the RMB to substantiate the opinion of the familial clustering. The grounds in the petition also fail to point out any such factors from the RMB.

19. In these facts, the reasons recorded in the RMB for holding NANA have been rightly rejected by the Tribunal. Since no other causal connection for the disease has been found to exist by the Medical Board, the plea of disability pension has been wrongly rejected by the Military establishment.

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

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

MANMEET PRITAM SINGH ARORA, J

V. KAMESWAR RAO, J

FEBRUARY 11, 2026/AJ