

COURT NO. 2  
ARMED FORCES TRIBUNAL  
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI

5.

OA 186/2026 with MA 229/2026

15478773M Ex Hav Rohit Kumar Sahu ..... Applicant  
Versus  
Union of India & Ors. .... Respondents

For Applicant : Mr. Ajit Kakkar, Advocate  
For Respondents : Mr. Kuldeep Singh, Advocate  
Maj Abhishek Sharma, OIC Legal

CORAM

HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE ANU MALHOTRA, MEMBER(J)  
HON'BLE LT GEN C P MOHANTY, MEMBER (A)

ORDER  
20.01.2026

MA 229/2026

This is an application filed under Section 22(2) of the Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007 seeking condonation of delay of 3219 days in filing the present OA. In view of the judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of *UoI & Ors Vs Tarsem Singh* 2009(1)AISLJ 371 and in *Ex Sep Chain Singh Vs*

*Union of India & Ors* (Civil Appeal No. 30073/2017 and the reasons mentioned, the MA 229/2026 is allowed and the delay of 3219 days in filing the OA 186/2026 is thus condoned. The MA is disposed of accordingly.

**OA 186/2026**

The applicant 15478773M Ex Hav Rohit Kumar Sahu vide the present OA filed under Section 14 of the Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007 makes the following prayers:

- (a) *“To direct the respondents to resolve the anomaly in the pay of the applicant as per most beneficial option.*
- (b) *To direct the respondents to fix pay in a manner that is most beneficial to the applicant and other allowances wef 01.01.2016(7<sup>th</sup> CPC).*
- (c) *To direct the respondents to pay 12%p.a. interest on the arrears accrued to the applicant.*
- (d) *To grant such other relief appropriate to the facts and circumstances of the case as deemed fit and pro.”*

2. The applicant was enrolled in the Indian Army on 01.06.2000 and was promoted to the rank of Naik(Nk) on 01.04.2011. The applicant submits that he and his juniors were

drawing approximately equal pay of Rs.11,150/- prior to the implementation of the 7<sup>th</sup> CPC. The applicant submits that he was again promoted to the rank of Havildar (Hav) on 26.12.2016 whereas the recommendations of the 7<sup>th</sup> CPC were came into force wef 01.01.2016 and his pay was wrongly fixed from the date of implementation of the recommendations of the 7<sup>th</sup> CPC only due to non-exercise of most beneficial option. The applicant submits as per the pay slip for the month of December, 2017, his basic pay was Rs.35,900/- whereas his junior Hav Gyanendra Kumar Singh(15480643H) was drawing a basic pay of Rs.37,000/- resulting him the loss of Rs.1100/- per month and the said disparity continued and increased over the time which caused substantial and recurring financial loss. The applicant submits that in order to get the pay anomaly removed, he represented to the respondents on numerous occasions on 08.09.2024, 07.09.2025 and through the RTI dated 06.03.2025 with request to the respondents to resolve the issue and in response to that, the respondents replied vide letter dated 08.04.2025 to the effect:

*"Sub: Seeking Information under RTI Act 2005.*

*Ref:Your L/No.15478773M/RTI(Trf)Gen/RE-2/Coord/NE&P dated 17/03/2025.*

*With reference to above cited letter, it is intimated that:*

*Pay of both PBORs are same as on 01.01.2016(i.e. Rs.33,300/-) and the pay anomaly is due to not opting option by senior PBOR , hence anomaly is not directly as a result of the application of the provision of Rule FR-22(1)(a)(1)*

*The above information may be informed accordingly to PBORs"*

3. The applicant submits that he submitted his option form opting for the most beneficial option vide letter dated July 2025 but the respondents vide letter dated 12.12.2025 submit to the effect:

*"Sub: Non adjustment of OPTFX*

*Ref: CPGRAM registration No. DOPPW/E/2025/0081534  
dated 28.10.2025*

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*Please refer to your CPGRAM Registration No. cited under reference. The issue raised by you has been examined and detail clarification is as appended below:*

*It is intimated that the individual may please liaise with AC Records to provide the sheet roll of the individual and the junior alongwith comparative statement for verification.*

*Moreover, during auditing it is observed that OPTFX DO II of individual is not adjusted in system due to the reason "OPTION FORM is tempered and overwritten"*

The applicant submitted that the respondents have ignored the well settled law in the case of *Sub Chittar Singh v Union of India & Ors* in OA No.113/2014 wherein para 3 states that in the scheme itself, it has been provided that it will be the

duty of the PAO(OR) to ensure that out of two options the most beneficial option be given even if the individual has not submitted his option form within the stipulated period of time. The applicant further submits as per Para 14(b)(iv) of SAI I/S/2008, if no option is exercised by the individual, the PAO(OR) will regulate and fix the pay of the individual on promotion in more beneficial manner by keeping in view the views expressed by the Hon'ble Armed Forces Tribunal(PB) vide order dated 03.09.2021 in OA 1182/2018 titled *Sub M L Shrivastava and Ors Vs Union of India & Ors.* and a catena of other orders of the Armed Forces Tribunal wherein also similarly circumstanced applicant (s) have been granted the stepping of pay at par to his junior.

4. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Union of India & Ors Vs P Jagdish and Ors*(SLP( C) No.020470/1995 has observed that the principle of stepping up prevents violation of the principle of "equal pay for equal work". Applying the same principle of law here, a service personnel in the same rank

cannot be allowed to draw a salary higher than his batchmate because that would be against the ethos of Article 39(d) of the Constitution which envisages the principle of "equal pay for equal work". Hence granting of stepping up is the only way out to remove the said anomaly, which results in a service personnel drawing a higher salary in the same rank than his batchmate. The only way to remove this anomaly is the stepping up of the salary of aggrieved personnel at par with other service personnel in the same rank. The rules and provisions which allow the said anomaly to exist and prohibit the stepping up are violative of the principle of natural justice and equity; and contrary to Article 39(d) of the Constitution which envisages "equal pay for equal work" and contrary to the principle of law laid down by the Apex Court in its pronouncements.

5. We have examined numerous cases pertaining to the incorrect pay fixation in 6<sup>th</sup> CPC in respect of Officers/JCOs/ORs merely on the grounds of option not being exercised in the stipulated time or applicants not exercising the

option at all, and have issued orders that in all these cases the petitioners' pay is to be re-fixed with the most beneficial option as stipulated in Para 14 of the SAI 1/S/2008 dated 11.10.2008. The matter of incorrect pay-fixation and providing the most beneficial option in the case of JCOs/ORs has been exhaustively examined in the case of Sub M.L. Shrivastava and Ors Vs. Union of India [O.A No.1182 of 2018] decided on 03.09.2021.

6. Furthermore, it is essential to observe that the order dated 03.09.2021 in OA 1182/2018 in case of *Sub Mahendra Lal Shrivastava(Retd) v Union of India & Ors.* and two other connected matters in OA 1314/2018 in *Sub Sattaru Lakshmana Rao v Union of India & Ors.* and OA 892/2019 in *Sub(TIFC) Jaya Prakash v Union of India & Ors.* has been upheld by the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi vide judgment dated 05.05.2025 in WP(C) 5880/2025 in *UOI & Ors. vs. Sub Mahendra Lal Shrivastava(Retd)* with observations in Para-24 and 25 thereof to the effect:-

*"24. There are various reasons why, in our view, this writ petition cannot succeed:*

(i) Firstly, the writ petition has been preferred more than 3½ years after the passing of the impugned judgment, without even a whisper of justification for the delay.

(ii) The writ petition is, therefore, liable to be rejected even on delay and laches. Nonetheless, as the issue is recurring in nature, we have examined it on merits.

(iii) It appears that the earlier decision of the AFT in Sub Chittar Singh has never been challenged by the petitioner. It is well settled that the UOI cannot adopt a pick and choose policy, and leave one decision unchallenged, while challenging a later decision on the same issue. Moreover, we find that the AFT, in the impugned order, has placed reliance on the decision in Sub Chittar Singh which, as we note, remains unchallenged.

(iv) Even on merits, there is no substance in the present petition. The reasoning of the AFT is unexceptionable. Though para 8 of the SAI required persons to exercise the option regarding the manner in which they were to be extended the benefit of the revised pay scales within three months of the SAI, which was issued on 11 October 2008, it was extended twice. It was first extended by letter dated 21 December 2010 till 31 March 2011. Subsequently, by letter dated 11 December 2013, it was directed that applications for change of option received till 30 June 2011 would be processed. Though it is correct that the respondents did not exercise their option within that period, it is also clear that each of the respondents had exercised their



option prior to 30 December 2013. (v) Moreover, we are also in agreement with the AFT's reliance on clause 14(b)(iv) of the SAI, which mandated that, if no option was exercised by the individual, the PAO would regulate the fixation of pay of the individual on promotion to ensure that he would be extended the more beneficial of the two options, i.e., of either of re-fixation of pay with effect from 1 January 2006 or w.e.f. the date of his next promotion.

(vi) We are in agreement with the AFT that, given the fact that the instruction was pertaining to officers in the army, and was inherently beneficial in nature, it has to be accorded an expansive interpretation. The AFT has correctly noted that the very purpose of granting extension of time for exercise of option was to cater to situations in which the officers concerned who in many cases, such as the cases before us, were not of very high ranks, would not have been aware of the date from which they were required to exercise their option and therefore may have either exercised their option belatedly or failed to exercise their option. It was, obviously, to ensure that an equitable dispensation of the recommendations of the 6th CPC that clause 14(b)(iv) place the responsibility on the PAO(OR) to ensure that the officers were given the more beneficial of the options available to them.

(vii) There is no dispute about the fact that, by re-fixing the pay of the respondents w.e.f. 1 January 2006 instead of the date from which they were promoted to the next grade between 1 January 2006 and 11

*October 2008, the respondents suffered financial detriment. They, therefore, were not extended the most beneficial of the two options of pay of fixation available to them, as was required by clause 14(b)(iv) of the SAI.*

*25. We, therefore, are in complete agreement with the impugned judgment of the AFT and see no cause to interfere therein."*

7. Similarly, in the matter of incorrect pay fixation in the 7<sup>th</sup> CPC, the issue has been exhaustively examined in Sub Ramjeevan Kumar Singh Vs. Union of India [O.A. No.2000/2021] decided on 27.09.2021. Relevant portions are extracted below:

*"12. Notwithstanding the absence of the option clause in 7<sup>th</sup> CPC, this Bench has repeatedly held that a soldier cannot be drawing less pay than his junior, or be placed in a pay scale/band which does not offer the most beneficial pay scale, for the only reason that the soldier did not exercise the required option for pay fixation, or exercised it late. We have no hesitation in concluding that even under the 7<sup>th</sup> CPC, it remains the responsibility of the Respondents; in particular the PAO (OR), to ensure that a soldier's pay is fixed in the most beneficial manner.*

*13. In view of the foregoing, we allow the OA and direct the Respondents to:-*

*(a) Take necessary action to amend the Extraordinary Gazette Notification NO SRO*

*9E dated 03.05.2017 and include a suitable 'most beneficial' option clause, similar to the 6<sup>th</sup> CPC. A Report to be submitted within three months of this order.*

*(b) Review the pay fixed of the applicant on his promotion to Naib Subedar in the 7<sup>th</sup> CPC, and after due verification re-fix his pay in a manner that is most beneficial to the applicant, while ensuring that he does not draw less pay than his juniors.*

*(c) Issue all arrears within three months of this order and submit a compliance report.*

*(d) Issue all arrears within three months of this order and submit a compliance report."*

8. In respect of officers, the cases pertaining to pay-anomaly have also been examined in detail by the Tribunal in the case of Lt Col Karan Dusad Vs. Union of India and others [O.A. No.868 of 2020 and connected matters] decided on 05.08.2022. In that case, we have directed CGDA/CDA(O) to issue necessary instructions to review pay-fixation of all officers of all the three Services, whose pay has been fixed on 01.01.2006 in 6<sup>th</sup> CPC and provide them the most beneficial option. Relevant extracts are given below:

*"102 (a) to (j) xxx*

*(k) The pay fixation of all the officers, of all the three Services (Army, Navy and Air Force), whose pay has been fixed as on 01.01.2006 merely because they*

*did not exercise an option/ exercised it after the stipulated time be reviewed by CGDA/ CDA(O), and the benefit of the most beneficial option be extended to these officers, with all consequential benefits, including to those who have retired. The CGDA to issue necessary instructions for the review and implementation.*

Directions

103. xxx

104. *We, however, direct the CGDA/CDA(O) to review and verify the pay fixation of all those officers, of all the three Services (Army, Navy and Air Force), whose pay has been fixed as on 01.01.2006, including those who have retired, and re-fix their pay with the most beneficial option, with all consequential benefits, including re-fixing of their pay in the 7<sup>th</sup> CPC and pension wherever applicable. The CGDA to issue necessary instructions for this review and its implementation. Respondents are directed to complete this review and file a detailed compliance report within four months of this order."*

9. Vide orders of this Tribunal in *Sub M.L Shrivastava and others Vs Union of India and others* (O.A No. 1182 of 2018 decided on 03.09.2021) which has been upheld by Hon'ble High Court of Delhi vide judgment dated 05.05.2025 in WP (C) 5880/2025 in *Union of India and others* versus *Sub Mahendra Lal Shrivastava Retd* vide observations in Paras 24 and 25 thereof already reproduced hereinabove in Para 7, it is apparent

that the mere non exercise of the beneficial option by the applicant or non exercise thereof within the stipulated period of time cannot be a ground to dis-entitle the applicant of the most beneficial option for implementation of the 7th CPC recommendations and the fixation of the pay and the pension of the applicant, merely because the promotion of the applicant had not taken place in the period of transition from the 6<sup>th</sup> CPC to the 7<sup>th</sup> CPC.

10. In view of the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Civil Appeal 1943/2022 in *Lt Col Suprita Chandel vs. UOI & Ors.* whereby vide Paras-14 and 15 thereof, it has been observed to the effect:-

*"14. It is a well settled principle of law that where a citizen aggrieved by an action of the government department has approached the court and obtained a declaration of law in his/her favour, others similarly situated ought to be extended the benefit without the need for them to go to court. [See Amrit Lal Berry vs. Collector of Central Excise, New Delhi and Others, (1975) 4 SCC 714]*

*15. In K.I. Shephard and Others vs. Union of India and Others, (1987) 4 SCC 431, this Court while reinforcing the above principle held as under:-*

*"19. The writ petitions and the appeals must succeed. We set aside the impugned judgments of the Single Judge and Division Bench of the Kerala High Court and direct that each of the three transferee banks should take over the excluded employees on the same terms and conditions of employment under the respective banking companies prior to amalgamation. The employees would be entitled to the benefit of continuity of service for all purposes including salary and perks throughout the period. We leave it open to the transferee banks to take such action as they consider proper against these employees in accordance with law. Some of the excluded employees have not come to court. There is no justification to penalise them for not having litigated. They too shall be entitled to the same benefits as the petitioners. ...."*

*(Emphasis Supplied)",*

all persons aggrieved similarly situated may not litigate on the same issue and would be entitled to the grant of the benefits of which have already been extended to others similarly situated .

11. In the light of the above considerations, the OA 186/2026 is allowed and direct the respondents to:

(a) Review the pay fixed of the applicant under the 7<sup>th</sup> CPC after due verification in a manner that is most beneficial to the applicant;

(b) To pay the arrears within three months of this order.

12. No order as to costs.

  
**(JUSTICE ANU MALHOTRA)**  
**MEMBER (J)**

  
**(LT GEN C P MOHANTY)**  
**MEMBER (A)**

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