

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

17.

**OA 902/2026**

IC-84465H Maj Jung Bahadur

Singh Dhindsa

..... Applicant

Versus

Union of India & Ors.

.... Respondents

For Applicant

: Mr Jatin Kadam & Ms. Karandeep  
Kaur, Advocates

For Respondents

: Ms Sunanda Shukla, Advocate

**CORAM**

**HON'BLE JUSTICE ANU MALHOTRA, MEMBER(J)**

**HON'BLE REAR ADMIRAL DHIREN VIG, MEMBER (A)**

**ORDER**

**19.03.2026**

The applicant IC-84465H Maj Jung Bahadur Singh Dhindsa vide the present OA filed under Section 14 of the Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007 makes the following prayers:

*“(a) Call for the records pertaining to fixation of the applicant’s pay under the 7<sup>th</sup> Central Pay Commission upon his promotion to the rank of Major from the date of promotion, whereby the respondents have failed to fix*

*his pay in the manner most beneficial to him, and quash and set aside any orders or actions to that effect.*

*(b) Issue further direction to the respondents to re-fix the pay of the applicant in the 7<sup>th</sup> CPC on promotion to the Rank of Major on 08.12.2024 in a manner that is more beneficial to the applicant.*

*(c) Direct the respondents to pay the differential amount of pay arising out of such re-fixation after necessary adjustments by way of arrears alongwith penal interest @18%p.a. within a time bound manner.*

*(e) Pass any other order/orders as deemed appropriate by this Hon'ble Tribunal in the facts and circumstances of the present case."*

2. The applicant was commissioned in the Indian Army on 08.12.2018 after having been found fit in all respects and was promoted to the Rank of Major on 08.12.2024. The applicant submits that the recommendations of the 7<sup>th</sup> Pay Commission were implemented vide SRO 12(E) dated 03.05.2017 in terms of the Army Pay Rules in respect of officers born on the effective strength of the Army as on 01.01.2016 as well as those commissioned thereafter and the said SRO contained a provision for exercise of option for fixation of pay in respect of officers who were promoted from one rank to another between

01.01.2016 and the date of issuance of the said instructions i.e. 03.07.2017 permitting them to continue in the pre-revised pay scale under the 6<sup>th</sup> CPC and seek fixation either from the Date of promotion or from the date of next increment whichever is more beneficial and the time limit for exercising of such option was 180 days from the date of issuance of the said instructions and the said instructions were further amended extending the period of 180 days from 06.07.2017. The applicant further submits that the respondents issued a circular vide MoD D(Pay/Services) OM No.1(20)/2017/D(Pay/Services) wherein it was stipulated that "option has to be exercised within three months from the date of promotion to have the pay fixed under these provisions from the date of such promotion or [to have the pay fixed from the date of accrual of next increment in the scale of the pay in the lower grade." Further, ADGPS(PS-3) Dte Letter No. B/25451/Doc Pro Offrs/AG/PS-3(D)/02/2021 dated 21.06.2021, vide which it was communicated to PCDA(O) that exercising of OPTION is mandatory through DO Part II Order with casualty code OPTFXDNI or OPTFXDOP whichever applicable w.e.f. 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2021 duly supported with ink-signed copy of Option Certificate as prescribed vide GoI MoD

New Delhi letter No.1(26)/97/D(Pay/Services) dated 08.05.2003. Further, the officers who have been promoted or granted financial up-gradation on or after 01.01.2016 and desire to exercise/re-exercise option for pay fixation from DNI may opt within three months from the date of issue of GoI, MoD, New Delhi OM dated 18.08.2023 i.e. by 17.11.2023.

3. The applicant further submits that on promotion to the rank of Major and as per the applicable guidelines and judicial precedent, his pay ought to have been fixed in the most beneficial manner at the time of his promotion, however, his pay was fixed from the date of promotion instead of from the date of next increment merely on the ground that he did not exercise option to switch over to the revised pay structure within the stipulated time frame whereas his batch-mates got their pay fixed at a higher level on being promoted to the rank of Major as they had exercised the most beneficial option. The applicant further submits that he sought to exercise his option for fixation of pay from the date of next increment in the lower rank i.e. 01.01.2015, however, the Part II Order notifying his promotion to the rank of Major was issued only on 17.03.2025 and that since the publication of Part II Order is a mandatory

pre-requisite for exercising the option, he could not validly exercise the option within the stipulated period of time i.e. within 03 months and consequently, the PCDA(O) rejected his request only on the ground that option was time-barred.

4. The applicant further submits that he had raised his grievance on the CPGRAMS portal seeking redressal of the pay anomaly in the fixation of his pay with the request for the fixation of his pay from the date of next increment i.e. 01.01.2025 which was more beneficial to him but the reply of the respondents to this effect is as under:

*"Reply*

*"Sir,*

*Regarding exercise of option.*

*Please refer to MoD D(Pay/Services) OM No.1(20)/2017/D(Pay/Services) dated 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2019, wherein it stipulates that "Option has to be exercised within three months from the date of Promotion, to have pay fixed under these provisions from the date of such promotion or to have the pay fixed from the date of accrual of next increment in the scale of the pay in the lower grade". Further, Option for Pay fixation on promotion, once exercised is Final"*

*Further also refer to ADGPS(PS-3) Dte Letter No. B/25451/Doc Pro Offrs/AG/PS-3(D)/02/2021 dated 21.06.2021, vide which it was communicated to PCDA(O) that exercising of OPTION is mandatory through DO Part II Order with casualty code OPTFXDNI or OPTFXDOP whichever applicable w.e.f. 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2021 duly supported with ink-signed copy of Option Certificate as prescribed vide GoI MoD New Delhi letter No.1(26)/97/D(Pay/Services) dated*

08.05.2003. However, Officer has not exercised option of DNI within stipulated time.

Further, on scrutiny of the Part II Orders, it found that officer already opted OPTFXDOP vide Part II Order No.139/2 dated 11.12.2024 and the same is cancelled vide Part II Order No.11 dated 17.03.2025 which against the order of **Option for Pay Fixation on Promotion, Once Exercised is Final.** Moreover, the OPTFXDNI published vide Part II Order numbers 0011 dated 17.03.2025 are also not published during the stipulated time i.e. 3 months from the date of promotion.

Regarding the relaxation /extension of time limit for acceptance of such officer may take up the matter with MoD/DMA/Competent Authority through proper channel.

Grievance officer has seen."

5. The applicant submits that the respondents have not taken any step to rectify the pay disparity despite the issue having already been decided by the Armed Forces Tribunal vide order dated 17.04.2025 in OA No.1043/2025 titled **Col Tarun Singh Jamwal Vs Union of India & Ors.** The applicant further submits that vide the letter of the ADG PS(PS-3), Dte Letter No.B/25451/Doc Pro Offrs/AG/PS-3(D)/02/2021 dated 21.06.2021, it was communicated to the PCDA(O) that exercising of OPTION is mandatory through DO Part II Order with casualty code OPTFXDNI or OPTFXDOP whichever applicable wef 04.09.2021 vide GoI, MoD New Delhi Letter No.1(26)/97/D(Pay/Services) dated 08.05.2003 with it being

stipulated that officers who have been promoted or granted financial up-gradation on or after 01.01.2016 and desire to exercise/re-exercise option for pay fixation from DNI may opt within three months from the date of issue of GoI, MoD, New Delhi OM dated 18.08.2023 i.e. by 17.11.2023. The applicant further submits that the Statutory Rules & Orders (SRO) had a provision for exercise of option for fixation of pay for those officers who were promoted from one rank to the other between 01.01.2016 to the date of issuance of instruction i.e. till 03.05.2017 to continue in the pre-revised scale of the 6<sup>th</sup> CPC and to get the fixation from the date of promotion or from the date of next increment whichever is more beneficial and the time limit for exercise of such option was prescribed to be 180 days from the date of issuance of the said instructions and the said instructions were further amended and the time limit was extended till 180 days from 06.07.2017.

6. 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 12 of the SAI 2/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.

7. 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 W.P.(C) 5880/2025 Page 17 of 19 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 W.P.(C) 5880/2025 Page 18 of 19 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."

8. 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."*

9. 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."*

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)",*

11. Furthermore, 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 which have been reproduced in para 6 hereinabove. 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.

12. In the light of the above considerations, the OA 902/2026 is allowed and we direct the respondents to:

(a) Review the pay fixation of the applicant on his promotion to the rank of Major on 08.12.2024 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.

- (b) To pay the arrears within three months of this order.
13. No order as to costs.

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

**(REAR ADMIRAL DHIREN VIG)**  
**MEMBER (A)**

/Chanana/