SRA LEGAL - WEEKLY JUDGMENT DIGEST

LEADING DECISIONS • PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES • VERIFIED SOURCES



CS RAVI BHUSHAN KUMAR

Advocate & Insolvency Professional



ADV. AKSHIKA DUBEY

Content Compiler

Advocates | Company Secretaries | Chartered Accountants | Insolvency Professionals

D-5, 3rd Floor, Sector 10, Noida - 201301 • D-205, Karkardooma Court, East Delhi - 110032

9990339200 • 0120-4160986 • sralegal2009@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This edition selects eleven decisions and significant orders with immediate value for litigation, employment, regulated business, banking, anti-corruption and public-law practice. The Supreme Court's directions against forcible vehicle repossession are the week's strongest compliance signal: recovery rights remain enforceable only through lawful process, and RBI supervision must operate in substance.

Service-law decisions refine four recurring questions. Promotion does not crystallise under repealed rules merely because a vacancy arose; placement in a reserve list does not compel an employer to fill a post; pay parity requires complete comparability rather than similar functions alone; and advertised eligibility conditions bind public recruiters unless validly relaxed.

For criminal and evidentiary practice, the Court required a proved link between a bribe intermediary and the public servant, while the Karnataka High Court rejected an intoxication inference based only on smell. The Rajasthan High Court confined Permanent Lok Adalat jurisdiction to statutory public utility services, and the Bombay High Court required food-safety authorities to reassess suspension after verified compliance.

7	4	9	2
Supreme Court	High Courts	Final judgments	Significant / reference orders

EDITOR'S PRACTICE WATCH

SIGNIFICANT ORDER

Immediate action points: review repossession and recovery-agent protocols; preserve larger-Bench arguments in Section 14B EPF disputes; audit public recruitment against the exact advertisement; and insist on reasoned consideration of fresh compliance evidence in regulatory suspension appeals.

SCOPE & STATUS GUIDE

This digest covers decisions and material orders identified for the seven days from 11 to 17 September 2026. A date marked ‘Reported’ is the publication date used where the retrieved report did not state a separate pronouncement date. Case titles, citations and Bench composition are included only when verified from the linked material.

The selection was made from coverage across the Supreme Court of India and all Indian High Courts, with priority to decisions likely to affect professional advice, institutional compliance, pleadings or hearing strategy.

FINAL JUDGMENT	Dispositive ruling determining the appeal, petition or principal controversy.
SIGNIFICANT ORDER	Operative judicial direction with present consequences, though the wider proceeding may continue.
REFERENCE ORDER	An issue referred for larger-Bench resolution; existing law should be applied with caution.

SELECTED MATTERS

01 Forcible vehicle repossession: RBI compliance directions and compensation — Supreme Court of India

02 Bharat Raj Meena v. Central Bureau of Investigation — proof of indirect bribe acceptance — Supreme Court of India

03 Sunita Lahu Panchpande v. District Collector & Ors. — appointments contrary to advertised eligibility — Supreme Court of India

04 BSNL v. G.N. Mani Ravinder & connected matters — promotion under repealed rules — Supreme Court of India

05 G.P. Sangeetha & Ors. v. State of Kerala & Ors. — equal pay and experience-based classification — Supreme Court of India

06 Disability pension — employer bears burden under the 2008 entitlement regime — Supreme Court of India

07 Section 14B EPF damages — automatic penalty question referred to a larger Bench — Supreme Court of India

08 Ravi Kant Thakral v. Bank of Baroda — reserve list does not compel promotion — Delhi High Court

09 State of Rajasthan v. Bhanwar Lal Jain — Permanent Lok Adalat jurisdiction — Rajasthan High Court

10 Salma & Ors. v. United India Insurance Co. Ltd. & Anr. — proof of intoxication in employee compensation — Karnataka High Court

11 Hotel Alankar v. State of Maharashtra — FSSAI licence suspension after rectification — Bombay High Court

SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

Leading judgments and significant procedural developments

01. Forcible vehicle repossession: RBI compliance directions and compensation

Court: Supreme Court of India	Date: 16 September 2026
Bench: P.S. Narasimha and Alok Aradhe, JJ.	Status: Final Judgment

FINAL JUDGMENT

Banks and NBFCs cannot use force or extra-legal recovery methods to seize hypothecated vehicles. The Court directed RBI to secure real compliance with its recovery-practice framework and awarded ₹10 lakh compensation to the vehicle owner.

Issue

Whether a financier could repossess and sell a hypothecated commercial vehicle without lawful process, and whether RBI's recovery-agent directions were being effectively enforced.

Holding / development

The Court treated RBI directions under Section 35A of the Banking Regulation Act as binding, reiterated that seizure must be through lawful means, identified safeguards for recovery-agent engagement and repossession clauses, and directed the Registry to send the judgment to RBI.

Practical significance

A major borrower-protection and financial-services ruling. Lenders, NBFCs, recovery agencies and litigators should review standard operating procedures, notices, agency due diligence, repossession clauses and grievance systems immediately.

Key provisions / principles

Banking Regulation Act, 1949, Section 35A; RBI Fair Practices Code and recovery-agent directions; rule of law; due process in secured-asset recovery; compensation for unlawful State or regulated-entity action.

Source: LiveLaw report and linked judgment

02. Bharat Raj Meena v. Central Bureau of Investigation — proof of indirect bribe acceptance

Court: Supreme Court of India	Date: 16 September 2026
Bench: Dipankar Datta and N. Kotiswar Singh, JJ.	Status: Final Judgment

FINAL JUDGMENT

Payment to an intermediary who invoked a public servant's name did not, without a proved evidentiary link to the accused, establish the public servant's demand or acceptance of illegal gratification. The conviction was set aside and the appellant acquitted.

Issue

Whether the prosecution proved beyond reasonable doubt that money received by an intermediary was demanded for, intended for, or reached the accused public servant.

Holding / development

The Court held that the chain of proof must connect demand, the intermediary transaction and the accused. Suspicion arising from the intermediary's conduct could not substitute for proof of the public servant's acceptance.

Practical significance

Useful for both prosecution and defence in corruption trials involving intermediaries. Investigation and trial strategy must build or test the complete evidentiary chain rather than rely only on recovery from a third party.

Key provisions / principles

Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, Sections 7 and 13; demand and acceptance; indirect receipt; proof beyond reasonable doubt; Neeraj Dutta and R.P.S. Yadav principles.

Source: LiveLaw report and linked judgment — 2026 LiveLaw (SC) 945

03. Sunita Lahu Panchpande v. District Collector & Ors. — appointments contrary to advertised eligibility

Court: Supreme Court of India	Date: Reported 17 September 2026
Bench: Dipankar Datta and Sheel Nagu, JJ.	Status: Final Judgment

FINAL JUDGMENT

An appointment made in disregard of an essential qualification stated in the advertisement cannot create a right to continue. Where the qualification was not shown to be relaxable, the contrary appointment was treated as a fraud on the public.

Issue

Whether an Anganwadi Supervisor appointed without the district-specific experience required by the advertisement could retain the post on the basis of an administrative clarification and subsequent service.

Holding / development

The appeal was dismissed; the High Court's cancellation of the appointment and direction benefiting the next eligible wait-listed candidate were upheld. The Court held that an administrative clarification could not override the governing resolution and advertisement.

Practical significance

Recruiting bodies should align advertisements, governing rules and scrutiny criteria. Candidates and challengers should verify whether essential qualifications are expressly relaxable before relying on equity or length of service.

Key provisions / principles

Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution; public recruitment; adherence to advertised criteria; no estoppel against eligibility rules; M. Tripura Sundari Devi.

Source: LiveLaw report and linked judgment — 2026 LiveLaw (SC) 947

04. BSNL v. G.N. Mani Ravinder & connected matters — promotion under repealed rules

Court: Supreme Court of India	Date: 17 September 2026
Bench: Prashant Kumar Mishra and Ujjal Bhuyan, JJ.	Status: Final Judgment

FINAL JUDGMENT

Employees officiating in a higher post did not acquire a vested right to promotion under repealed rules. Following restructuring, BSNL could require the written test prescribed by the new recruitment rules.

Issue

Whether vacancies arising under earlier rules had to be filled under those rules after repeal and restructuring, particularly for employees holding the post only on an officiating basis.

Holding / development

The Court set aside the Telangana High Court's directions, applied BSNL v. Mishri Lal, distinguished Medini C. because those employees had been provisionally promoted, and rejected a universal vacancy-date rule.

Practical significance

Important for service-law advice during restructuring. The employee's precise status—officiating, ad hoc, provisional or regular—can determine whether any accrued protection survives a rule change.

Key provisions / principles

No vested right to promotion; applicable recruitment rules; restructuring; officiating service; distinction between a right to consideration and a right to promotion.

Source: LiveLaw report

---

05. G.P. Sangeetha & Ors. v. State of Kerala & Ors. — equal pay and experience-based classification

Court: Supreme Court of India	Date: Reported 17 September 2026
Bench: Dipankar Datta and Sheel Nagu, JJ.	Status: Final Judgment

FINAL JUDGMENT

Equal pay for equal work is not triggered by functional similarity alone. A rational distinction based on recruitment source, qualifications, experience, responsibility or accountability may justify different pay treatment.

Issue

Whether directly recruited junior higher-secondary teachers were entitled to the pay protection given to experienced promotee or transferee teachers performing similar functions.

Holding / development

The Court dismissed the direct recruits' appeals and upheld the distinction because the promotee/transferee group brought prior teaching experience that justified protection of the higher pay scale.

Practical significance

Pay-parity claims should be pleaded and evidenced factor by factor. Employers should record the legitimate objective and factual basis for any differential scale; employees must establish complete comparability, not merely identical job labels.

Key provisions / principles

Constitution Articles 14 and 39(d); equal pay for equal work; reasonable classification; recruitment source, qualifications, experience and responsibility.

Source: LiveLaw report — 2026 LiveLaw (SC) 948

---

06. Disability pension — employer bears burden under the 2008 entitlement regime

Court: Supreme Court of India	Date: 15 September 2026
Bench: P.S. Narasimha and Alok Aradhe, JJ.	Status: Final Judgment

FINAL JUDGMENT

Even after the 2008 Entitlement Rules removed the earlier presumption of fitness at entry, the Union continued to bear the burden of proving that a service member's disability was neither attributable to nor aggravated by military service.

Issue

Whether Release Medical Board findings described as ‘neither attributable nor aggravated’ were sufficient to defeat disability-pension claims without the employer discharging its evidentiary burden.

Holding / development

The Court dismissed 271 Union appeals arising from Armed Forces Tribunal and High Court orders granting disability pension to former service members.

Practical significance

The decision affects pension litigation and medical-board reasoning across a large class of claims. Authorities must support non-attributability findings with reasons and evidence rather than formulaic conclusions.

Key provisions / principles

2008 Entitlement Rules; disability pension; burden of proof; attributable to or aggravated by service; reasoned medical-board assessment.

Source: LiveLaw report

07. Section 14B EPF damages — automatic penalty question referred to a larger Bench

Court: Supreme Court of India	Date: Reported 15 September 2026
Bench: Bench composition not verified in the retrieved report	Status: Reference Order

REFERENCE ORDER

The Court doubted the view that damages for delayed provident-fund deposits under Section 14B are invariably automatic and mandatory, and referred the issue for authoritative consideration by a larger Bench.

Issue

Whether the EPF authority has discretion in imposing or waiving Section 14B damages, or whether delay alone mandates the statutory penalty.

Holding / development

The correctness of the 2022 Horticulture Experiment Station Gonikoppal line was questioned. No final rule has yet been laid down; the larger Bench will determine the governing standard.

Practical significance

Employers should not treat this as a waiver of existing liability. Pending and future matters should preserve arguments on mens rea, circumstances of delay and statutory discretion while tracking the reference.

Key provisions / principles

Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, Section 14B; damages for delayed remittance; precedent; larger-Bench reference.

Source: LiveLaw report

INDIAN HIGH COURTS

Selected practice-significant rulings from the nationwide review

08. Ravi Kant Thakral v. Bank of Baroda — reserve list does not compel promotion

Court: Delhi High Court	Date: Reported 16 September 2026
Bench: Sanjeev Narula, J.	Status: Final Judgment

FINAL JUDGMENT

First position in a valid reserve list gave precedence only if the Bank chose to operate the list; it did not oblige the Bank to fill every vacancy or confer an indefeasible right to promotion.

Issue

Whether a former Deputy General Manager could claim promotion because a General Manager vacancy arose while he stood first in the reserve list.

Holding / development

The writ petition was dismissed. The promotion policy used discretionary language and permitted management to leave vacancies unfilled; no lower-ranked reserve candidate had been preferred.

Practical significance

In selection-list litigation, the governing policy language and evidence of discriminatory operation are decisive. Vacancy existence alone is insufficient unless rules impose a duty to fill it.

Key provisions / principles

Article 14; select and reserve lists; legitimate expectation; administrative discretion; Shankarsan Dash v. Union of India.

Source: LiveLaw report — 2026 LiveLaw (Del) 851

09. State of Rajasthan v. Bhanwar Lal Jain — Permanent Lok Adalat jurisdiction

Court: Rajasthan High Court	Date: Reported 15 September 2026
Bench: Anoop Kumar Dhand, J.	Status: Final Judgment

FINAL JUDGMENT

A Permanent Lok Adalat's jurisdiction is confined to disputes concerning statutory ‘public utility services’. It could not adjudicate a government employee's claim for service benefits.

Issue

Whether the Permanent Lok Adalat, Merta, could direct the Public Health Engineering Department to grant service benefits from the employee's initial appointment date.

Holding / development

The award was quashed for want of jurisdiction. The employee was given liberty to make a departmental representation, which the department was asked to

decide sympathetically and expeditiously.

Practical significance

Parties must test subject-matter jurisdiction before using pre-litigation conciliation forums. Service disputes should follow departmental and service-law remedies unless they independently fall within the statutory public-utility definition.

Key provisions / principles

Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, Sections 22A and 22C; public utility services; jurisdictional limits; alternative remedy.

Source: LiveLaw report — 2026 LiveLaw (Raj) 383

---

10. Salma & Ors. v. United India Insurance Co. Ltd. & Anr. — proof of intoxication in employee compensation

Court: Karnataka High Court	Date: Reported 17 September 2026
Bench: Ravi V. Hosmani, J.	Status: Final Judgment

FINAL JUDGMENT

A reported smell of alcohol, without reliable evidence that the worker was actually under its influence when the accident occurred, was insufficient to invoke the employer-liability exclusion.

Issue

Whether a Tribunal could reject dependants' compensation solely from a post-mortem observation concerning smell, without scientific or eyewitness evidence of intoxication and causal connection.

Holding / development

The Tribunal's award was set aside and the claim remitted for fresh disposal. The Court distinguished consumption from being under the influence and found the inference drawn from smell alone unsafe.

Practical significance

Insurers and claimants should focus on objective evidence, statutory thresholds and causation. Medical observations must be interpreted in context rather than converted into an automatic exclusion.

Key provisions / principles

Employees' Compensation Act, 1923, Sections 3(1)(b)(i) and 22; burden of proof; intoxication; causal connection; Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, Section 185 by analogy.

Source: LiveLaw report — 2026 LiveLaw (Kar) 361

11. Hotel Alankar v. State of Maharashtra — FSSAI licence suspension after rectification

Court: Bombay High Court	Date: 11 September 2026
Bench: Sharmila U. Deshmukh and Neeraj P. Dhote, JJ.	Status: Final Judgment

FINAL JUDGMENT

A food-business licence suspension aimed at protecting public health cannot continue indefinitely once deficiencies are rectified and re-inspection records exemplary compliance. Monitoring may continue, but suspension must remain justified by current non-compliance.

Issue

Whether authorities could maintain suspension despite a re-inspection score of 97% and without considering the later compliance report.

Holding / development

The appellate order and suspension were set aside, and the FSSAI licence restored. The Court held that ignoring the re-verification report defeated the statutory improvement-and-compliance scheme.

Practical significance

Regulated businesses should obtain prompt re-inspection records and insist that appellate authorities consider post-suspension compliance. Regulators should issue reasoned, current-risk-based orders.

Key provisions / principles

Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, Sections 32, 55 and 63; improvement notice; public-health suspension; proportionality; consideration of subsequent compliance.

Source: LiveLaw report and linked order

EDITORIAL & FIRM PANEL

SRA Legal's weekly judgment digest is structured for fast professional use: each matter separates procedural posture, the operative principle and the practical consequence. Hyperlinked source lines allow the reader to move from the editorial note to the underlying report or linked court document.



CS RAVI BHUSHAN KUMAR, FCS, LL.M., IP, M.Com.
Advocate and Insolvency Professional
Former Chairman, ICSI-Noida Chapter

Office: D-5, 3rd Floor, Sector 10, Noida - 201301
Chamber: D-205, Karkardooma Court, East Delhi - 110032
Mobile: 9990339200 Office: 0120-4160986
Email: sralegal2009@gmail.com



ADV. AKSHIKA DUBEY
CONTENT COMPILER
M: 9990339245

LITIGATION & DISPUTES	CORPORATE & SECRETARIAL	INSOLVENCY & REGULATORY
Court, tribunal and appellate strategy; pleadings; interim and final relief.	Governance, compliance, transactions and company-law advisory.	IBC assignments, creditor strategy, restructuring and regulated-business advice.

Advocates | Company Secretaries | Chartered Accountants | Insolvency Professionals

SRA LEGAL