

₹20,000 debited, no cash?

Your money is safe.

What to do when an ATM keeps your money, how the refund works, and the ₹100 a day rule your bank has to follow.

You commented "PDF", so here it is. The video showed what happened to my friend at the ATM. This guide gives you the full process: what to note before you walk away, what to tell your bank, when the refund must arrive, and where to go if it doesn't.

- 1 The refund is your right, not a favour.** RBI says your bank must put the money back within 5 days of the transaction.
- 2 Late refund means extra money for you.** From day 6, the bank owes you ₹100 for every day of delay, credited automatically.
- 3 RBI is your backup, and it's free.** If the bank says no or goes quiet for 30 days, the RBI Ombudsman steps in.

REFUND WITHIN

T+5 days

LATE PENALTY

₹100/day

BANK REPLY

30 days

RBI COMPLAINT

₹0 fee

The three things *to remember*

Here is the video in one table, with the exact rule behind each point.

FROM THE VIDEO	THE ACTUAL RULE
Keep the ATM receipt	The receipt (or the SMS and your statement) shows the ATM ID, date, time and transaction number. These are the details your bank uses to trace the transaction in the ATM's cash log.
Call your bank's customer care	Always complain to your own bank , the one that issued your card, even if you used another bank's ATM. Ask for a complaint or ticket number every time.
Refund within 5 days	RBI rule: the bank must reverse a failed ATM withdrawal within T+5 days , where T is the day of the transaction (calendar days, Sundays included).
₹100 per day	For every day after T+5 that the money stays stuck, the bank must pay you ₹100 . It should be credited on its own, without you asking.
RBI Banking Ombudsman	If the bank rejects your complaint, gives a reply you're not happy with, or doesn't reply within 30 days, you can complain to the RBI Ombudsman for free.

Source: RBI circular RBI/2019-20/67 (20 Sept 2019) on turnaround time for failed transactions; Reserve Bank Integrated Ombudsman Scheme, 2026 (in force from 1 July 2026).

THE ONE THING TO NOTICE

You don't have to fight for the refund. The bank's clock starts the day the ATM failed, whether you complained or not.

ABOUT THE ORDER OF STEPS IN THE VIDEO

In the video I said "if it's not refunded in 5 days, complain to the Ombudsman, and after that the bank pays ₹100 a day." The real order is a little different. The ₹100 a day starts automatically from day 6, no Ombudsman needed. And the Ombudsman is the last step: you complain to your bank first, then go to RBI only if the bank says no or stays silent for 30 days. The rest of this guide follows that correct order.

Where your money *actually* went

Your money isn't lost. It's stuck between your account and the ATM, and the records show exactly where.

1 What goes on inside the machine

When you press "withdraw", two things happen. Your bank **debits your account** first, then tells the ATM to count out the notes. If something breaks in between (a network drop, a cash jam, the machine running out of notes), the debit has already happened but the cash never comes out.

Every ATM keeps an **electronic journal**, a log of every note it dispensed. At the end of the day, the bank matches that log against the cash left inside the machine. If your ₹20,000 is still sitting in the cassette, the mismatch shows up, and the money is sent back to your account. This matching is called **reconciliation**.

2 Raise a complaint in all of these cases

WHAT HAPPENED	WHAT TO DO
No cash at all, full amount debited	Classic failed transaction. Full refund due within T+5 days.
Only part of the cash came out	Count it at the machine. Tell the bank the exact amount you got and the amount missing.
Used another bank's ATM	Still complain to your own bank. It deals with the other bank for you.
Machine showed "transaction declined" but SMS says debited	Treat it as a failed transaction. Save the SMS.

THIS TOOK ME A WHILE TO GET

Often the money comes back on its own once reconciliation runs. Your complaint is the safety net that puts it on record.

The first *10 minutes*

What you do before walking away makes the rest easy. Stay calm and collect a few details.

3 Do these before you leave

- 1 Wait a minute at the machine.** Sometimes the cash comes out late, or the machine pulls it back in. Don't walk away the second the screen changes.
- 2 Take the receipt, or a photo of the screen.** If no receipt prints, photograph the error screen and the ATM ID sticker on the machine.
- 3 Note the place and time.** ATM location, bank name on the machine, date and exact time. Your phone's camera timestamp works.
- 4 Screenshot the debit SMS.** It usually has the amount, date, time and a reference number.
- 5 Don't accept help from strangers.** Never share your PIN, OTP or card with anyone who offers to "fix" it. Bank staff will never ask for your PIN.
- 6 Call your bank the same day.** Use the number on the back of your card or the bank's official app. Get a complaint number.

KEEP THESE SAFE

- Receipt or screen photo
- Debit SMS screenshot
- Complaint number
- Date of the transaction

YOU DON'T NEED TO

- Block your card (unless it was retained or you suspect fraud)
- Visit the other bank's branch
- Pay anyone for help

What to *tell your bank*

A complete complaint gets solved faster. Give them everything in one go.

4 The details they will ask for

DETAIL	WHERE TO FIND IT
ATM ID	On the receipt, or the sticker on the machine
Date and time	Receipt, SMS, or your photo's timestamp
Amount debited	Debit SMS or bank app
Amount received	₹0, or the partial amount you counted
Transaction / reference no.	Receipt or SMS (sometimes called RRN)
Card's last 4 digits	Your card. Never share the full number, PIN or OTP.

5 Where to complain

Customer care number on your card, the "raise a dispute" option in your bank's app or net banking, or a written complaint at your home branch. Pick one that gives you a **complaint number**. A written or app complaint is better because it leaves a dated record, which you'll need if you ever go to RBI.

A MESSAGE YOU CAN COPY

I tried to withdraw ₹20,000 at the ATM ID _____ at [location] on [date] at [time] using my card ending XXXX.
 My account was debited but the cash was not dispensed (I received ₹0). Transaction reference: _____.
 Please reverse the amount as per RBI's turnaround time rules and share the complaint number.

When the bank *pays you* for the delay

The 5-day clock starts on the day of the transaction. Every day after that costs the bank ₹100.

6 How the clock runs

- **1 October · Day T**
You try to withdraw ₹20,000. Account debited, no cash.
- **2 to 6 October · T+1 to T+5**
The bank has these five days to put the ₹20,000 back. **No penalty yet.**
- **7 October onwards · T+6**
If the money still isn't back, the bank owes you **₹100 for each day** until it is.

7 What that looks like in rupees

REFUND LANDS ON	DAYS LATE	COMPENSATION	YOU GET BACK
4 October	0	₹0	₹20,000
6 October	0	₹0	₹20,000
9 October	3	₹300	₹20,300
16 October	10	₹1,000	₹21,000
31 October	25	₹2,500	₹22,500

Example dates. Days late = refund date minus 6 October (T+5). Compensation = days late × ₹100. Calendar days, holidays included.

A SHORTCUT I USE NOW

When the refund arrives, check the date it was credited. If it's after T+5 and no compensation came with it, write to the bank quoting your complaint number and ask for the ₹100 a day as per RBI's 2019 circular. It's owed even if they forgot.

Going to the *RBI Ombudsman*

The Ombudsman is RBI's free complaint service for bank customers. It's the step after your bank, not instead of it.

8 When you can go

SITUATION	CAN YOU COMPLAIN TO RBI?
You haven't complained to your bank yet	Not yet. Complain to the bank in writing first.
Bank rejected your complaint	Yes, right away.
Bank replied, but you're not satisfied	Yes.
No reply 30 days after your complaint	Yes.
More than 90 days have passed	Too late. File within 90 days of the 30-day wait ending or the bank's last reply, whichever is later.

9 How to file

- Go to cms.rbi.org.in** (RBI's complaint portal) and choose "File a Complaint". You can also email crpc@rbi.org.in or post a written complaint to RBI's Centralised Receipt and Processing Centre in Chandigarh.
- Fill in your bank, branch and the complaint details.** Same facts as Part 4.
- Attach proof.** Your complaint to the bank, the bank's reply (if any), receipt or screen photo, and the debit SMS.
- Track it with the RBI complaint number.** RBI's contact centre on 14448 can also help you with the process.

WHAT FINALLY SETTLED IT FOR ME

Filing with RBI costs nothing, and you don't need a lawyer. Your proof and your bank complaint number do most of the work.

The glossary, *in plain words*

The terms your bank or RBI might use, explained simply.

Failed transaction

NOT YOUR FAULT

A transaction that didn't complete for a reason that isn't the customer's mistake.

"Thappu unga mela illa, system la."

Debit

MONEY TAKEN OUT

Money leaving your account. Here it left, but never reached your hand.

"Account la irunthu panam poiduchu."

Reversal

MONEY PUT BACK

The bank undoing the debit and crediting the amount back to your account.

"Pona panam thirumba varuthu."

T

TRANSACTION DAY

The calendar date on which the ATM failed. The 5-day clock starts here.

"Panam maatikitta naal."

T+5

REFUND DEADLINE

Five calendar days after T. The refund must be done by this day.

"Anju naal kulla thirumba varanum."

TAT

TURNAROUND TIME

The maximum time RBI allows a bank to fix a failed transaction.

"Bank ku kudutha deadline."

ATM ID

TERMINAL ID

The unique code of each ATM, printed on the receipt and on a sticker on the machine.

"Antha machine oda adaiyaala number."

RRN

RETRIEVAL REFERENCE NUMBER

A reference number for your transaction, often on the receipt or SMS.

"Unga transaction oda tracking number."

Electronic journal

ATM'S LOG BOOK

The record every ATM keeps of each note it gives out. Banks check it to verify your claim.

"Machine ellathayum note pannikkum."

Reconciliation

MATCHING THE BOOKS

Comparing the ATM's log with the cash left inside, to find money that never came out.

"Kanakku match aagutha nu check panrathu."

Issuing bank

YOUR CARD'S BANK

The bank that gave you the debit card. This is who you complain to.

"Card kudutha bank kitta thaana complaint."

Acquiring bank

THE ATM'S BANK

The bank that owns the ATM you used. Your bank deals with it for you.

"Machine vechirukkura bank."

Compensation

₹100 PER DAY

The penalty the bank pays you for each day the refund is late after T+5.

"Late aana bank fine kattanum, ungalukku."

RBI Ombudsman

RBI'S COMPLAINT OFFICER

A free RBI service that settles complaints the bank didn't solve.

"Bank kekkalaina, RBI kekkum."

CMS portal

CMS.RBI.ORG.IN

RBI's website for filing and tracking complaints against banks.

"Online la RBI ku complaint podra idam."

How the *numbers* were worked out

Every rule in this guide comes from RBI's own documents. Checked in October 2026.

1. **T+5 days and ₹100 per day:** RBI circular RBI/2019-20/67, DPSS.CO.PD No.629/02.01.014/2019-20, "Harmonisation of Turn Around Time (TAT) and customer compensation for failed transactions using authorised Payment Systems", 20 September 2019, effective 15 October 2019. Item 1(a): ATM debit with cash not dispensed. T is the calendar date of the transaction. Compensation is to be credited without waiting for a complaint.
2. **Scope:** Same circular. Applies to domestic transactions, including use of another bank's ATM.
3. **Ombudsman rules:** Reserve Bank Integrated Ombudsman Scheme, 2026, in force from 1 July 2026 (replacing the 2021 scheme). Complain to the bank first; approach the Ombudsman if rejected, unsatisfied, or no reply within 30 days. File within 90 days of the 30-day period ending or the bank's last reply, whichever is later. Free of cost. Filing via cms.rbi.org.in, crpc@rbi.org.in, or post to CRPC, RBI, Sector 17, Chandigarh 160017. RBI FAQ on RB-IOS 2026 (updated 1 July 2026). RBI contact centre: toll-free 14448.
4. **Worked example (Part 5):** Transaction on 1 October; T+5 = 6 October. Days late = refund date minus 6 October; compensation = days late × ₹100. Calculated in a script and rounded to whole days.

DISCLAIMER

This guide is for education only. It is not legal or financial advice, and it does not recommend any specific bank or service. I am not a SEBI-registered investment adviser or a lawyer. The rules described are from RBI circulars and the RBI Ombudsman scheme as of October 2026 and can change. Always check the latest rules on rbi.org.in or with your bank before acting.

Ever had cash stuck in an ATM? *Tell me how many days* the refund took, in the comments.

Free to share. Made by Abinash at [@buildwithabinash](https://twitter.com/buildwithabinash). Send this to a friend who just got a "debited" SMS with no cash in hand.