

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FINANCE
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-1984

ANSWERED ON TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026/19 PHALGUNA, 1947 (SAKA)

EASE REFORM PROGRAMMES FOR PSBs

1984. SHRI LAHAR SINGH SIROYA:
SHRI KESRIDEVSINH JHALA:
SMT. DARSHANA SINGH:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether any notifications, circulars or performance frameworks were issued during 2025–26 under the Enhanced Access and Service Excellence (EASE) reform programme for Public Sector Banks (PSBs), the details thereof;
- (b) the key governance, customer service, digital lending and risk-management measures introduced or revised under these reforms, along with prescribed implementation timelines;
- (c) the progress made by Public Sector Banks in achieving EASE targets since the latest revisions, including improvements in customer grievance redressal, asset quality and operational efficiency;
- (d) whether any evaluation has been undertaken with reference to such progress and improvements; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE
(SHRI PANKAJ CHAUDHARY)

(a) to (e): Enhanced Access and Service Excellence (EASE) Reform Agenda is finalised on yearly basis at the start of each financial year (FY), under the guidance of EASE Steering Committee of member PSBs under the aegis of Indian Banks' Association. The Reforms Agenda is objectively assessed and reviewed quarterly by the EASE Steering Committee.

In FY2025-26, EASE 8.0 Common Reforms have been launched as EASERise with four themes on Risk and Resilience, Innovation, Socio-economic Impact and Excellence. This comprehensive reform agenda is focused on risk & resilience, Gen-Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Agentic AI adoption, inclusive banking, sustainability, customer experience, and operational excellence with the objective to strengthen PSBs as agile, future-ready and customer-centric institutions. The details of major initiatives introduced or revised in EASE 8.0 are as under:

- (1) Governance:
 - (i) Inclusive Governance Framework to ensure Divyangjans representation in Customer Service Committees, Grievance Redressal Cell, and setting up a dedicated Accessibility Cell having Accessibility employees

- (ii) Dedicated outbound sales team governance structures
- (iii) Enhanced Learning and Development governance
- (iv) Environmental, Social and Governance Scorecard integration and dedicated Customer Retention Squad governance framework
- (v) Artificial Intelligence roadmaps and leveraging its use cases for operational efficiency

(2) Customer Service:

- (i) Specifically designed asset and liability products for Gig/platform workers, Youth, Women and Startups
- (ii) Multilingual Customer service in Regional Languages (Digital Channels and Service forms)
- (iii) Enhanced Mobile-App capabilities for Retail and Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) customers
- (iv) Asset and Liability digital assisted journey for customer onboarding
- (v) Virtual Relationship Managers for identified customers
- (vi) End-to-end digital journeys for trade finance solutions
- (vii) Self-service touch points for Divyangjans

(3) Digital Lending:

- (i) Digital journeys for Retail, MSME and Agri-loan products.
- (ii) Digital assisted framework for customer convenience
- (iii) Integrating advanced capabilities in loan management system for MSME underwriting
- (iv) Integration with Account Aggregator ecosystem
- (v) Automatic credit appraisal generation capabilities and use of analytics/AI in underwriting

(4) Risk Management:

- (i) Focus on Expected Credit Loss models
- (ii) Digital portal/platforms for monitoring of Operational Risks taxonomy and Early Warning Signals
- (iii) Fraud prevention and Anti-Money Laundering checks in the existing as well as new bank customers' onboarding journey
- (iv) Enhanced models for mule account identification and enhanced customer due diligence
- (v) Technology Modernisation and resilience of IT Applications by setting up Resiliency Operation Centre and efficient third-party risk management
- (vi) Digital forensic readiness for cyber incidents
- (vii) App/platform/portal-based recovery and collection monitoring mechanisms

Under EASE Reforms, normally timelines are defined within the FY, and the metrics are scheduled for operationalisation from April onwards during the FY, to ensure structured implementation.

Since the latest revisions, under the EASE reform programme, the progress made by PSBs on various parameters including improvements in customer grievance redressal, asset quality, and operational efficiency are as under:

- (i) Improved customer grievance redressal mechanism by enabling remediation action tagging and integrating complaints to Bank's Customer Relationship Management Portal
- (ii) Enhanced asset quality: PSBs have embedded multiple advanced capabilities in their Loan Management Systems, which *inter alia* include bureau analysis tools, automated retrieval of financial statements from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs' portal, bank statement integration through Account Aggregators, data-driven underwriting models, and GST integration. These enhancements have significantly improved portfolio quality while also strengthening resilience to potential credit shocks

- (iii) PSBs have dedicated sales team for Current Account Savings Account acquisition through digital assisted journeys for customer convenience and outreach
- (iv) 11 PSBs have set up Resiliency Operations Centres to strengthen IT governance and resilience of IT infrastructure
- (v) Seven PSBs have deployed at least one Gen-AI use case to enhance operational efficiency and customer service
- (vi) Seven PSBs have established centralised Business Intelligence units to proactively assess market potential and identify leads for outbound field sales and branches
- (vii) Five PSBs have governance framework with representation of Divyangjans in Customer Service Cell and Grievance Redressal Cell along with setting up of Digital Accessibility Cell and appointment of Nodal officers
- (viii) PSBs have strengthened accessibility for Divyangjans and Senior Citizens customers through initiatives including rollout of Braille-enabled debit and credit cards, priority call routing to trained agents, regional language interfaces, and dedicated service cells reflecting a stronger emphasis on empathy and inclusivity across PSBs
- (ix) Effective collections mechanism through customer specific and product wise collection strategies across various digital channels. 11 PSBs have a collection mobile application for better monitoring and follow-up features to reduce collection operational cost
- (x) 10 PSBs have AI-driven voice bots and WhatsApp chatbots for recovery actions
- (xi) PSBs have Digital tool/portal/platform for monitoring SARFAESI/DRT/NCLT cases

A structured quarterly evaluation is overseen by EASE Steering Committee comprising stakeholders from all PSBs, to assess the progress and improvements based on defined metrics, quarterly data submissions/review, and relative performance among PSBs.

The evaluation framework systematically captures performance outcomes by measuring improvements across defined reform indicators. Progress is assessed through periodic data submissions, trend analysis, and relative performance among PSBs to ensure objectivity and comparability.

EASE has served as a catalyst in the transformation journey of PSBs through its structured approach to reforms. As per RBI's provisional data, as on 31.12.2025, below are key highlights that illustrate the significant impact witnessed by PSBs throughout this remarkable journey.

- (i) During FY2024-25, all PSBs were profit making with highest ever aggregate net profit of ₹1.78 lakh crore, as against the loss of ₹85,371 crore reported by PSBs in FY2017-18. Further, the net profit of PSBs during the first nine months of FY2025-26 was ₹1.46 lakh crore.
- (ii) Gross NPA ratio of PSBs have declined to a fresh low of 2.10% (₹2.54 lakh crore) in Dec-25 from 4.97% (₹2.79 lakh crore) in Mar-15, and from a peak of 14.58% (₹8.96 lakh crore) in Mar-18.
- (iii) Capital adequacy has improved significantly with Capital to Risk- weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) of PSBs improving by 401 bps to reach 15.46% in Dec-25 from 11.45% in Mar-15.
- (iv) During FY2024-25, no PSB was under RBI's Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) as against FY2017-18 where 11 PSBs out of 21 were under PCA.
- (v) In FY2024-25, all PSBs have digital journeys across Retail, Agriculture and MSME sectors, while no such journeys were offered in FY2017-18.
- (vi) Now all PSBs have a centralized integrated grievance redressal portal, while manual grievance redressal system existed in FY2017-18.
- (vii) In FY2024-25, PSBs have achieved an Annualised Return on Total Assets of 1.10%, which was -0.87% in FY2017-18.
