

# MUMBAI MERI JAAN

## THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF AGNI

Action for good  
Governance &  
Networking in  
India



# AGNI

### Editorial

## Unclaimed Deposits in Banks needs urgent and better recovery system

**A**n open letter to RBI Governor, Shri Sanjay Malhotra, who has been in the forefront, immediately on being appointed, the latest being the use of AI in resolving the Bank customer complaints. (See lead report below in this issue).

A few years ago, replying to an RTI filed by a media organisation, the government of India, particularly the Ministry of Finance, conceded that Indian banks have unclaimed accounts and deposits worth over 5,000 crores. That was at least 10-15 years ago. Today, the unclaimed deposits in [Scheduled Commercial Banks \(SCBs\)](#) in India have crossed Rs 35,000 crore (as of March 2023) and continue to rise year after year.

According to an estimate banks in India today are **holding about Rs 82,000 crores worth of unclaimed funds** in disputed, forgotten, and dormant accounts, FDs, Bonds, insurance, and provident funds whose owner is untraced, or dead. This is in addition to around Rs 33,114 crores deposited in the Depositor Education and Awareness Fund (DEAF) as of March 31, 2020.

We have been regularly reporting about the unclaimed deposits lying with the Banks and later in RBI under Depositor Education and Awareness Fund (DEAF) Account.

As reported in our December 2024 issue, the renowned banker, Shri K. V. Kamath has suggested systemic reforms for transmission of assets. To quote him, "I have been through the challenges in claiming assets myself. I can only imagine what the challenge it must be for a layman, who does not have the knowledge. However, with technology, issues in asset transmission that most of what we are talking about like frauds, or mistrust can be resolved. **The process of recovery has to be automatic and simple.** We need to ensure that the regulator is on the same page with our concerns and there is an urgency in addressing the issue."

It is said that the Home branch of the unclaimed funds has to apply. However, in the last few years there has been major mergers of even big public sector banks that the Home branches have vanished. So how will the claimant get his funds? Once the original Deposit Receipt of the Bank is with the claimant, the RBI and the Bank should ensure return of the funds along with the interest. If RBI eases the claim process, many claimants will be able to get back their hard earned money. **Hope the RBI Governor will seriously look into this matter and bring in ease of getting back the hard earned money!**

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## HSNC University, Mumbai in collaboration with AGNI launches cyber vigilance cell to enhance cyber security awareness

 Sumit Zarchobe

**H**yderabad Sind National Collegiate University (HSNC University), Mumbai, a State Public University, in collaboration with Action for good Governance & Networking in India (AGNI), successfully launched its Cyber Vigilance Cell on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025. This initiative is designed to equip students, faculty, and the broader community with the knowledge and tools to navigate the increasingly digital world safely.

The inauguration ceremony was graced by distinguished guests, including Col. Dr. Hemlata K. Bagla, Vice Chancellor, HSNC University; Chief Guest Shri Brijesh Singh, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister of Maharashtra & Additional Director General of Police in Maharashtra and Adv. (Dr.) Prashant Mali, internationally renowned cyber law & cyber security expert; Shri V. Ranganathan, former Bombay Municipal Commissioner, as the Guests of Honour; Shri Dinesh Ahir, Trustee & Convenor, AGNI and Ms. Prema Iyer, Networking Co-ordinator, HSNC University, Mumbai. During the event, the esteemed speakers highlighted the urgent need for cyber security awareness and the role of educational institutions in fostering a culture of vigilance in the digital era.



In her welcome address, Dr. Hemlata K. Bagla underscored the need for a cyber-vigilance cell in an educational institution and said "The launch of the Cyber Vigilance Cell is a significant milestone for HSNC University. In this digital age, cyber threats are ever-evolving and it is crucial to equip our students and faculty with the tools to navigate the online world securely. With HSNC University now actively involved in this cyber-security movement; students, faculty and law enforcement experts stand together in creating a safe and resilient digital future for all."

"This Cyber Vigilance Cell is a movement. We are building a community of 'cyber warriors' and 'cyber doers' who will safeguard their digital environment and educate others on best practices," Dr. Bagla affirmed.

In his keynote address, Shri Brijesh Singh highlighted the critical importance of digital safety and urged the audience to embrace best practices for online security. He also spoke about the growing need for courses in cybersecurity and Artificial Intelligence (AI), *contd. on page 2*

## RBI Governor Pushes for AI To Resolve Bank Customer Complaints

*The RBI governor called upon banking leaders to prioritise customer service at all organisational levels. He urged bank management to dedicate time daily to grievance redressal, citing that unresolved complaints risk damaging consumer confidence and reputation. He stressed that complaints should not be seen as nuisances but as valuable insights for improvement.*

**C**alling for a paradigm shift in grievance redressal through the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI), Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor

 [Moneylife Digital Team](#)

Sanjay Malhotra emphasised the importance of leveraging AI technology to streamline customer complaints and build *Contd. on Page 3*

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## HSNC University, Mumbai cell with AGNI launches cyber vigilance cell

contd. from page 1 stressing the importance of re-skilling. "AI is not going to take your job, someone using AI is going to take your job. So, why not become that person who uses AI to do that job," Shri Singh contended.

Addressing the increasing complexities of cyber threats, he stressed the necessity for collective action in tackling these challenges. He touched on a range of cybercrimes, including voice cloning, deepfakes, robocalls, hacking, phishing, malware, ransomware, identity theft, banking fraud, email scams, online job scams, WhatsApp hacking, money mule accounts, DDOS, DOS, cyber-stalking, cyber-bullying, and data breaches.

He especially praised Dr. Bagla's enthusiasm, hands-on approach, quick action in implementing new ideas and dedication in advancing the University's initiatives, describing her as a "Super-woman". He noted "Dr. Bagla's enthusiasm and commitment to implement new ideas is truly commendable. We just discussed some innovative ideas and she is already eager to begin implementing them. Her proactive approach and readiness to take immediate action will undoubtedly contribute to the success of the Cyber Vigilance Cell and other initiatives aimed at enhancing digital security."

Adv. Prashant Mali provided valuable insights into the legal dimensions of cybercrime and shared practical steps individuals can take to protect their personal and professional information online. His session covered the legal consequences of cybercrimes and highlighted effective ways to address these issues. Adv. Mali also discussed the significant role social stigma plays in discouraging victims from reporting cybercrimes. This under-reporting allows offenders to operate with impunity, as many victims fear further harassment or disbelief. He urged the audience to take advantage of platforms like the [National Cyber-crime Reporting Portal](#) (NCRP), which ensures secure and anonymous reporting along with essential

cyber safety guidelines. Victims can call the helpline at 1930 and report incidents via the NCRP portal for official police intervention.

"As cyber threats grow more complex, proactive initiatives like the Cyber Vigilance Cell are crucial in promoting digital awareness, supporting victims and providing necessary security education," Adv. Mali concluded.

Shri V. Ranganathan addressed the critical issue of data protection, emphasising the need for more robust governance in the realm of digital privacy. He outlined essential strategies for both businesses and individuals to effectively safeguard their digital footprint and ensure their online activities remain secure.

Shri Dinesh Ahir, Trustee & Convenor of AGNI, stated, "In today's fast-evolving digital world, it is our duty to ensure

that students, faculty, and the wider community are empowered with the knowledge and tools to protect themselves from cyber threats. The launch of the Cyber Vigilance Cell marks a significant step in fostering a culture of awareness and responsibility in the digital age. We are proud to collaborate with HSNC University, Mumbai on this crucial initiative." He urged everyone to stay informed, stay secure, and actively spread awareness.

During the subsequent Q&A session, students raised several important questions, covering a broad range of topics. These included concerns over differential pricing for Apple and Android users, the pressing need for enhanced data protection in CKYC databases, privacy-focused web browsers, the use of Facebook Pixel, internet cookie policies, GDPR laws, and the



security of personal data amidst the rise of digital transactions and regulatory changes.

The event also marked the launch of a broader initiative to prioritize cyber safety across the University, with plans to extend its reach to the wider community. The cell will continue to collaborate with law enforcement agencies, NGOs and industry experts to ensure that timely and effective measures are in place for preventing cybercrimes.

- Cyber Vigilance Cell:
- A Step Toward Building a Safer Digital Ecosystem
  - The Cyber Vigilance Cell of

HSNC University, Mumbai will be a key resource in raising awareness about risk, vulnerabilities and cyber threats, providing support for victims of cyber-crimes and educating individuals on how to protect themselves from online dangers.

● The cell will host a series of workshops, seminars and campaigns focused on cyber security best practices.

HSNC University's collaboration with AGNI aims to create a comprehensive network for promoting good governance and reducing digital risks in the community.

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## BMC Proposes User Fee And Hefty Fines Up To ₹10,000 for garbage collection

Shefali Parab-Pandit

Nearly after two decades the BMC has proposed a revisions to the Solid Waste Management (SWM) bye-laws of 2006, including the introduction of a 'User Fee' for garbage collection. This fee will be determined based on property size, usage, type, and waste generation patterns. Additionally, a new fine of Rs. 500 has been introduced for washing vehicles on roads. The new draft bye-laws will also raise the penalties for offences such as littering, spitting, urinating, defecating and bathing in open spaces. Notably, the fine for burning waste has seen a hike, soaring from Rs. 100 to Rs. 10,000.

According to civic officials, implementing a user fee aligns with the SWM Rules, 2016, issued by the

central government. The new draft rules proposes to charge the following monthly fees for residential units: Rs. 100 for a unit up to 50 sq m; Rs. 500 for areas up to 300 sq m; and Rs. 1,000 for those over 300 sq m. The commercial establishments, shops, eating places such as Dhaba, sweet shops and coffee house etc will be charged Rs. 500. While the private and government offices, bank, coaching classes and educational institutions will be charged Rs. 750, marriage and festival halls, exhibition and fairs with area up to 3000 sq.m. will have to pay Rs. 7,500 for waste collection.


The Bye-laws, 2006 primarily focused on waste collection and removal but did not place enough emphasis on waste minimisation. Although the

Contd. on Page 4

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## Time to End Beach Cleanups on Carter Road

 **Mario Fishery, MMJ Editorial Board member**

For years, dedicated volunteers have gathered at Carter Road Beach with one goal: to clean up the shoreline. These efforts have been nothing short of inspiring, with children, students, young adults, senior citizens, and even Bollywood celebrities coming together to restore the beach's beauty. Their commitment to environmental conservation is commendable, but despite their hard work, the problem persists. The next day, fresh garbage washes ashore, and the cycle of cleaning starts all over again.

The reality is clear: While these groups are solving the problem temporarily, they are not addressing its root cause.

### The Hidden Culprit:

#### Open Drains Polluting Carter Road Beach

Our investigations have uncovered a major contributor to the never-ending waste accumulation: open drains leading directly into the sea. These drains are continuously discharging trash, plastic, and other pollutants into the water, undoing all the hard work of cleanup volunteers. Without intervention at the source, no amount of cleanup efforts will ever be enough to keep Carter Road Beach clean.

#### What Needs to Be Done Immediately?

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) must take swift and effective action to address this issue:

**Install Nets on Open Drains:** A simple yet effective solution is to place strong, durable nets at the mouth of these drains to prevent solid waste from flowing into the sea.

**Regular Cleaning of Drain Nets:** The nets must be cleaned regularly to ensure they do not clog and create further issues.

**Implement Waste Management Solutions:** The BMC should work on redirecting waste properly so that solid garbage does not enter water bodies.

**Public Awareness Campaigns:** The

community must be informed about how waste disposal impacts the environment and what they can do to help reduce pollution.

**Fines for Littering and Dumping:** Strict penalties must be enforced for businesses or individuals found illegally disposing of waste in these drains.

#### A Call to Action for Volunteer Groups

Instead of spending countless hours cleaning the beach day after day, it is time for these passionate individuals and organizations to redirect their efforts towards more pressing civic issues. Mumbai has no shortage of challenges, and the same dedication can be used to audit and improve:

Public healthcare facilities

Road maintenance

Public transportation efficiency

Garbage disposal systems

#### Children Deserve to Play, Not Clean Up Our Mess

Beach cleanups, while noble, should not be the responsibility of children and young students. They should be enjoying the beach, playing, exploring marine life, and learning about nature—not picking up trash they didn't create.

#### The Future of Carter Road Beach: A Sustainable Solution

It is time for the BMC to take full responsibility for maintaining Carter Road Beach. With immediate action to fix the root cause, we can ensure that beach cleanups become a thing of the past. Let's advocate for long-term solutions and allow our beaches to remain clean—not just for a day, but forever. MMJ

## Maharashtra Govt Partners With Microsoft To Use AI In Governance

 **Kalpesh Mhamunkar**

In a significant move towards digital transformation, the Maharashtra government has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Microsoft to leverage Artificial Intelligence (AI) for enhancing governance. The MoU was signed in the presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, with Chief Secretary Sujata Saunik representing the Maharashtra government and Venkat Krishnan signing on behalf of Microsoft.

Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, Water Resources Minister Girish Mahajan, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Vikas Kharge and other key officials from the state government and Microsoft were also present at the event.

Fadnavis emphasised that this partnership will make governance more efficient, transparent, and citizen-centric. Sujata Saunik highlighted that the collaboration with Microsoft will provide government officials with world-class AI training, accelerating Maharashtra's digital transformation.

#### Benefits of the MoU

Under this partnership, three AI Excellence Centers will be set up in

Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur.

The MoU will significantly enhance administrative efficiency through AI-driven automation. This transformation will streamline document processing, policy implementation, and decision-making processes, resulting in faster, more accurate governance outcomes.

State employees will receive AI training and certifications, enabling them to adopt cutting-edge technologies and improve governance.

Microsoft's Copilot technology will enhance efficiency in complaint resolution, healthcare management, transportation, and land records administration, making government services more responsive and citizen-friendly.

AI will contribute to strategic improvements in agriculture, healthcare, cybersecurity, and industrial development, further aligning with Maharashtra's goal of becoming a \$1 trillion economy by 2028.

The MoU will also help Maharashtra target to be at the forefront of AI-driven governance, attracting global technology investments and fostering an innovation-driven administration. MMJ

## RBI Governor Pushes for AI To Resolve Bank Customer Complaints

Contd from Page 1

consumer trust. He was speaking at the annual conference of the RBI Ombudsmen on World Consumer Rights Day.

Governor Malhotra acknowledged that while digital banking has revolutionised financial services, consumer grievances remain a significant challenge. "Last year alone, 95 scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) registered over 10mn (million) complaints. As digital transactions grow, so too do customer expectations and grievances. We must address this proactively," he said.

Highlighting the potential of AI to transform grievance redressal, the RBI governor outlined its advantages in categorising complaints, optimising routing, and identifying systemic gaps. He said, "AI can assist in decision-making, speed up complaint



resolution, and even predict potential issues before they arise. But we must balance technology with human empathy and integrity."

Mr Malhotra also underscored the need for responsible AI adoption, addressing concerns around data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the importance of human oversight. "AI should complement human judgment, not replace it. Every complaint is an opportunity to improve and build lasting trust."

The RBI governor also

called upon banking leaders to prioritise customer service at all organisational levels. He urged bank management to dedicate time daily to grievance redressal, citing that unresolved complaints risk damaging consumer confidence and reputation.

He stressed that complaints should not be seen as nuisances but as valuable insights for improvement. "Repeat complaints often indicate deeper systemic flaws. Addressing these issues comprehensively will help reduce recurrence," he noted.

Addressing ongoing challenges, the governor highlighted areas requiring immediate attention, including know-your-customer (KYC) compliance,

digital fraud mitigation, and ethical recovery practices. He urged regulated entities (REs) to invest in customer education and digital literacy to reduce vulnerability to scams.

Mr Malhotra also reiterated RBI's commitment to facilitating smoother operations for regulated entities through initiatives such as the PRAVAAH portal, designed to streamline applications and approvals.

Concluding his speech, the governor envisioned a future where technology and empathy coexist to build a resilient, customer-centric financial ecosystem. "Our mission is not just to resolve complaints but to prevent them altogether through innovation and human-centric approaches," he said. MMJ

# Mumbai To Get Indian Institute Of Creative Technology; Film City To Provide Land, Centre Allocates ₹400 Cr

 **Vikrant Jha**

An Indian Institute of Creative Technology (IICT) will be established in Goregaon, Mumbai, on the lines of the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT), with the central government allocating Rs400 crore for the project, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the World Audio-Visual & Entertainment Summit 2025, titled 'Waves 2025', held at Sushma Swaraj Bhavan in New Delhi, Fadnavis highlighted the significance of this initiative in positioning India's media and entertainment sector on a global platform.

Maharashtra has been granted the opportunity to host Waves 2025, an achievement the chief minister described as a matter of pride for the state. The grand conference will be held from May 1 to 4 at the Jio Convention Centre in Mumbai. The inaugural session of the summit was organised by the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, with ambassadors and high

commissioners from various countries in attendance.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Maharashtra government for the 'Waves 2025' initiative.

Fadnavis, addressing the media, reiterated that the establishment of IICT in Mumbai aims to transform the city into a global creative hub. He stated that the central government's financial aid of Rs400 crore will facilitate the development of this institution. He added that this project is not limited to Maharashtra but will be a milestone for India's creative technology sector.

"This project will not be limited to Maharashtra but will become a milestone for India's creative technology sector. IICT will not just be an educational institution but a leading center driving innovation in the creative

technology industry. It will elevate India to the global stage in this domain," the Chief Minister added.

IICT will not be confined to film production but will encompass digital content, visual effects (VFX), animation, audio-visual storytelling, media innovation, and Web 3.0 technology, Fadnavis said. Similar to IIT Bombay, IICT will be a premier centre for creative technology in India. The Maharashtra government has designated land within Film City in Goregaon for the institute.

"With the establishment of this new institute, India's creative sector will gain a world-class platform. Just as Davos is a crucial venue for economic affairs, this platform will emerge as a global brand for creative technology," Fadnavis said.

The 'Waves 2025' summit will provide a major platform for professionals from broadcasting, film, MMJ



animation, gaming, digital media, music, advertising, social media platforms, and emerging technologies. Special initiatives such as 'Waves Bazaar', 'Wave Accelerator', and 'Creatosphere' will be launched to foster investment opportunities and promote innovation.

The event, in which over 100 countries are expected to participate, is anticipated to boost investment in the media and entertainment sector, encourage new ideas, and provide international companies with a gateway to the Indian market. MMJ

## Garbage user fees BMC

Contd. from Page 2 original bye-laws recommended waste segregation, it was not effectively enforced. A senior civic official said, "The revised bye-laws will now make waste segregation at source mandatory, with clear categorisation of wet, dry, and hazardous waste. To ensure compliance and reduce the burden on landfills, the revised rules include strict penalties for failing to segregate waste. Additionally, hefty fines are proposed for illegal dumping, open burning, and improper waste handling. Repeat offenders will face higher penalties, and there are provisions for legal action if necessary."

The city generates 6,500 metric tons of solid waste daily, which is primarily transported to the Kanjurmarg landfill, with a smaller portion sent to Deonar. The BMC expects to generate about Rs 687 crore in revenue from this user fee, which will be charged per unit. This estimate is based on the 5.9 lakh properties that have been assessed for property tax in Mumbai. Meanwhile, the draft of Bye-laws will be published on BMC's Website on Tuesday. The civic body has invited suggestions and objections on the revised bye-laws from the citizens between April 1 to May 31. MMJ

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A	Churchgate, Colaba, Cuffe Parade, Fort, CST	Jennifer Shetty	9223415069	jenniferagni@gmail.com
D	Malabar Hill, Mahalaxmi, Opera House, Girgaum	Theo D'Souza	9820303940	theomdsouza@gmail.com
F/North	Sion, Wadala, Matunga, Dadar(E), Antop Hill	Nikhil Desai	9819930405	n.c.desai2012@gmail.com
G/North	Mahim, Dadar(W), Matunga(W), Dharavi	Bulu Saldanha	9920323831	bulu_saldanha@yahoo.com
H/East	Bandra(E), Khar(E), Santa Cruz(E), Kalina	Reuben Dias	9930569225	reuben6947@yahoo.co.in
H/West	Bandra(W), Khar(W), Santa Cruz(W)	Cherian Joseph Sanjeev D'souza Madhu Poplai	9892314442 9820803840 9820048996	cheriankjoseph@yahoo.com sanjeevd270@gmail.com madhupoplai@hotmail.com
K/East	Vile Parle(E), Andheri (E), Jogeshwari (E)	James John	9324086140	k-jamesjohn@hotmail.com
K/West	Vile Parle (W), Andheri (W), Jogeshwari(W)	Sandra Alex	9820602521	sandraalex2357@gmail.com
L	Kurla, Nehru Nagar, Chandivli	Nutan Bhalla	9819171015	nutsie59@gmail.com
N	Ghatkopar, Vikhroli	Kishor K. Chudasama	9821051346	kishorkc_shantuu@gmail.com
P/South	Goregaon (West)	Anthony Dias	9821291660	diasapvoice@gmail.com
R/South	Kandivli (East & West), Charkop	S. K. Nangia	9322258038	sknangia2004@yahoo.com
R/North	Borivli, Dahisar (East West, IC Colony)	Willie Shirsat Shrikant Soman Glenda Almeida	9820213392 9324228946 9820291563	shirsatwillie382@hotmail.com shrikant_soman@gmail.com glenda301@gmail.com
M/West	Chembur	Krantikumar Sherkhane	703900255	krantikumar@gmail.com
S	Bhandup, Kanjurmarg, Powai	Pamela Cheema	9820150748	pamelachema@gmail.com
T	Mulund	Laxmidas Thakkar	8080011966	lthakkar@yahoo.co.in

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AGNI

Chadha Bldg. 1st Flr, Plot No. 95,  
Wadala (W), Mumbai - 400031  
agni.mumbai99@gmail.com  
Ph: 2416 5956  
[www.agnimumbai.in](http://www.agnimumbai.in)

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