

Six decades of service to the nation: NBP: first Pakistani bank to cross Rs one trillion mark

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RECORDER REPORT

The National Bank of Pakistan, the country's largest banking institution, has completed 60 years of service to the nation, a press release said on Saturday. It said that the bank was established through an ordinance on November 9, 1949.

NBP, the handout said, started its operations with an issued capital of Rs 15 million and 100 employees. NBP, it said, had become the country's first-ever bank to cross a trillion-rupee bench mark with more than 16,500 employees and a network of 1,285 branches across Pakistan in addition to 23 overseas branches and representative offices in four countries and a unique footprint in South Asia, Central Asia and Middle East.

The Bank's entire branch network is now completely online, and it has the fastest growing overseas correspondent base for home remittances. NBP has been rated AAA/A-1+ (Triple A / A-One Plus) by JCR-VIS Credit Rating Company Limited (JCR-VIS).

From Corporate and Retail Banking to Agriculture and Islamic Banking, NBP is offering valuable services in almost all the areas of banking. Apart from this NBP has taken major steps in the areas of risk management, information technology, operations and human resources and the bank is also fulfilling its commitment towards the community. During the past year, NBP became the largest bank with a 100 percent online branch network, offering online facilities to its account holders, including inter-branch fund transfers, withdrawals and ATM/Debit Card.

In addition to regular online services, NBP account holders who are registered taxpayers of the Federal Bureau of Revenues (FBR), can also avail the facility of payment of government taxes (FBR dues) via online direct debit to their accounts.

The National Bank of Pakistan has also been facilitating payments of EOBI pensions to thousands of EOBI beneficiaries through its authorised branches and Customer Facilitation Centres. NBP is also collecting contributions from EOBI registered employers and beneficiaries.

The bank has successfully replaced the paper based account opening process with a system based account opening process which meets all regulatory as well as Bank's internal polices requirements relating to Know-Your-Customer and for prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing. The bank is serving 7.7 million account holders. Of the total, 3.3 million are pensioners. There are about four million pensioners in the country.

To facilitate EOBI pensioners, a web-based application has been implemented since March 1 last year in 560 authorised branches for payment of pensions and contribution collections of EOBI. The same web-based utility will later be replicated for payments of pensions to Railways' retired employees, which will benefit more than 100,000 pensioners, reducing counter traffic at bank branches.

Another milestone achieved by NBP is the development of 'Direct Account Credit Module' for facilitating pensioners who opt for taking pension directly to their account opened with NBP branches and they can withdraw their pension through cheque or ATM card transaction. Home Remittances is the second largest source of recurring foreign exchange for the country and a sustainable flow of remittances provide much needed stability to the economy. NBP has posted phenomenal growth in free of charge remittances over the past three years. Last year alone the growth was over 93 percent.

NBP has reduced the remittance delivery time to minutes (conditions apply) by introducing computerised processing systems. Overseas correspondent base has grown to 29 leading financial institutions and Money Service Business Providers (MSBs) from just 8 at the time of establishment of this dedicated group, free SMS alerts are sent to beneficiaries on receipt of their payments which also provides helpline numbers to beneficiaries.

NBP Advance Salary is the single largest consumer product in Pakistan. The product was launched in 2002. The purpose of the Advance Salary Scheme was to uplift the previously ignored and under-banked community of government employees by providing them opportunity of greater self-reliance and generate easily accessible funds for personal use through NBP Advance Salary Scheme. So far more than Rs 200 billion has been disbursed in this product to more than 1.5 million customers. Today, NBP Advance Salary is the largest and most profitable product of the bank. It is the largest Product in Personal Loan category with 52 percent market share.

Keeping in view the potential and requirement of the market, in 2012, the bank increased maximum financing limit of NBP Advance Salary, now the customers can borrow up to Rs 1 million, this strategy has helped in building the bank book. Being the nation's bank, NBP is always the first corporate entity to come forward and help the nation whenever a calamity hits its countrymen. NBP is awarded number of international and national awards as 'The Best Emerging Markets Bank' in 2011, 2006, 2005 and in 2003 and NBP was awarded 'Best Foreign Exchange Bank in Pakistan' in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2008 years. NBP is in 'Top 1000 World Banks 2011' by The Banker magazine of the UK.-PR