

# SMEs top priority for HSBC India

## Trade finance, cash management services next in focus

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HSBC Bank in India will be focusing on Small and Medium Enterprises and has added 9,000 new customers in the first three quarters of the current fiscal.

"The share of Indian business in HSBC Holding PLC is on a steady growth and we believe focus on SME sector would drive further growth," Ms Naina Lal Kidwai, Chief Executive Officer, HSBC India, told *Business Line* over phone from Mumbai. The bank has a total customer base of 33,000 till date.

After SMEs, trade finance and cash management services matter the most in India to the global major.

"We are doing well in export credit segment with a share of 5-6 per cent. We aim to grab a bigger pie with renewed focus on trade financing," Ms Kidwai said.

In retail segment, the bank



**Ms Naina Lal Kidwai**

has a customer base of 2.4 million and 2.7 million credit card holders. It would be investing heavily in small ticket loans (below Rs 50,000) under HSBC Pragati Finance.

"This is important as we have not received a Non-Banking Finance Corporation (NBFC) licence from Reserve Bank of India," the HSBC official said.

On the profitability of Indian business of the London-based bank, which suffered a \$17 billion hit on the US-housing woes in 2007 (as per the annual results announced on Tuesday), Ms Kidwai said there were no repercussions of US developments in Indian market.

"The Indian scenario is very comfortable. Our net profit in India grew by 64 per cent (at Rs 846 crore) for the year ended March 31, 2007. We are confident of repeating the show this year too," she added.

On the forthcoming initiatives, Ms Kidwai said the bank is actively considering use of mobile technology to attract tech-savvy customers. "We will offer banking solutions through mobile phones after ensuring proper checks and balances. The work is on," she explained.