

President on \$5-tn target: Banking with the unbanked, securing the unsecured

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PRESIDENT RAM NATH Kovind said Wednesday that as India aims to become a \$5-trillion economy, the banking sector has to start preparing for the next big leap.

"This mainly involves banking with the unbanked and securing the unsecured," he said at the golden jubilee celebration of the National Institute of Bank Management (NIBM) here, and urged the institution to create a pool of trained human resource skilled to serve banking institutions of global standards.

He said banks are the fulcrum of our economic system and it is

the duty of the system to reach the constitutional goal of economic as well as social justice. "When the country was at its nascent stage of a republic, banking sector faced hurdles of lack of presence and instability and a large number of people, particularly the poor, had no access to banking. Efforts made by banks under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana have significantly changed this position. As the scheme progressed, nearly 35 crore bank accounts have been opened, which is larger than any country's population."

Stating that rapid strides have been taken for reaching the goal of economic inclusion and covering unbanked sectors, the President said the next challenge

is to deeply involve those included and have financial products which meet the needs of those at the bottom. "Good research facilities need to be used for creation of financial products for the poorer sections of the population. Progress of the country depends on the contribution of the collective economic strength of the poor. Self-help group movements led by women have shown benefits one can reap by investing in the poor." he said.

He added that millions of lives have been touched through direct transfer of funds through welfare schemes and these funds amount to almost Rs 9.2 lakh crore. "It is reassuring and we can raise our bar of expectations."