



The bank said the Polaris solution would be run on three recently-installed enterprise servers.

## NBAD TO REVAMP CORE BANKING WORLDWIDE

**National Bank of Abu Dhabi (NBAD) is upgrading its core banking systems at all its locations around the globe.**

The bank is in the process of rolling out Polaris Software's Intellect solution across the Gulf and has installed enterprise servers at its headquarters in Abu Dhabi from where it will run the systems worldwide.

NBAD had previously been using Misys' Kindle Bankmaster core banking system, Srood Sherif, the bank's head of IT, told *IT Weekly*. Sherif said Bankmaster was not being replaced because the bank was unhappy with the system or Misys, adding that it would continue to use the vendor's software for other banking functions.

In a statement to *IT Weekly*, Misys said it enjoyed a "strong relationship" with NBAD, pointing out that the bank is still using Bankmaster to run its overseas retail banking operations and was broadening its usage in other areas.

Sherif said NBAD was currently

deploying Intellect in Oman, and the system's implementation would be completed in Kuwait, Bahrain and the UAE during the first half of 2007.

Following this the bank will also deploy Intellect throughout its operations in Egypt, Sudan, London, Paris and Washington.

Sherif said NBAD went with India-based Polaris because it wanted a "customer-centric" solution to run all its international branches.

Intellect will be run on three enterprise servers purchased from Fujitsu Services — the largest the bank has ever deployed.

NBAD will consolidate a number of servers and applications to run on the Fujitsu Siemens Computers (FSC) Primepower 900s, including its Veritas clustering solution, Solaris operating system, and Oracle database.

**FEEDBACK**

## GCC IT SPEND INCREASED 19% LAST YEAR, ANALYST REPORTS

**Investment in IT across the GCC states jumped over 19% last year to more than US\$6.8 billion, according to IDC.**

This growth was lower than the previous year, however, when IT expenditure increased 23%.

Philip van Heerden, programme manager for IDC MEA told *IT Weekly* that he expected IT spending in the GCC to continue to rise, albeit at a lower rate, over the next couple of years as oil prices stabilise.

"In time, everyone expects the oil prices to mature to a more sustainable level and

then we also expect the economic growth rate to grow slower," he said. "At some stage [IT spend] will definitely flatten out and maintain a high single digit number. But for the short and medium term, we expect it to stay in double digits."

Saudi Arabia and the UAE accounted for the bulk of IT spend in the GCC in 2006, making up nearly 45% and 33% of IT spending in the region respectively.

## VODAFONE GETS EGYPT 3G DEAL

Egypt's telecom regulator has awarded Vodafone Egypt a licence to provide 3G services in Egypt.

The operator paid US\$586million for the licence in addition to agreeing to pay 2.4% of its annual revenues to the government.

The licence, which lasts 15 years, will make Vodafone Egypt the second company in Egypt to provide mobile third generation services.

However, in an unusual step, the National Telecom Regulatory Agency (NTRA) has stipulated that Vodafone Egypt can only start providing mobile third generation services after the launch of the third mobile operator in Egypt, Etisalat.

Etisalat, which won Egypt's third GSM licence last July, is expected to launch its operations in Egypt by the end of February. Under the conditions of its licence, it is expected to offer mobile services under the 011 prefix as well as being able to offer 3G services throughout the country.

## WIPRO IN JOINT SAUDI VENTURE

Indian firm Wipro Infotech has formed a joint venture company with Saudi Arabian group Dar Al Riyadh.

Through the joint venture, Wipro Arabia, the two companies will promote a range of IT solutions to the Saudi Arabian market including application development and management, package implementation services and system integration services. The company is an extension of Wipro's existing relationship with Dar Al Riyadh.

Wipro Infotech president Suresh Vaswani said the purpose of the joint venture was to demonstrate its commitment to Saudi Arabia, to open up more market opportunities, and to give the company more of a local flavour.

"The Saudi Arabian market needs global services and a strong local touch. We have a very good partnership with Dar Al Riyadh, we worked with them for the past four years and Prince Turki Abdulrahman [CEO of Dar Al Riyadh] is a well respected name in the Saudi Arabian market," he told *IT Weekly*.