Central Bank's customer service card

By A Staff Reporter

BOMBAY, August 11: Central Bank of India has launched a scheme of "Centralcard." The bank is the first financial institution in the country to introduce such a customer service.

The scheme was formally launched in Bombay on Monday when Mr. P. F. Gutta, former chairman of the bank, handed over a few cards to Mr. N. Vaghul, executive director of the bank, to be passed on to the bank's customers.

Mr. Gutta said it was high time that the banking industry diversified its activities and provided better services to the customers. He pointed out that Central Bank of India was the first bank to introduce the executive trustee company, to offer facilities of safe deposit lockers to its customers, to start income-tax consultancy service, and to grant facilities to its customers to deposit cash in any branch in Bombay for crediting their accounts in another branch.

Talking to pressmen, Mr. Vaghul said the idea of introducing "Centralcard" was conceived by Mr. Gutta when he was heading the bank.

He said the genesis of the new service was the convenience which would accrue to the Centralcard holder of dispensing with cash or cheques for his specific transactions with the designated establishments.

NO CREDIT EXTENSION

Mr. Vaghul said current and saving account holders would be offered this facility. He pointed out that although the basic features of the scheme were similar to the 'credit cards' system in developed countries, the one noteworthy distinction was the safeguard against extension of consumer credit to the card holder.

He said the procedure would provide for debiting the card holder's account with the amount of bills signed by him at monthly intervals. Thus it was more a means of convenience and not an instrument for credit extension.

Mr. Waghul said 400 establishments comprising hotels, restaurants and department stores had already agreed to honour the Centralcard. By the end of this year, 20,000 cards were expected to be issued. Later the Centralcard holder would be offered facility of cashing his cheque at any of the bank's branches in the country.