Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs delivers keynote address at 38th SEBI Foundation Day celebrations

Smt. Sitharaman cautions SEBI and all regulated entities to enhance cyber security measures for emerging global challenges

SEBI should invest very substantially in public awareness on every major platform in regional languages: Union Finance Minister

Union Finance Minister also launches 'Mission Jagrook' - SEBI's nationwide investor awareness initiative

FM Smt. Sitharaman appreciates SEBI's actions against unregistered "fin-fluencers", calls for enabling frameworks for responsible financial education

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Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman delivered the keynote address at the 38th Foundation Day Programme of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), in Mumbai today.

Smt. Sitharaman also digitally launched SEBI's nationwide investor awareness initiative 'Mission Jagrook' on the occasion.

In her keynote address, the Union Finance Minister urged SEBI to be ready to meet the emerging challenges, the most pressing of which is cybersecurity challenges. A single successful cyberattack on a major exchange, depository, clearing corporation, or large broker could disrupt markets at national scale, erase wealth, and shake public confidence in ways that take years to rebuild, stated Smt. Sitharaman. She added, AI-led tools are making cyberattacks faster, more adaptive, scalable, and in some cases more autonomous in execution. These risks can take many forms — automated discovery of system vulnerabilities, malicious source-code interference, attacks aimed at software supply chains and coordinated intrusions that can evolve in real time to evade detection. "Therefore, not just SEBI, but all Regulated Entities will have to remain exceptionally vigilant. The tools of attack are evolving at high speed, and the tools of defence must evolve even faster", said the Union Finance Minister.

With the increasing use of technology, there is an explosion of fake investment videos and apps circulating on social media, many of them using deepfake AI to impersonate leaders, the Union Finance Minister further stated.

In this context, FM Smt. Sitharaman said that SEBI has done commendable good work with the Cybersecurity and Cyber Resilience Framework that came into effect in April 2025. This is a solid foundation on which more work can be undertaken, she added.

The Finance Minister informed that SEBI's Data Analytics and Digital Forensics Laboratory is using advance analytics, AI/ML models to detect complex market manipulation patterns and network-based frauds. Smt. Sitharaman also commended SEBI for rolling out "SEBI Check", which allows investors to verify the payment details of registered intermediaries before transferring money. "These are important interventions, and they should be expanded with urgency and visibility", she said and urged SEBI to invest very substantially in public awareness, through campaigns on every major platform in regional languages, and through rapid-response takedown mechanisms for fraudulent content impersonating public officials.

FM Smt. Sitharaman also said that soft-touch regulation approach and public consultation are essential for economic efficiency and effective governance. Principles-based regulation should be encouraged as far as possible, rather than an overly detailed rulebook. In this context, the Finance Minister noted that Union Budget 2023 explicitly stated that public consultation would be integrated into the regulatory process to improve the quality and ease of compliance.

The Union Finance Minister appreciated SEBI's pursuance of the consultative path, seeking public comments, engaging with committees and market participants.

Smt. Sitharaman said, "Our investors are global, our issuers engage international pools of capital and regulatory developments in one major jurisdiction increasingly influence market practice far beyond its borders". Hence, regulatory conversations cannot remain only domestic, she added.

The Union Finance Minister also stressed on thegrievance redressal systems, that must remain credible, accessible, and timely. Stating that trust in markets depends not only on returns but on the assurance that wrongs can be addressed fairly, Smt. Sitharaman appreciated SEBI's actions against unregistered "fin-fluencers", which signal the seriousness with which the regulator views unlicensed financial advice. "We need enabling frameworks for responsible financial education, but we should not tolerate the monetisation of uninformed retail investor trust for personal enrichment", said the Union Finance Minister.

FM Smt. Sitharaman also appreciated that SEBI, along with IEPFA and market institutions, has conducted several joint 'Niveshak Shivir' programmes to reduce unclaimed financial assets and to create awareness about it.

The Union Finance Minister also urged SEBI to help drive the prescription of common KYC norms and the simplification and digitalisation of KYC processes across the Indian securities market. "SEBI has the scale of investor participation, the depth of digital infrastructure, and the institutional credibility among peer regulators to take the lead in this domain", she added.

Speaking about SEBI's continuous reform journey over the years, Chairman Shri Tuhin Kanta Pandey said that SEBI has led a series of foundational reforms — transitioning to screen-based trading, introducing dematerialisation, moving to rolling settlements, strengthening corporate governance, and building robust risk management systems. He informed, as on date, India has over 5,900 listed companies and more than 140 million unique investors. Over last decade, market capitalisation has grown at around 15 percent CAGR. Mutual fund assets have expanded at over 20 percent annually. The corporate bond market continues its steady growth. And each year, the primary market facilitates capital formation of nearly ₹10 trillion. He further informed, SEBI has deeply engaged with all stakeholders in the past one year, to bring out wide ranging reforms for ease of doing business- to simplify and optimise regulations, remove ambiguities, resolve issues and facilitate capital formation.

> Watch Live: Smt @nsitharaman's address at the 38th SEBI Foundation Day in Mumbai, Maharashtra. @SEBI_updates https://t.co/dgLr9r3962
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> — Nirmala Sitharaman Office (@nsitharamanoffc) April 25, 2026

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