Address by Shri Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Chairman, SEBI
Bharat Chamber of Commerce, Kolkata
"Building India's World-Class Capital Markets"
October 31, 2026

Mr. Naresh Pachisia, President, Bharat Chamber of Commerce, members of Bharat Chamber of Commerce, industry leaders, representatives from the financial sector, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning to all of you.

It is a pleasure to be here in Kolkata, a city with a rich tradition of commerce, industry and entrepreneurship.

I congratulate Bharat Chamber of Commerce for its contribution to industry and trade for over 125 years. The Chamber has played an important role in bringing together businesses of different sizes and sectors, representing their interests and supporting their growth.

West Bengal has been an important participant in India's economic and financial progress. The state's economy is estimated to have grown by 7.6% in FY26. Its participation in capital markets has also expanded considerably. The number of investors in the securities market from West Bengal has increased to over 90 lakh today from around 12 lakh in FY15. Around 36%, of these, are young investors below 30 years of age.

In terms of capital raising, more than 40 SMEs from the state have also accessed capital markets and raised over ₹1,400 crore through SME IPOs over the years.

These developments reflect both growing economic opportunities and increasing financial participation from West Bengal.

India's Capital Markets – A Remarkable Transformation

This brings me to the theme of today's discussion: Building India's World-Class Capital Markets.

Over the past decade, India's securities markets have undergone a remarkable transformation. They have grown significantly in size, depth, diversity and investor participation.

Let me share a few numbers that illustrate this progress.

- India's market capitalisation has grown at around 17% annually in last 10 years
- Over the past decade, companies have raised, on average, more than ₹10 trillion annually through equity and debt issuances
- Outstanding corporate bonds have reached around ₹61 trillion
- Mutual fund assets have grown at around 20% annually over the past decade
- The number of unique investors in securities markets has increased fourfold since FY19, to over 15 crore

The momentum continues. We have witnessed strong activity in the primary equity market, with 189 IPOs raising over ₹98,000 crore during FY27 (Apr-Sept) so far.

Alongside this expansion, India has developed a robust and technologically advanced market infrastructure. Our markets today offer efficient trading, clearing and settlement systems, supported by strong risk-management frameworks.

These achievements provide a strong foundation. But building world-class capital markets is not merely about achieving higher market capitalisation, larger trading volumes or faster transactions.

The real measure is how effectively markets connect savings with productive investment, support businesses in raising capital and create opportunities for investors to participate in economic growth.

Capital Markets Promotes Economic Development

Our development aspirations will require substantial and sustained investment in infrastructure, manufacturing, technology, innovation and emerging industries.

Consider a promising manufacturing enterprise that has developed a successful product. It has customers, a sound business model and ambitions to expand across India or enter global markets. Yet, translating those ambitions into reality requires capital.

Banks will continue to be important financing partners. But as businesses grow, their financing needs also become more diverse.

This is where capital markets play a vital role.

Equity markets enable businesses to raise long-term risk capital without adding repayment obligations. Corporate bond markets provide alternative avenues for financing expansion. For businesses, therefore, capital markets are not merely platforms where securities are traded. They are avenues for financing growth, improving competitiveness and realising entrepreneurial ambitions.

At the same time, they enable household savings to participate in the country's economic progress.

A stronger connection between savings and productive investment benefits both businesses and investors. And creating this connection efficiently, transparently and sustainably is central to building world-class markets.

SEBI's Efforts – Deepening Markets and Strengthening the Ecosystem

Recognising this, SEBI has been working continuously to make our markets more accessible, efficient and resilient.

Our approach has been to facilitate capital formation, improve ease of doing business and strengthen investor protection. These objectives reinforce one another.

Facilitating capital formation

For businesses seeking access to capital, time, cost and regulatory certainty matter.

We have therefore taken several steps to make fundraising processes simpler and more efficient.

We have streamlined IPO processes and shortened timelines for rights issues. Listing requirements have been rationalised for large issuers. We have also addressed practical concerns of founders by permitting them, subject to prescribed conditions, to retain certain employee stock options after listing.

On the debt side, we have reduced listing timelines for public issues and enabled debt securities with lower face value[1]. More recently, we have relaxed the mandatory merchant banker requirement for certain eligible issuers undertaking private placements of such debt securities. This can reduce issuance costs while retaining appropriate safeguards.

The common objective behind these measures is simple: good businesses should be able to access suitable forms of capital through efficient and transparent processes.

Improving ease of doing business

Alongside market development, we are reviewing regulatory processes to reduce unnecessary compliance burdens and improve operational efficiency. Our endeavour is to make regulation more proportionate and risk-based, while maintaining high standards of governance and market integrity.

Technology is playing an important role in this effort. Digital processes, simplified documentation and greater automation can reduce costs and make participation easier for businesses, investors and intermediaries.

However, efficiency alone is not sufficient. As markets become larger and more technology-driven, the importance of cybersecurity, operational resilience, effective surveillance and sound risk management also increases.

World-class markets must be not only efficient during normal times, but also resilient during periods of stress.

Investor Success – From Participation to Informed Participation

While we continue to strengthen markets for businesses, an equally important priority is the investor.

The tremendous growth in India's investor base is encouraging. Simpler onboarding, digital access and the availability of diverse investment products have brought securities markets closer to millions of households.

[1] Reduced face value to ₹10,000, compared with the earlier ₹1 lakh threshold

But wider access also brings greater responsibility.

Opening an investment account has become much easier. Understanding investment risks, however, still requires knowledge, care and sound judgement.

An investor entering the market must understand that higher expected returns may involve higher risks. Investment decisions should reflect financial goals and risk appetite. And long-term wealth creation is different from short-term speculation.

This becomes particularly important when investors are exposed to unrealistic return promises, misleading social media advice and increasingly sophisticated digital frauds.

Strengthening investor protection

At SEBI, we have introduced several measures to make investing safer and strengthen investor confidence.

- Validated UPI handles and the SEBI Check facility help investors verify payment details of genuine registered intermediaries, reducing the risk of transferring funds to fraudsters.
- We have simplified nomination-related processes. Platforms such as SCORES 2.0 and online dispute resolution have strengthened avenues for resolving investor grievances.
- The MITRA platform helps investors identify inactive and unclaimed mutual fund folios.
- We are also taking action against misleading investment-related content and inappropriate associations between regulated entities and unregistered persons offering investment advice.

These measures seek to make investor protection more effective throughout the investment journey.

Investor awareness – The foundation of responsible investing

Yet, regulation and technology alone cannot protect investors from every risk.

An informed investor remains the first line of defence.

During FY26, over 41,000 investor awareness programmes were conducted in collaboration with exchanges and depositories, reaching more than 22 lakh participants.

Through Project Jagrook, SEBI along with its partners, have launched a campaign for investor awareness on Oct 05, 2026 - *'Samajh Se Investing Simple'.*

Many of you would also have received WhatsApp messages from our newly launched channel – SEBI Awareness.

The idea is simple. Investors should understand before they act.

As investment products and technologies evolve, financial education must also keep pace. We need to build a culture where investors ask questions, evaluate risks and make decisions based on reliable information rather than market rumours or promises of quick returns.

Role of Industry and Bharat Chamber of Commerce

This is where organisations such as Bharat Chamber of Commerce can make a meaningful contribution.

The launch of the Investors Forum is a welcome step in this direction.

With its extensive connections across businesses, financial institutions and professional communities, the Chamber is well placed to promote financial literacy, responsible investing and awareness of digital frauds.

But I see another important opportunity for the Chamber.

Many promising small and medium enterprises have strong businesses and ambitious growth plans, yet limited understanding of how capital markets can support their expansion.

The Chamber can help bridge this gap.

It can guide such enterprises in understanding the opportunities available through capital markets, the processes involved in raising funds and the responsibilities that come with becoming a listed company.

This is particularly relevant for a state like West Bengal, with its rich entrepreneurial tradition and diverse industrial base.

By helping more well-governed businesses become ready to access public markets, the Chamber can contribute not only to enterprise growth but also to broader capital market development.

I would encourage the Forum to pursue these objectives through sustained engagement, practical programmes and close collaboration with market institutions.

Way Forward and Closing

Ladies and gentlemen,

India has made substantial progress in developing its capital markets. But our ambitions for the coming decades are much greater.

As we move forward, we must continue to deepen our markets, expand financing opportunities for businesses and encourage informed investor participation.

We must combine innovation with resilience, ease of access with investor protection, and market growth with strong governance.

This is a shared responsibility. Regulators, market institutions, businesses, intermediaries and investors all have an important role to play.

Our goal must be to build capital markets that can finance the aspirations of our enterprises, create opportunities for our citizens and strengthen confidence in India's financial system.

Thank you.