

Changing global order poses challenges but also opportunities for India, says FM Sitharaman

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Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the changing global order poses challenges as well as opportunities for India. This remark assumes significance as Donald Trump's tariff decisions have the potential to bring big changes in the global economic order.

"As we lay the foundation for a developed India, we must stay committed to long-term goals, without losing sight of present realities. The global order is changing. That poses challenges but also opportunities. We must be prepared to tackle the former while seizing the latter," she said while addressing a gathering at the Hoover Institution, Stanford Uni-

versity, in California. The Minister is in the US on an official visit.

"A Viksit Bharat will be shaped not only by the government but also the collective effort of every citizen. This vision calls upon us to think boldly, act inclusively, and stay resilient and flexible," she said.

Talking about the thrust on infrastructure development, she said this had created a strong foundation for manufacturing-led growth by bolstering investor confidence. This was enabled by a more-than-fourfold increase in the government's capital expenditure between 2017-18 and the 2025-26.

DIGITISATION PUSH

Highlighting the success of digital public infrastructure (DPI), the Minister said that



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, in California

more than a billion digital identities had been created using DPI. Using these digital identities, bank accounts of people were created and during the Covid-19

pandemic, money was transferred by the government with the click of a button. DPI was also useful while administering vaccines during the pandemic.

Taking note of a report by Indiaspora and BCG, she said that Indian first-generation immigrants founded 72 unicorns between 2018 and 2023. These unicorns were worth at least \$195 billion in valuation and employed nearly 55,000 people. More than 65 per cent of global capability centres (GCC) in India have their headquarters in the US. These GCCs provide high value-added, bespoke services in areas such as R&D, management consulting and auditing," Sitharaman said.

Acknowledging the role of a vibrant and thriving network of small and medium

enterprises is essential for domestic manufacturing to grow. The government has undertaken numerous initiatives to support MSMEs, including easing access to credit, redefining size thresholds, facilitating prompt payments from large buyers and simplifying compliance burdens. The Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), launched in April 2022, has successfully onboarded more than 7,64,000 vendors across 616 cities.

"Our next focus is reducing regulatory frictions, digitising approvals and integrating MSMEs into global value chains. Special support to women-led and rural enterprises will help enhance economic opportunities and ensure more inclusive growth," she said.