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Neha Raj January 14, 2025



India Needs Tech-Savvy Forces to Secure Its Digital World: FM Nirmala Sitharaman

India must develop tech-savvy forces to safeguard its digital infrastructure, which plays a critical role in economic growth. Speaking at the fourth convocation ceremony of Rashtriya Raksha University in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** highlighted the dual-edged nature of



technology. While it drives productivity and innovation, it can also be misused to threaten financial systems and national security.

The Need for a Tech-Savvy Defence Force

FM Sitharaman emphasized that India's security challenges have evolved, extending beyond physical borders into the digital realm:

- **Digital Threats:** India's digital public infrastructure, a key enabler of growth, faces vulnerabilities, including attacks on banks, stock markets, payment platforms, and other online services.
- **Tech Misuse:** Vested interests and "dark forces" exploit technology to disrupt national security and economic stability.
- **Call to Action:** Sitharaman stressed the need for internal forces that are not only tech-savvy but also equipped to counter these emerging threats.

"As much as you need physical force to take care of our borders, we also need forces within the country who are tech-savvy and aware of the threats before us," she said.



India's Digital Prowess and Growing Influence

India's rapid digital advancements have drawn global attention, with many competitors finding the country's growth "astonishing." Sitharaman pointed out that:

- **Global Recognition:** India's success in digital infrastructure surpasses that of many developed nations, highlighting its capability to lead in the digital age.
- **Potential Challenges:** Despite well-wishers, some global actors are wary of India's rise and may pose indirect challenges.

India's Achievements in Defence and Technology

Sitharaman also praised India's strides in defence production and exports, marking a significant transformation over the past decade:

1. Defence Production Milestones:

- In 2023-24, India achieved a record-high defence production value of **₹1.27 trillion**, a 2.7-fold increase compared to 2014-15.



2. Defence Exports Growth:

- Defence exports surged to an all-time high of **₹21,083 crore** in 2023-24, a dramatic 30-fold increase from ₹686 crore in 2013-14.
- India has transitioned from being the world's second-largest arms importer (2015-2019) to being among the top 25 arms exporters.

3. Technological Self-Reliance:



- This transformation underscores India's ability to innovate and reduce dependence on foreign technologies, aligning with its broader strategy to secure digital and physical sovereignty.
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Building a Robust Defence Against Digital Threats

To protect the digital world, Sitharaman advocated for a comprehensive approach:

- **Digital Readiness:** Invest in creating skilled personnel capable of identifying and countering cyber threats.
 - **Public-Private Collaboration:** Strengthen partnerships between the government and private sector to build robust cybersecurity infrastructure.
 - **Policy and Innovation:** Encourage technological innovation while formulating policies that mitigate risks without stifling growth.
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India's digital and defence advancements mark its ascent as a global leader in technology and security. However, these achievements also attract new challenges. FM Nirmala Sitharaman's call for tech-savvy forces underscores the need for vigilance and innovation to safeguard India's digital assets, ensuring continued economic growth and national security in the digital era.



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