

3rd ANTI-SMUGGLING DAY

‘Smuggled Saaman Ko Karo Nakaar, Viksit Bharat Ka Sapna Karo Sakaar’

FICCI’s Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying the Economy (CASCADE) held the 3rd edition of Anti-Smuggling Day on 11th February 2024. A virtual conference was organized on the occasion showcasing video messages from esteemed dignitaries including Mr. Mohan Kumar Singh, Principal Director General, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI); Mr. Pranab Kumar Das, Director, Compliance and Facilitation, World Customs Organisation (WCO); Mr. Balesh Kumar, Member, Appellate Tribunal-SAFEMA, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance; Mr. Marco Teixeira, Regional Representative- South Asia, UNODC and amongst others.

FICCI CASCADE identified 11th February as Anti-Smuggling Day in the year 2022 as a global first. This initiative seeks to bring all stakeholders to collectively comprehend the extent of the problem and explore avenues for enhanced cooperation and coordination.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Mohan Kumar Singh, Principal Director General, DRI said, “Smuggling is a transnational crime. Underscoring the critical need for international cooperation in combating such illicit activities, DRI actively engages and participates in various global enforcement operations targeting drugs, arms, wildlife, environment, money laundering, and terror financing. Through the consistent sharing of actionable intelligence with our overseas counterparts, numerous operations have been conducted, resulting in significant seizures of contraband by customs authorities in countries including Myanmar, Bangladesh, Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Nepal.”

“DRI has also kept a close watch on the smuggling of various other items like red sanders, cigarettes, fake currency, foreign currency, wildlife products and so on. These seizures are the result of fine teamwork of the DRI officers, supported by excellent cooperation and inter-agency coordination of our partner law enforcement agencies in the country,” Mr Singh added.

Applauding FICCI CASCADE, Mr Singh stated, “On behalf of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, my compliments to FICCI CASCADE for organizing the Anti-Smuggling Day. This great initiative, now in its third year in a row gives us an occasion as well as a platform to discuss the growing menace of smuggling and counterfeiting. The dynamic nature of the threat from smuggling makes it imperative for all of us to join hands and contribute our bit towards combating of smuggling activities.”

Highlighting the need for collective action, Mr. Anil Rajput, Chairman, FICCI CASCADE while launching a new campaign said, “We launched the Anti-Smuggling Day on 11th February, 2022 and pledged to spare no effort in raising awareness and taking concerted action against the multi-faceted challenge of smuggling.

Staying true to that commitment, FICCI CASCADE is now introducing a new campaign - *'Smuggled Saaman Ko Karo Nakaar, Viksit Bharat Ka Sapna Karo Sakaar'*.”

“The Indian economy is flourishing under a proactive government, translating to increased prosperity and subsequently, greater spending power. However, it has been observed that higher disposable income often leads to an upsurge in the consumption of smuggled goods. Today, we launch a new campaign to sensitize the beneficiaries of India’s economic growth about the responsibility they bear in utilizing their income. We urge them not to purchase smuggled goods which not only jeopardize their health but also harm the country’s economy. In the ensuing days and months, we will take this campaign forward through various initiatives,” Mr Rajput added.

The vision of Viksit Bharat is outlined by the Indian government with an ambitious goal of achieving a developed nation status by 2047. The vision encapsulates the aspiration for a prosperous country where every citizen can unlock their potential. As India propels forward on this growth trajectory, a burgeoning middle class with increased disposable incomes is inevitable. FICCI CASCADE’s latest campaign, *'Smuggled Saaman Ko Karo Nakaar, Viksit Bharat Ka Sapna Karo Sakaar'* is created to enlighten this expanding customer base about the perils associated with engaging in smuggled goods, spanning categories like drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, mobile phones and packaged foods. The realization of the Viksit Bharat vision greatly depends on our collective efforts (Sabka Prayas), and the battle against smuggling stands as a pivotal element and a formidable challenge in this transformative journey.

Reinforcing the need for vigilance by citizens to tackle smuggling, Mr Balesh Kumar, Member, Appellate Tribunal-SAFEMA, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance said, “I would appeal to all Indians to participate in the activities of the Anti-Smuggling Day, which launched by FICCI CASCADE. This occasion serves not only as a reminder for enforcement agencies but also for citizens to remain vigilant against the use of smuggled goods, as it is in their best interest to avoid products of questionable quality. Smuggled counterfeit goods, often available at low prices in the market, pose significant risks to society and health. Therefore, I implore citizens to refrain from using such items.”

To intensify the global fight against smuggling and raise awareness among the youth about the menace of smuggled goods, FICCI CASCADE has also organized a competition with the theme ‘Stand Against Smuggling.’ This competition provides a platform to involve young minds in comprehending the severe implications of smuggling on society and empowers them to firmly oppose such illicit practices. ‘Stand Against Smuggling’ aims to cultivate a culture of ethical consumption and instil a sense of responsible citizenship among the younger generation. The competition has consistently drawn participants from across the globe.

Over the years, FICCI CASCADE has been consistently working towards creating awareness on tackling the serious problem of smuggling and launched the Anti-Smuggling Day in 2022 as a global first. The objective of declaring an Anti-Smuggling Day was to highlight the issue amongst consumers, adverse impact of smuggling on nation-building, fostering coordination and cooperation among law enforcement agencies, facilitating better exchange of information and experiences and building a strong network to find innovative solutions to combat the scourge of smuggling.