

Business Standard

'India suffering significant economic consequences due to smuggling'

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India is suffering significant economic, health and safety consequences as a result of widespread smuggling and counterfeiting in the country, said a senior government official on Tuesday.

"Illicit trade is a global problem of enormous scale, impacting human lives and virtually every industry sector around the world -- and India is no exception. It is suffering significant economic and health and safety consequences as a result of widespread smuggling and counterfeiting in the country," said Reena Arya, Additional Director General of the National Academy of Customs, Indirect Tax and Narcotics (NACIN).

Arya was speaking at a capacity building programme organised by NACIN and FICCI's Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities (CASCADE).

As per FICCI's CASCADE report, the total loss to the government on account of illicit markets in just seven manufacturing sectors is Rs 39,239 crore in 2014.

Amongst the various sectors, the maximum revenue loss to the exchequer on account of counterfeiting and illicit trade is attributed to tobacco products, estimating a revenue loss of Rs 9,139 crore followed by mobile phones at Rs 6,705 crore and alcoholic beverages at Rs 6,309 crore.

The theme of the programme was Socio-Economic Impact of Illicit Trade.

Giving a detailed overview on the socio economic impact of illicit trade, P.C. Jha, Advisor, FICCI CASCADE and Ex-Chairman, Central Board of Excise and Customs, said one of the mandate by FICCI's CASCADE was capacity building of law enforcement agencies.

"Judges, police and customs officers and CASCADE have been working extensively in this area nationally, organising training programmes and seminars along with continuous interactions with the law enforcement authorities to emphasize on the importance of continued awareness and seriousness of the impact of counterfeit and smuggled goods," said Jha.

The programme was also attended by Ryan Ribner, Department of Homeland Security-Homeland Security Investigations, US Embassy, and Pramod Bhatt, Senior Director - Security and Intelligence (South Asia), Sanofi, besides over 145 officers of the Indian Revenue Service.

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