

## Industry, govt join hands to counter menace of counterfeit and illicit trade

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Concerned over the loss caused to trade and industry on account of illicit trade, smuggling and counterfeit products, industry body FICCI and the government on Thursday joined hands in reiterating commitment to fight the menace.

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu said India is moving towards becoming a knowledge economy and this meant respecting and protecting the knowledge and intellectual property of its creators. In a video message to the FICCI CASCADE event, he said the government is committed to this end and had created a vibrant regime to guard people against smuggling, counterfeit and illicit trade.

FICCI CASCADE (Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying the Economy) organised its 4th edition of International conference on Thursday on the theme 'Protect Your Brand Globally: Fight Counterfeiting, Smuggling and Piracy'.

Inaugurating the conference, BJP MP Shatrughan Sinha said it is high time and the right time for promotion, protection and projection of India's goods and to fight illicit trade menace.

Urging the stakeholders to take this agenda to the global platform and engage NRIs in the movement against illicit trade, he said FICCI CASCADE showed commitment and drive to curb smuggling and illicit trade is helping in creating awareness. Much more is needed to be done to change the general mindset with respect to the use of smuggled and illicit goods, he added.

United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, Regional Representative, South Asia, Sergey Kapinos, said smuggling and counterfeiting goods not only hampered the economic growth of the country but also adversely affected the social fabric and well-being of its people. There is a need for framing robust policies and effective implementation to curtail this menace, he added.

Highlighting the initiatives undertaken by the Centre to fight the menace of smuggling and counterfeiting, Member, Customs, Central Board of Excise and Customs, Pranab Kumar Das, said there is a need to create ownership and build a relationship of trust between the government agencies and private sector and create a level-playing field for the stakeholders to curb tax evasion, black economy and revenue losses. He said the CBEC is a potent force ready to partner with FICCI and private sector to fight against illicit trade.

In his welcome address, Anil Rajput, Chairman, FICCI CASCADE and Vice President, ITC Corporate Affairs, said proceeds from illicit trade are increasingly becoming the main source of terror funding. "We need to understand this relationship and work towards effective mechanisms to counter its worldwide impact. It is a race against time as all of us are the stakeholders. The policymakers are steadily taking steps but the need of the hour is to seek bold and out-of-the-box solutions," he said.

To encourage and acknowledge the work of law-enforcement agencies FICCI CASCADE also felicitated the best-performing officers for the period 2016-17 for their outstanding achievement in prevention of counterfeiting and smuggling and enforcement of anti-smuggling and anti-counterfeiting laws from several government agencies.

The conference was organised with an aim to ensure that national and international stakeholders could hold a dialogue with policymakers to identify opportunities for joint action between governments and the private sector to combat illicit cross-border trade.

**Source:** <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/industry-govt-join-hands-to-counter-menace-of-counterfeit-and-illicit-trade/481202.html>