

# ‘DRI seized illicit cigarettes worth ₹45 cr & gold worth ₹ 275 cr in last 9 months’

**NEW DELHI:** “National security needs to be looked at holistically. We must understand that economic security cannot be treated as something separate from physical security,” said Balesh Kumar, Principal Director General, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), while discussing the smuggling scenario in the country at the FICCI CASCADE ‘In Conversation Series’.

Speaking on the challenging security environment that India faced, Mr. Kumar was underling the need for all law enforcement agencies to have a constant vigil to prevent smuggling as well as to ensure that necessary inputs were available to prevent potential terror attacks funded both externally and internally.

“Sealing of borders is not enough to secure the hinterland. Issues relating to security can travel across the borders very quickly into India and for that we must have a clear strategy of comprehensive approach of looking at the internal secu-

rity in conjunction with external security as well as physical security along with economic security”, he added.

Highlighting the unwavering efforts of DRI officers during the unprecedented coronavirus crisis, Kumar informed that DRI has strategically focused on smuggling of cigarettes and gold this year seizing illicit cigarettes worth Rs. 45 crores and gold worth Rs. 275 crores in the last 9 months.

Balesh Kumar discussed the threat posed by smuggling to India’s security and economy, the pattern of smuggling due to COVID-19, preparedness of enforcement agencies in terms of adequacy of manpower and resources, and terrorism financing through the proceeds of smuggling.

Moderating the session, PC Jha, Former Chairman, CBIC and Advisor, FICCI CASCADE, said “Smuggling of items such as cigarettes, narcotics, substandard food items and medicines leads to severe health hazards.