

Better coordination among enforcement agencies leading to major seizures: CBIC member

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, February 11

ASSERTING THAT SMUGGLING is a huge threat to national security, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) member Balesh Kumar on Friday said better coordination among enforcement agencies is leading to major seizures.

There is a need for coordinated efforts from all stakeholders including industry to tackle this menace, he said at the Anti-Smuggling Day launch event, organised by Ficci CASCADE (Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying the Economy).

The government has always been committed to combating the menace of smuggling and has institutionalised coordination between agencies, which has helped in generating volumes of information that are not only timely but also accurate leading to major seizures, he said.

Referring to a recent seizure, he said, DRI in Manipure effected a seizure of 12.5 kg of gold coming across from Myanmar and over 46 lakh sticks of cigarettes worth ₹9.5 crore in one single operation last week.

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), under the CBIC, is an intelligence and enforcement agency of Government of India on anti-smuggling matters.

Anti-Smuggling Day is launched with an objective of enhancing coordination and cooperation between law enforcement agencies, facilitating better exchange of information and experiences, and build-



CBIC member Balesh Kumar

ing a strong network to find innovative solutions to combat the menace of smuggling, Ficci CASCADE said in a statement.

As per the estimates of the World Economic Forum, illicit trade resulted in an annual drain of \$2.2 trillion, about 3% of the world GDP in 2020.

Textiles, tobacco products (cigarettes), readymade garments, capital goods (machinery and parts), and consumer (electronics) durables are the top industries impacted by smuggling, it said.

"Despite smuggling being a global menace, due focus and thrust has not been given to this mounting threat which is not only damaging our exchequer and leading to job losses but is also impacting the safety and security worldwide. In this context, it is critical to emphasize and generate global awareness about the fact that the root cause of illicit trade lies in smuggling," said Ficci CASCADE chairman Anil Rajput.

Speaking at the event, World Customs Organisation director, compliance and facilitation directorate, PK Das said the customs department has a major role to play in mitigating the challenges posed by illicit trade for the country and the economy.