

92,000 kg of narcotics worth Rs 17,400 cr, 14 cr cigarette sticks seized in 2021-22: CBIC

IANIS | May 12, 2022

New Delhi, May 12 (IANIS) Vivek Johri, Chairman, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs(CBIC) on Thursday said that gold, narcotics, and cigarettes are highly prone to outright smuggling.

Addressing the 'In Conversation Series' organised by FICCI's Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying the Economy (CASCADE), Mr Johri highlighted the extent of the menace and said: "At CBIC, we are going aggressively against illicit trade in these goods. In 2021-22, we seized 92,000 kg of narcotics worth Rs 17,400 crore, during this period, we also seized 14 crore cigarette sticks".

He further added that artificial intelligence and data analytics are playing a pivotal role in targeting instances of smuggling which have significantly helped the department to deal with the growing menace of illicit trade.

Johri also shared those unscrupulous players indulging in illicit activities misuse free trade agreements, export promotion schemes, and misuse end user-based exemptions. "CBIC is trying to overcome these challenges in a systemic way, and have ramped up the use of technology in their operations with 22 cargo scanners at 16 locations to ensure 100 per cent scanning of all containers coming into the country through gateway ports," he said.

Anil Rajput, Chairman, FICCI CASCADE said: "Smuggling and illicit trade is increasingly hurting Indian economy and have crept into multiple sections of the society. Immediate steps are required, both in the form of policy intervention and awareness generation, to address this growing menace."

"It is indeed heartening to see how CBIC is using AI, Blockchain, Machine Learning to strengthen the enforcement agencies in detecting such malpractices. Complimenting the GST council and CBIC for a well-balanced tax policy and maintaining equal thrust on revenue augmentation and strict handling of tax evaders." He highlighted how this has led to effective compliance and record-breaking revenue collections. "We can already see some green shoots and are hopeful that going forward collaborative efforts between government agencies and industries would bring fruitful results for the country," he added.

P.C. Jha, Former Chairman, CBIC and Advisor, FICCI CASCADE while moderating the session stated: "The magnitude of illicit market is large and with passage of time it is proliferating at an accelerated pace. One in 3 FMCG household and personal goods available in the market, is not genuine. Similarly, one out of 4 FMCG packaged food items and one out of 5 tobacco products including cigarette sold is an illicit product. FICCI CASCADE study indicates that in FY 2013-14 due to illicit trade in respect of just 7 items, total loss to government revenue was about Rs 39,000 crore and sales loss to the genuine industry was about Rs 1,05,000 crores."

FICCI CASCADE has been over the years working closely with government, industry, enforcement officials, legal fraternity, consumer organizations and the youth to create awareness on the adverse impact of the problem of counterfeiting and smuggling. FICCI CASCADE, in pursuance of its agenda, has been organising series of such interactions with experts to understand various facets of illicit trade and its impact on the economy.

Source: <https://in.investing.com/news/92000-kg-of-narcotics-worth-rs-17400-cr-14-cr-cigarette-sticks-seized-in-202122-cbic-3198771>