

FICCI CASCADE CONVENES NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION

FICCI CASCADE organized the seminar “Protecting Consumers: Addressing the Threat of Smuggling and Counterfeiting” on 8th April 2026 in New Delhi.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Pralhad Joshi, Hon’ble Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Minister of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India described illicit trade as a “shadow economy” at a time when India’s rapid economic expansion is reshaping consumption patterns and market dynamics.

In a special video address at the seminar, the Minister said, “smuggling and counterfeiting are far from victimless crimes. They expose consumers to unsafe, substandard and even toxic products, undermine honest businesses, and erode government revenues that could otherwise be invested in public welfare and infrastructure.”

Emphasising that “the objective is not just consumer protection, but consumer prosperity,” he pointed to initiatives such as the Central Consumer Protection Authority, the National Consumer Helpline, and the Jago Grahak Jago campaign as key pillars in empowering citizens. Calling for a broader coalition, he added, “When a product is fake, it is not just a business loss — it is a betrayal of consumer trust. Combating this requires shared responsibility across government, industry and society.”

In her inaugural address, Ms. Nidhi Khare, Secretary, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India, said “we are living in a time when India has emerged as the world’s fourth-largest economy”.

She noted that consumer protection has evolved from awareness-building to a technology-enabled system. “From ‘Jago Grahak Jago’ to AI-driven grievance redressal, we are building a system that is faster, more efficient, and transparent,” she said. Highlighting improvements in grievance redressal, she added, “Resolution timelines have come down from 63 days to around 21 days, and in some online cases even within 72 hours.”

On the role of digital platforms, she said, “While e-commerce platforms operate at scale and require continuous regulatory engagement, they are also increasingly stepping up — through measures such as delisting and stronger monitoring — to combat counterfeit products.” She added that “the challenge extends beyond digital marketplaces into physical supply chains.”

She called for a multi-pronged approach, including stronger quality standards, support for MSMEs, greater platform accountability, and enhanced enforcement across both digital and physical markets.

In his welcome address, Mr. Anil Rajput, Chairman, FICCI CASCADE, said, “advancing consumer protection today requires a decisive shift from a reactive approach to a preventive, structured and forward-looking system. While the Government of India has taken significant steps through the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, the establishment of the Central Consumer Protection Authority, and initiatives like ‘Jago Grahak Jago’, the evolving nature of illicit trade demands stronger implementation and deeper institutional coordination. We need better intelligence-sharing across agencies, stronger enforcement

mechanisms, and greater use of technology to detect and prevent violations. At the same time, a whole-of-society approach — bringing together government, industry and consumers — is essential to effectively combat smuggling and counterfeiting.”

Dr. Ashwani Mahajan, National Co-Convener, Swadeshi Jagran Manch, said, “effectively tackling illicit trade requires strong and sustained political will, decisive policy interventions — such as demonetisation — have previously demonstrated how determined action can disrupt counterfeit and illicit ecosystems. The need to strengthen enforcement mechanisms, particularly at the borders, stating that gaps in customs oversight continue to enable the entry of illicit goods into the domestic market.”

Mr. P C Jha, Advisor, FICCI CASCADE and Former Chairman, CBIC, provided a comprehensive enforcement and governance perspective, stressing that consumer protection must be seen as an integral pillar of economic policy.

“Smuggling and counterfeiting are fundamentally profit-driven crimes. Disrupting their financial flows is essential to dismantling these networks, rather than merely intercepting consignments,” he concluded.

“The seminar brought together senior policymakers, judicial leaders, enforcement officials, industry representatives, and consumer organisations to deliberate on the growing threat of illicit trade and the need for stronger consumer-centric frameworks,” FICCI said in its press statement.

“Across sessions, discussions highlighted the importance of consumer awareness, judicial responsiveness, regulatory coordination, and technology-driven enforcement. A recurring theme was the need to move beyond fragmented interventions towards a cohesive, ecosystem-based response,” FICCI said.

[Source: FICCI Press Release titled “Illicit Trade Undermines Consumer Trust and Economic Integrity, Says Minister Pralhad Joshi; Calls for Collective Action at FICCI CASCADE Seminar”, April 8, 2026]

Illicit trade undermines consumer trust, economic integrity: Joshi
BY Mpost 10 Apr 2026 9:28 PM

New Delhi: Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution Pralhad Joshi termed smuggling and counterfeiting a “shadow economy” that harms consumers, businesses and government revenues, calling for a collective response to curb the threat.

Addressing a FICCI CASCADE seminar, he said such activities expose consumers to unsafe and substandard products and undermine public welfare. “The objective is not just consumer protection, but consumer prosperity,” he said, adding that initiatives like the Central Consumer Protection Authority and “Jago Grahak Jago” are key to empowering citizens. “When a product is fake...it is a betrayal of consumer trust,” he added.

Nidhi Khare, Secretary, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, GoI, said, “we are living in a time when India has emerged as the world’s fourth-largest economy.” Highlighting reforms, she said, “From ‘Jago Grahak Jago’ to AI-driven grievance redressal, we are building a system that is faster, more efficient, and transparent,” noting resolution timelines have fallen from 63 days to about 21 days, and even 72 hours in some cases. On e-commerce, she said platforms are stepping up through delisting & monitoring, but “the challenge extends beyond digital marketplaces into physical supply chains,” calling for stronger standards, MSME support and enforcement.

Anil Rajput, Chairman, FICCI CASCADE, said, “advancing consumer protection today requires a decisive shift... We need better intelligence-sharing, stronger enforcement mechanisms, & greater use of technology,” alongside a whole-of-society approach.

P.C.Jha, Advisor, FICCI CASCADE and former CBIC Chairman, said smuggling and counterfeiting are profit-driven crimes requiring disruption of financial flows, not just seizure of consignments.

The seminar underscored the need for coordinated, technology-driven action & stronger consumer-centric frameworks to combat illicit trade.

Counterfeiting, smuggling a ‘Shadow Economy’ threatening consumers says minister Pralhad Joshi
New Delhi (India), April 8 (ANI): Counterfeiting (/topic/counterfeiting) and smuggling in India form a “shadow economy” that directly harms consumers.

‘Illicit trade threatens consumers, economy’
BY Mpost Bureau 8 Apr 2026 11:52 PM

New Delhi: Union Consumer Affairs minister Pralhad Joshi on Tuesday termed illicit trade a “shadow economy”, warning that smuggling and counterfeiting pose serious risks to consumers and the broader economy.

Addressing a seminar on “Protecting Consumers: Addressing the Threat of Smuggling and Counterfeiting” organised by FICCI CASCADE, Joshi said such activities expose consumers to un-safe and substandard products, undermine honest businesses and erode government revenues meant for public welfare. He stressed that consumer protection must go beyond safety to ensuring “consumer prosperity”.

Highlighting government efforts, he cited initiatives like the Central Consumer Protection Authority, National Consumer Helpline and the Jago Grahak Jago campaign as key tools for em-powering citizens. He called for collective action by government, industry and society to tackle the menace.

Union Consumer Affairs secretary Nidhi Khare said India’s consumer protection framework has evolved into a technology-driven system. She noted that grievance redressal timelines have reduced significantly, with some online complaints now resolved within 72 hours. Khare also pointed to the dual role of e-commerce platforms, stating that while they require regulatory oversight, they are increasingly taking steps such as delisting counterfeit products.

FICCI CASCADE chairman Anil Rajput called for a shift to preventive and technology-driven enforcement, while experts stressed stronger border controls and inter-agency coordination.

Broader coalition needed to fight ‘shadow economy’ of illicit trade: Minister
Empowering Consumers and Combating Illicit Trade: A Multi-Stakeholder Approach

Pralhad Joshi calls for collective action against illicit trade

As a time when India’s rapid economic expansion is reshaping consumption patterns and market dynamics, Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Minister of New and Renewable Energy, Pralhad Joshi, described illicit trade as a “shadow economy” while addressing the seminar virtually.

In a special video address at the seminar “Protecting Consumers: Addressing the Threat of Smuggling and Counterfeiting” organised by FICCI CASCADE, the Minister said, “smuggling and counterfeiting are far from victimless crimes. They expose consumers to unsafe, substandard and even toxic products, undermine honest businesses, and erode government revenues that could otherwise be invested in public welfare and infrastructure.”

Emphasising that “the objective is not just consumer protection, but consumer prosperity” he pointed to initiatives such as the Central Consumer Protection Authority, the National Consumer Helpline, and the Jago Grahak Jago campaign as key pillars in empowering citizens. Calling for a broader coalition, he added, “When a product is fake, it is not just a business loss—it is a betrayal of consumer trust. Combating this requires shared responsibility across government, industry and society.”

In her inaugural address, Nidhi Khare, Secretary, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India, said “we are living in a time when India has emerged as the world’s fourth-largest economy”.

She noted that consumer protection has evolved from awareness-building to a technology-enabled system. “From ‘Jago Grahak Jago’ to AI-driven grievance redressal, we are building a system that is