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Counterfeiting of products have become a “big industry” in India that is impacting the consumers as well as the revenue earned by the governments, a senior West Bengal minister said here on Tuesday, urging the police and state agencies to be more vigilant to curb such practices.

“Counterfeiting has become a very big industry. Products like tea and cigarette of all the big brands are being counterfeited. I do not know whether the government of India is focussing on this matter because it is impacting the revenue, particularly in the segment of indirect taxes.

“Also the consumers are unknowingly using bad quality products while paying for big brands,” state Consumer Affairs Minister Sadhan Pande said at a Conference on Combating Counterfeiting and Smuggling, organised by Ficci CASCADE (Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying the Economy) here.

“We have to stress more to curb counterfeiting of products and cases of smuggling. We have to be more vigilant to stop such practises. The concerned government offices and police have to be very strict about counterfeiting and smuggling,” he added.

Pande said that counterfeit products such as tea, cream etc were finding its way to the retail market in the guise of branded products owing to their low prices while products like ganja, cigarettes and fake notes were being smuggled in from neighbouring countries.

“Many foreign brands of cigarettes are found without any price tags in certain Kolkata markets and are sold at unregulated prices. Also these brands are smuggled in countries like Nepal and Bhutan. We are taking steps to curb these practices,” he said.

Deepankar Aron, Additional Director General of Directorate of Revenue Intelligence’s Kolkata zonal unit, who was also present at the session, said his agency has seized counterfeit and smuggled products worth Rs 350 crore apart from gold and drugs in the last financial year.

“Seizure of tobacco products worth Rs 110 crore has been made. Also 110 kgs of gold worth Rs 430 crore have been seized in the last one year,” he added.

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