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INDIA: Apparel exporter to wage a legal battle

BANGALORE: An India based Jeans brand supplier has challenged the malicious campaign started by NGO's about the working conditions in its production plants in the city.

The company Fibres and Fabrics International and Jeans Knit Pvt Ltd. is a Rs 400 crore Garment maker supplying denims pants to Europe and the United States.

The company supplies denim pants to top brands such as G-Star, Mexx, Gap and Guess.

The company has five plants in Bangalore.

Two Netherlands-based NGOs had levelled charges of labour rights violations against the company. The company says the allegations are unsubstantiated and unspecified.

The FFI officials have said that similar campaigns by them had resulted in closure of several units in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Philippines. If they were not challenged, it could badly affect the good image of the Indian garment industry with Brand India taking a beating.

The two NGOs, Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) and Landelijke India Werkgroep (LIW), had launched a campaign alleging labour harassment, including severe physical assault of workers in the washing unit, absence of proper safety measures, especially in the washing unit, and arbitrary termination.

FFI Director-Manufacturing and Technology M Mohammed Ghiase claimed that the company provided one of the best facilities to its employees and followed international safety norms.

Following a request from the Indian High Commission at the Hague, the Centre had asked the Karantaka Government to look into the matter. The Labour Commissioner inquired into the matter and could not substantiate any of the claims made by CCC against FFI and JKPL and gave the company a clean chit.

The company had not contacted the Union Commerce Ministry to seek help.

The company has decided to wage a legal battle against the NGOs.

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