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European NGOs spreading false info, Nath tells Finnish minister

24 Oct, 2007, 2354 hrs IST, TNN

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NEW DELHI : India has expressed strong reservations on European NGOs for spreading false information about Indian industry employing children and abusing human rights. Commerce & industry minister Kamal Nath informed visiting Finnish minister for foreign trade and development Paavo Vayrynen that European NGOs, some based in Finland, were indulging in false propaganda about working conditions in the Indian industry, particularly textile, and the government had been approached by the Indian industry to take

appropriate action.

"We do not want to take any action against this as it would create an unhealthy environment," the minister said, adding that he expected the EU to take action.

The Finnish minister, however, expressed helplessness claiming that since these NGOs were not funded by the government, they did not have much control over their functioning. Mr Vayrynen added that sometimes his government was at the receiving end of NGO propaganda.

"There are NGOs resisting our paper industry and the sustainable forestry programme which we have designed," he said.

The Indian minister pointed out that India had its labour legislations and laws against child labour, which the industry was made to follow. "The entire Indian industry is subjected to legislations and is transparent. Such irresponsible campaigns cause trade disruption," he said. Mr Nath will also take up the issue with Dutch minister for economic affairs M Vander Hoeven on Wednesday.

Both Mr Nath and Mr Vayrynen confirmed that issues like human rights and environment have not been included in the proposed India-EU Free Trade and Investment Agreement. "There are other platforms for subjects such as human rights and environment. This agreement is confined to trade and investment,"

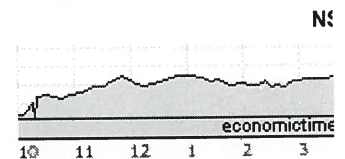
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Corporate Announcement

Uday Shankar named CEO of Star announced on Thursday appointment of Uday Shankar made Jagdish Kumar COO, S Kumar.

Mr Nath said.

India has managed to convince the EU to stick to the agreed framework of restricting the agreement to trade, services and investment, despite pressure by some EU members like France to include labour and environment in the agreement.

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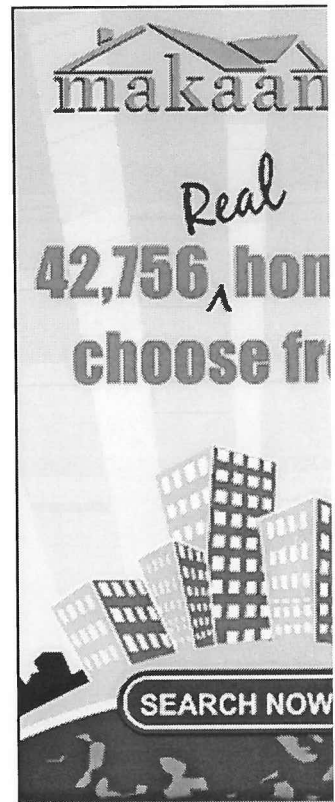
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