



# The Daily Star BUSINESS

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Japan had been reluctant to back Moscow's bid for membership, saying the Russian economy was too premature to join the forum, which urges member economies to commit themselves to tear down trade barriers.

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## Child labour

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Pandya said the allegations came from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

"They are baseless, malicious and the handiwork of vested interests," he said, adding child labour was about three per cent of the total workforce.

Pandya said the allegations could have "international implications and could be used as a handle to get importing countries to impose non-tariff trade barriers on us."

India imports small-sized rough diamonds, cuts and polishes them in thousands of shops across the country and re-exports them, mainly the United States and Europe.

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Diamond exporter Ashish Mehta said a study had been carried out by a leading firm of accountants in 1995 to estimate the extent of child labour in the industry.

"The study found child workers below 14 years of age were about 0.4 per cent of the workers in the organised sector, while they were 3.4 per cent in the unorganised sector," he said.

Kothari was confident the number of child workers are much less now as we had begun a campaign to eradicate child labour as soon as that study was out.

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