

**‘Top Thai Brands 2019’ expo opens: FTA with Thailand to boost trade, investment: KCCI chief**

KARACHI: President Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Junaid Makda has said that there exists great potential to enhance bilateral trade, investment and cooperation between Pakistan and Thailand.

Inaugurating three-day “Top Thai Brands 2019” exhibition at a local hotel, he said the signing of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) was in process and expected to be signed in 2019. Pakistan has reportedly demanded concession on 115 products on textiles, agro products, plastic and pharmaceuticals, in the manner granted by Thailand to other FTA partners on these products. Pakistan will likely to be benefited by \$200 million after signing the FTA, Junaid Makda informed.

He said Pakistan and Thailand maintained sound bilateral trade relations. “Pakistan’s import from Thailand totaled at \$1466.1 million in 2018 against \$1400.3 million in 2017 showing a growth of 4.7 percent,” he added.

The trade balance is favorable for Thailand at \$1240.6 million in 2018 as compared with \$1257.5 million in 2017, a decrease of 1.3 percent.

President KCCI said Thailand possessed number of high value-added industries like agro business, food processing and automotive production. Pakistan, by arranging joint ventures in those fields, could develop those industries together, he urged.

“Furthermore, there exists potential to collaborate in the field of trade, culture, infrastructure development, science and technology, defence, education and religious tourism.”

“There are several sightseeing places in Pakistan that have much attraction for Thai tourists. Pakistan needs to enhance marketing of its tourism potential. A transfer of technology relationship can also be set up in the automotive and water treatment sectors,” Junaid Makda concluded.

Director of Thai Trade Centre, Dhaka, Department of International Trade Promotion, Ministry of Commerce, Royal Thai Government, Suebsak Dangboonrueng expressed his pleasure to visit Pakistan one more time and appreciated support of local business community. “We can take our relations to next level by enhancing mutual trade,” he added.

Consul General Thailand, Thatree Chauvachata, said Pakistan was very important major partner of Thailand in that region. “Pakistan is now among top five countries which have good trade with Thailand for which we are thankful to business community and people of Pakistan.”

“There are many tourist places as well including Mohin Jo Daro where Thai citizens usually come. We are also going to have a meeting with Sindh Tourism Authority,” he added.

Honorary Trade Advisor to Ministry of Commerce Thailand, Arif Suleman, said that such exhibitions played a key role in promoting business activities.

Talking to media, expo organizer Rashid Ul Haque, who is also Director, Event and Conference International, said that more than 50 companies were exhibiting their goods and technology.

A large number of products is on display including cosmetic & herbal, food items, plastic house ware, bulbs, gas stove, locks, auto parts, chemical adhesive, water pump & generator, agricultural machinery, industrial paints, footwear, fishery equipment, corrugated plastic sheet for packaging, advertising etc.

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