**Japan keen to invest in Indias food processing sector: Badal**

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March 2, 2017 | UPDATED 18:50 IST

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New Delhi, Mar 2 (PTI) Japanese companies are keen to invest in Indias food processing sector especially in fruits, vegetables and spices, Union Minister [Harsimrat Kaur Badal](http://indiatoday.intoday.in/people/harsimrat-kaur-badal/19448.html) said today. Badal, who is on a three-day visit to Tokyo leading an industry body CII delegation, today met Japanese Agriculture Minister Ken Saito to discuss ways to improve bilateral trade between the two countries.

She highlighted the opportunities that India offers in the food processing sector. Badal also met top officials of Japanese food companies.

"We had positive interaction. The Japanese government and companies are keen to strengthen ties in the food processing sector. They are looking for more business opportunities in India," Badal told PTI over phone from Tokyo.

Japan, the fourth largest investor in India, is presently sourcing sea food from India. It is now keen to invest in the processing of fruits and vegetables as well as spices and make India a prospective base and export hub, she said.

"One of the Japanese firm engaged in manufacturing of tomato paste wants to become a global leader and is looking at India for sourcing the commodity in huge quantity," she added.

Badal met officials of companies such as Marubeni Corporation, Isetan Misukoshi Holdings, Housefoods Corporation, Japan Association of Refrigerated Warehouses, Mitsui Foods, Royal Host and Kohyo Company, Nissin Foods, Yakult and Fuji Oil Holdings. A Japanese delegation is expected to participate in the forthcoming World Food Fair here in November this year and explore business opportunities in India, she added.

With low food processing level in India, Badal sought cooperation and partnership from Japanese companies in the area of technology.

"Japan is more keen to source agriculture produce from India which are non-genetically modified," Badal said.

The minister said there is huge potential for Japanese investment in Indias food processing sector as only 12 firms out of 380 food companies have presence in the country. PTI LUX MJH MR

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