

FTA Talks Revived

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Thailand plans to resume free trade talks with the United States, which were put on hold after the military coup that ousted Thaksin Shinawatra in 2006, a government spokesman said yesterday.

A senior Commerce Ministry official "recently had a meeting with a US trade representative in Washington DC on resuming the Thai-US free trade agreement talks", spokesman Wichianchote Sukchotrat said.

He gave no timeframe, saying only that Thailand and the US were setting up an unofficial mechanism to work on sticking points.

"The discussions will lead to FTA talks ... and will lead to increase in investment and trade," said Mr Wichianchote.

Trade talks with the United States began in 2003, but have been dogged by controversy, particularly over complaints that Thai regulations threaten patent protection for US pharmaceutical products.