

Solar cell maker adds 3 new production lines

By Chen Qide (China Daily)
Updated: 2008-03-12 13:31

Solar cell manufacturer chairman of Nantong Qiangsheng Photovoltaic Technology Co Ltd (QS Solar), plans to add three new production lines in Nantong, Jiangsu Province, this year. Sha Xiaolin, chairman of QS Solar, said yesterday the firm will invest a total \$70 million in its four production lines, which will have a combined annual capacity of 130 mW of solar cells. "Capital is not a problem," Sha said, adding that 10 foreign financial institutions - including Morgan Stanley, Lehman Brothers and Standard Chartered Bank - will back the project. The manufacturer's first production line came onstream in August last year, with an annual capacity of 12 mW of solar panels. "Sales are good," Sha Yan, general manager of QS Solar, said. The company has signed a contract with a US firm to sell five mW of solar panels, as well as deals for two mW to South Korea and two mW to Spain.

The manufacturer has also signed a deal with Nantong's Rudong Economy and Technology Development Zone to launch a one-mW photovoltaic solar power plant.

Construction of the plant, China's largest, is expected to start after four months' preparation, the company's chairman said.

The plant will cost 28 million yuan (\$3.94 million) and will use 16,000 pieces of thin-film amorphous silicon solar cells to generate one mW of solar electricity. The same plant built overseas would cost 65 million yuan, he said.

Solar electricity produced at the plant will be more expensive than thermal power at three yuan per kWh.

But he said the price will drop to one yuan per kWh when more photovoltaic power plants are built. China produced 3,000 mW of solar cells last year, but its photovoltaic materials relied heavily on imports and 90 percent of photovoltaic cells were exported to Europe, the United States and Japan.

China's two million sq km of deserts could generate the same amount of electricity as produced by hydro, thermal and nuclear power plants combined if just one percent of it was used to build photovoltaic power plants, QS Solar said.

The manufacturer plans to have six production lines by 2009 to boost annual capacity to 340 mW, its chairman said.

By 2010, it plans to add another six production lines to reach 550 mW, he said.

"We're talking to the Shanghai municipal government about establishing a headquarters and R&D center in the city to push forward the industry," he said.

"If things go smoothly, we'll have about 20 experts from the United States, Europe and Australia working for us," he said.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/bizchina/2008-03/12/content_6529967.htm