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Taiwanese thin-film plant nears completion but with lower capacity

Following a July ground-breaking ceremony, Taiwan-headquartered storage media manufacturer CMC Magnetics Corp. says a factory for a new thin-film PV module subsidiary should be complete around mid-November. But when Sun Well Solar Corp. begins commercial production of a-Si modules in the 36,000 m² facility in April 2008, capacity will only be 15 MW, not the 40 MW reported earlier (see PI 8/2007, p. 88).

When CMC bought the line for an undisclosed amount from Swiss-based thin-film equipment manufacturer Oerlikon Solar, it was touted as having a 40 MW capacity. But according to Hsiao Yin Yi, CMC's CFO and Sun Well's director, the Taoyuan-based factory won't add equipment for the larger capacity until 2009, at which point Sun Well will most likely still be producing 1.1 x 1.3 m a-Si modules on glass

with a guaranteed efficiency of 6.9 percent. Hsiao says Sun Well would then upgrade to 48 MW in 2010. While Hsiao confirms this increase will be based on Oerlikon's next-generation micromorph tandem technology, combining a-Si and microcrystalline layers for increasing potential efficiency to over 10 percent, he says it is too early to say whether all of the production will be switched over.

The Oerlikon deal includes a production system for TCO layer deposition. Hsiao says Sun Well is currently working on a supply deal for glass and has also sent samples to Oerlikon from at least two other Taiwanese glass manufacturers to determine suitability for use.

CMC shares, which seemed to get a bounce on the Taiwan Stock Exchange when the new factory was announced, hitting a three-year high of \$18.60 TWD (\$7c USD) on July 27, was down to \$14.10 TWD (43c USD) at the close of trading on Oct. 26. wph

India's XL Telecom adds to cell line and doubles module capacity

India's XL Telecom Ltd., a mobile handset assembler that began PV module production in 2005, plans to add 120 MW of cell production capacity by mid-2008. The Secunderabad-based company will also move all PV production to a new 25,000 m² building being constructed in the nearby Fab City, Hyderabad's semiconductor hub, where module capacity will be increased from 30 to 80 MW.

According to Dinesh Kumar, CEO and managing director of XL, the company is investing 3.05 billion INR (\$76.6 million). A cell line has already been ordered from Germany's Roth & Rau AG and should be in place by June 2008. XL has lined up deals in China and Germany for about 50 percent of the wafers needed for the 5 and 6 inch mono- and multicrystalline cells. Kumar says XL currently has plans to double



Growing: XL Telecom will be moving all production from Secunderabad to a new factory in Hyderabad.

capacity to 240 MW by 2010. Cells not used by XL will be sold at between \$2.70 and \$2.80 per W, most likely on the spot market, Kumar says.

The company is in «final negotiations» for new module lines, most likely from GT Solar, which Kumar expects to be installed by May 2008 with commercial production starting a month later. For 2007, Kumar thinks XL will produce between 20 and 24 MW of modules, sized from 5 to 280 W. He says XL was awaiting IEC 61215 module certification in October and UL listing by the end of 2007. wph