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## Sharp plans massive hike in thin-film cell production

Electronics major Sharp Corp is to increase its annual production capacity for thin-film solar cells at its Katsuragi plant from the current level of 15 MW to 160 MW by October 2008.

The yen 22 billion (US\$200 million) facility will combine plants for cutting-edge LCDs, solar cells, and supporting industries.

The plant in Nara Prefecture, Japan, is expanding production ahead of the opening of a new thin-film solar cell plant in Sakai City, in Osaka Prefecture.

Groundbreaking has already taken place on the 1.27 million square metre site in Sakaihama District of the city, which Sharp is aiming to make a major industrial zone by inviting relevant infrastructure and material and equipment manufacturers to construct their plants on the site.

The LCD panel plant and the solar cell plant are both set to start production by March 2010. Plans call for an annual production volume of 1000 MW a year for thin-film solar cells with the development project including land acquisition costs coming in at a total of yen 380 billion yen (US\$3.45 billion).

Details on the investment and other factors related to the thin film plant are currently under review, says sharp.

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