

# Sharp To End Solar Battery Business In U.S., Europe

The Associated Press

OSAKA, Sept. 27 (Kyodo) — Sharp Corp. intends to withdraw from the solar battery business in the United States and Europe as part of efforts to streamline its money-losing operations, according to the company's restructuring plan obtained by Kyodo News on Wednesday.

In Japan, the consumer electronics maker is looking to sell its solar battery manufacturing facilities in Nara, Osaka and Toyama prefectures to consolidate production into its plant in Sakai, Osaka Prefecture.

Sharp, a top Japanese manufacturer of solar batteries, will basically discontinue production and sales of such products by the end of next March in the U.S. and European markets, where it has been incurring losses due partly to fierce competition with Chinese and other rivals.

The company is determined to focus its resources mainly on Japan plus India and China, where strong growth is expected. In the domestic market, Sharp is eager to lift its market share of solar batteries for households to more than 40 percent from the current 30 percent, the plan said.

The plan revealed that Sharp will sell the Katsuragi plant in Nara Prefecture and the Yao plant in Osaka Prefecture around the end of next March, while ending operations at its Toyama plant in Toyama Prefecture in the first half of the business year starting next April.

Though the profit margin of the business has deteriorated, the company expects the Japanese market to expand further due to effects of government subsidies and the introduction of the law obliging utilities to buy renewable energy at fixed rates.

At its Sakai plant, Sharp will mainly make crystalline solar cells that are suitable for roofs of houses and end output of thin-film solar cells except for certain types.

To enhance its price competitiveness, Sharp intends to farm out production to other companies, the plan said.

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