

Mitsui Chemicals' New Singapore Elastomers Plant Starts Commercial Operation

Mitsui Elastomers Singapore Pte. Ltd. (MELS), a fully owned subsidiary of Japan's Mitsui Chemicals, Inc. (MCI), has embarked upon the commercial operation of its new high-performance elastomers plant on Jurong Island, Singapore, MCI announced today.

MELS was established on February 7, 2001, with a paid-in capital of 35 million U.S. dollars and head offices in downtown Singapore, to engage in the manufacture and sale of a line of high-performance elastomers centered at the flagship product Tafmer®.

Construction of the new plant which has been proceeding smoothly since the ground-breaking in September, 2001, was completed successfully in November 2002. Thereafter, test runs for confirming the plant integrity and product quality have been conducted successfully, while at the same time samples were distributed to customers for ascertaining product Tafmer®'s commercial viability.

The plant, with a production capacity of 100,000 ton/yr, is a largest-class world-scale elastomers plant fully leveraging MCI's latest production technology based on the company's many years of outstanding capabilities in the polymers field.

A properties-modifying material used to drastically improve the impact strength as well as the flexibility of the matrix polymers, Tafmer® is a prime strategic product which MCI developed and commercialized ahead of the world and successfully created the market. It constitutes a nucleus of the Elastomers businesses in the Performance Materials sector which is a core business of MCI.

It is expected that demand for Tafmer® would undergo a yet greater expansion in step with a further anticipated development of the Asian economy and a greater sophistication of industry in that region from now on. Having strengthened its Tafmer® marketing activities in Asia, based on such an outlook, by creating a sales & marketing organization within MELS last October, MCI is seeing a smooth progress in developing Tafmer® demand in the region.

Now that the commercial operation of the new plant has been kicked off, MCI plans to maintain its largest market share and pursue further business expansion in Asia including Japan, by meeting the diverse needs of the customers and assuring them a stable supply based on a two-pronged production setup in Japan and Singapore.

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