

New era of thin-film solar tech arrives

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THE ERA of mobile energy sources has arrived with the dawn of thin-film solar technology, according to the chairman of clean energy company Hanergy,

"It is the future trend for new energy, including solar power, to replace traditional fossil fuels. Mobile energy technology, which allows you to charge anywhere, will turn different objects into green generators," said Li Hejun, chairman of Hanergy Holding Group Ltd, a Beijing-based multinational renewable energy company.

According to Li, burning coal or oil not only generates greenhouse emissions, but also leads to great waste, as the energy utilisation rate of those fuel types is only 1 to 2 per cent.

"This is in stark contrast with the up to 30 per cent energy utilisation of thin-film solar technology, which only takes tenths of a millisecond to generate energy and doesn't produce any emissions," Li said.

He described thin-film solar power technology as man-made chlorophyll, with which Hanergy is researching and developing innovative solar products including foldable solar paper, solar backpacks, solar clothes, solar tents, and solar cell phone cases.

The global mobile energy market includes mobile energy products, smart routing products and mobile energy services. It is projected to reach 7.4 trillion yuan (\$1.15 trillion) by 2020, Economic Information Daily said, citing a report from the new energy chamber of commerce of the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce.

Li said it takes about 30 years for an industry to realise explosive growth, and thinfilm solar technology could experience tenfold or even twentyfold annual growth.

Shi Dinghuan, former councilor of the State Council, said solar energy is the most universal energy in the world, and with its increasing efficiency rates, there are broad innovative areas for development.

"Human beings' mobility is made possible either by aircraft, ship, train, car, bicycle or foot, and all that requires energy. So the utilisation of solar energy or wind could guarantee our energy supply on the way," Shi said.

"As the country with the highest number of electric vehicles, with up to 1 million, efforts should be made to utilise solar energy in electric cars in the future," he said.

China's new energy vehicle output and sales remained robust throughout 2017. A total of 794,000 new energy vehicles were produced and 777,000 were sold across China, up 53.8 per cent and 53.3 per cent year-on-year, respectively, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers.

Two years ago, Swiss pilots made an around-the-world trip in Solar Impulse 2, the world's most advanced solar-powered airplane, opening the world's eyes to greater possible clean energy applications. Since Hanergy turned its focus to solar energy in 2009, more than \$10 billion has poured into its technology integration and innovation.