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KEC International Capitalizing on Opportunities, New Aluminium Conductor Plant in Gujarat



A *Asian Cables, a part of KEC International Limited is coming up with a state-of-the-art aluminium conductor plant in Vadodara, Gujarat equipped to manufacture a wide range of conductors including ACSR, AAAC, Al-59, and ACSS with a production capacity of 1,500 kilometers variants per month. With an aim to capitalize on emerging opportunities, Asian Cables is well-positioned to navigate market dynamics and drive sustainable growth in the cable market by expanding into tier 2 and tier 3 cities, a strategic move to tap into burgeoning markets. This was revealed by Mr. Manjit Singh, Executive Director - Cables, KEC International Limited during an interview with Wire & Cable India magazine.*

Mr. Manjit Singh, Executive Director - Cables, KEC International Limited

Wire & Cable India: *Asian Cables is all set to establish a new aluminium conductor plant at Vadodara, Gujarat. Cast some light on your upcoming facility's infrastructure, production capacity, and technology.*

Manjit Singh: Our upcoming aluminium conductor plant in Vadodara, Gujarat is poised to be a state-of-the-art facility, equipped to manufacture a wide range of conductors including ACSR, AAAC, Al-59, and ACSS. We have invested in top-of-the-line machinery to ensure efficient production processes and high-quality output. Our rolling mill, sourced from Xinter, and drawing machine from renowned Niehoff, along with a state-of-the-art stranding machine from Cable Tech, represent the latest in manufacturing technology. With these advanced machines, we are confident in our ability to meet the growing demand for aluminium conductors. The plant will be capable of producing up to 1,500 kilometers of all conductor variants every month,

ensuring our ability to meet the diverse needs of our customers efficiently and effectively. Overall, our new aluminium conductor plant embodies our commitment to innovation, quality, and meeting the evolving needs of the market.

WCI: *The industry is now transitioning from Industry 4.0 to Industry 5.0. How, according to you, has the implementation of Industry 4.0 evolved over the years? Do you think that the wire & cable industry is ready to adapt to this evolving industrial revolution?*

MS: Industry 5.0, often referred to as the Human-Centered Industry, is essentially an evolution of the Industry 4.0 concept, focusing on harmonizing human intelligence with state-of-the-art technologies like automation, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things (IoT) in manufacturing processes. In the context of the cable industry, this paradigm shift holds immense promise. We anticipate advancements such as refined automation techniques, empowering our workforce through augmented reality (AR) training initiatives, and

leveraging data-driven insights to ensure optimal machinery performance and operational excellence.

WCI: *What marketing strategies do you use to enhance your sales and market presence?*

MS: We adopt a comprehensive strategy revolving around proactive customer engagement and a deep understanding of their unique needs. We prioritize direct interaction with our customers, fostering open communication channels to ensure that we are attuned to their evolving requirements. This commitment to understanding our customers' needs allows us to offer solutions that precisely address their objectives.

We actively participate in industry events such as seminars and exhibitions. Having conducted multiple seminars in metro and tier-2 cities and being enthusiastic participants in events like the Cable & Wire Fair and Wiretech exhibitions, we seize the opportunity to showcase our expertise to a diverse range of stakeholders. Through these seminars, focused on key industry topics, and our presence at prominent exhibitions, we not only demonstrate our commitment to thought leadership but also engage directly with potential customers.

Recognizing the significant influence of consultants in the cables and wire industry, we prioritize building strong relationships with these key stakeholders. Additionally, obtaining product approvals from relevant regulatory bodies enhance our credibility and market acceptance, reinforcing our position as a trusted provider of quality solutions in the industry.

WCI: *Tell us about the recent product development and the R&D that the company has been undertaking at Asian Cables.*

MS: At Asian Cables, we've been actively engaged in advancing our product portfolio through rigorous research and development efforts. Our recent endeavors have yielded several noteworthy innovations. One such breakthrough is the development of Cu – Ag contact wire, offering a

compelling alternative to traditional copper contact wires. This innovation delivers higher current ratings and significantly reduces power losses, enhancing overall efficiency. Additionally, we've developed Cu- Mg Dropper/Jumper as a safer alternative to Cu-Cd Dropper/Jumper, particularly addressing environmental and safety concerns. In addition, our commitment to improving transmission efficiency has led to the development of products like ACSR, AAAC, and AL-59 overhead conductors.

WCI: *With the growing focus on environmental responsibility, how is Asian Cables committed to sustainability throughout its manufacturing processes and products?*

MS: Asian Cables is deeply committed to sustainability across its manufacturing processes and product offerings. Our dedication to environmental responsibility is exemplified through several initiatives. Firstly, we have developed a range of green cables, including LT, HT, and EHV variants, which boast a low carbon footprint and are designed for sustainability. These cables help reduce harmful gases released into the environment, making them particularly beneficial for sensitive places, such as airports, malls, etc. where large numbers of people come together in one place. Given the huge power requirements of data centers, the use of green cables becomes even more crucial.

Secondly, our fire survival cables, in the LT category, are engineered to maintain circuit integrity even in the event of a fire. By preventing the spread of fire, these cables play a crucial role in protecting life and property, contributing to overall safety and sustainability.

Lastly, with the world's rapid transition towards electric vehicles (EVs), we recognize the importance of EV charging infrastructure. Our EV cables facilitate the charging of EVs, providing both an opportunity and a responsibility to contribute to a more sustainable tomorrow. By supporting the adoption of electric vehicles, we aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote cleaner transportation alternatives.



Furthermore, in the realm of manufacturing processes, our Vadodara plant, with new power purchase agreements and capex plans, is expected to increase its reliance on renewable energy sources from 33 percent to over 90 percent. Similarly, our Mysore plant already exceeds 90 percent reliance on renewable energy, further solidifying our commitment to sustainability.

Through these initiatives, Asian Cables is actively advancing sustainability goals, and prioritizing environmental responsibility. We are committed to playing our part in building a greener, more sustainable future for generations to come.

WCI: *What according to you are the USPs of your company, setting it apart from the competition in the market?*

MS: Asian Cables stands out in the market both in terms of product quality and organizational excellence. Safety is paramount—we rigorously adhere to safety specifications to ensure our cables pose no risks to humans or the environment. Adherence to regulatory standards is another cornerstone of our operations; we strictly follow IS/IC standards to maintain high-quality products. Operating within the organized sector further underscores our commitment to professionalism and accountability. Additionally, we prioritize gender equality within our organization, ensuring equal opportunities for all employees. These factors collectively set us apart, reinforcing our reputation as a trusted and reliable player in the cable industry.

WCI: *Kindly provide your insights on the current scenario, ongoing challenges, and upcoming opportunities in the Indian and global cable markets.*

MS: The surge in industrial activity, fueled by increased

public sector capital infusion and robust gross fixed capital formation in infrastructure development, has unlocked global opportunities. This momentum has been further bolstered by the rising contribution of the private sector to gross capital formation. Consequently, the cable industry has been experiencing considerable growth, mirroring the booming industrial activity. Over the last five years, significant progress has been observed within the industry, confirming its growth trajectory domestically and internationally. As a result, we have also benefited from this growth momentum, playing a pivotal role in meeting the increased demand for cable solutions. Our exports have increased significantly by over 50 percent. Moreover, initiatives aimed at revitalizing the dealer network and intensifying customer engagement activities have yielded tangible results, reinforcing the brand's market presence.

Looking ahead, Asian Cables aims to capitalize on emerging opportunities by expanding into tier 2 and tier 3 cities, a strategic move to tap into burgeoning markets. We are also enhancing our product portfolio by installing a new aluminum conductor line. However, challenges such as metal price volatility, currency challenges, geopolitical tensions etc. persist posing hurdles to maintaining stability and competitiveness. Despite these challenges, Asian Cables is poised to leverage numerous opportunities in the market. These include utility upgradation through schemes like RDSS, the growing demand for cables in data centers and 5G telecom infrastructure, and the thrust towards renewable energy projects. Additionally, the UL certification presents a gateway to explore the US cable market, signaling potential for expansion into new territories and market segments. Overall, while challenges remain, Asian Cables is well-positioned to navigate market dynamics, capitalize on opportunities, and drive sustainable growth in the cable market.

