

March 18, 2024

Sulzer to deliver technology and key equipment to India's first bioplastics plant to boost sustainable manufacturing in the region

Sulzer will supply its cutting-edge polylactic acid (PLA) production technologies to Balrampur Chini Mills Limited (BCML) to support the construction of India's first bioplastics plant. The new state-of-the-art bioplastics plant will produce 75'000 tonnes of compostable, wholly recyclable bioplastic per year using sugarcane as a feedstock. It will be located adjacent to one of BCML's sugar cane processing facilities, enabling BCML to use the country's main agricultural crop to make a major contribution to the nation's sustainability aims.

Single-use plastic waste has been a major environmental issue in the world and many countries are encouraging the adoption of bioplastics, especially for packaging materials. Polylactic acid is a bio-based, compostable and wholly recyclable biopolymer that is produced from renewable feedstocks, such as sugar cane. The technologies required to enable the production process for this material have been developed and optimized by Sulzer. They have been designed to help industry meet the increasing global demand for high-performance, more sustainable products in an economically viable way.

Balrampur Chini Mills Limited is one of India's leading sugar producers with a crushing capacity of 80'000 tonnes per day spread across ten plants. The company has a strong sustainability ethos; they are already the largest producer of bioethanol for fuel in India and they also use waste products from the sugar mills for power generation. The introduction of this new bioplastic manufacturing capability is the next step in the company's journey to Net Zero. In essence, it will strengthen the company's efforts to continuously improve its resource efficiency and environmental footprint.

Playing a key role in the realization of the plant, Sulzer will deliver the manufacturing technologies for the key process stages including lactide synthesis, lactide purification and polymerization. As the leading global supplier of key equipment for bioplastics production, Sulzer's expertise is used in most PLA manufacturing plants in the world. Once this latest plant is complete, the company's field service experts will also be on-hand to support the commissioning and start-up procedures.

Projects like this exemplify Sulzer's focus on supporting essential industries that can contribute to a more prosperous economy and sustainable society. In addition to supporting the company's sustainability goals, the new bioplastics plant will provide further diversification for the sugar producer, adding to its bioethanol and power generation schemes. Since the sugar market is heavily regulated and exports carefully managed, the potential for increasing margins is limited. In contrast, the demand for bioplastics is growing rapidly as more applications look to take advantage of the environmental benefits and reduced energy costs in production.

Avantika Saraogi, Executive Director, BCML, explains: "The integration of a cutting-edge and globally first PLA plant to process right from sugarcane to bioplastic in one location will make a major contribution to our sustainability portfolio, which is very important for our corporate goals. The attractive commercial proposition also offers us an excellent opportunity for

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further diversification with an excellent market for our end-product. Sulzer has a proven record in delivering the bioplastic production technology needed to optimize this plant and we are confident in the success of this project.”

Sulzer Chemtech Division President Uwe Boltersdorf said: “We strategically aim to support industrialists in executing projects more professionally, thereby enhancing both economic and sustainable performance. The construction of India’s first fully integrated bioplastics plant highlights the tangible benefits available to clients who want to diversify their revenue streams and make a positive contribution to reducing plastic pollutants. We look forward to working with BCML and other forward-thinking clients as we continue to strive to deliver improved energy efficiency, raw material efficiency and higher yields.”

Sulzer is a global leader in fluid engineering and chemical processing applications. We specialize in energy-efficient pumping, agitation, mixing, separation, purification, crystallization and polymerization technologies for fluids of all types. Our solutions enable carbon emission reductions, development of polymers from biological sources, recycling of plastic waste and textiles, and efficient power storage. Our customers benefit from our commitment to innovation, performance and quality through our responsive network of 160 world-class manufacturing facilities and service centers across the globe. Sulzer has been headquartered in Winterthur, Switzerland, since 1834. In 2023, our 13'130 employees delivered revenues of CHF 3.3 billion. Our shares are traded on the SIX Swiss Exchange (SIX: SUN). www.sulzer.com

Inquiries:

*Media Relations: Mary-Lou Murphy, Group External Communications
Phone +41 52 262 31 52, mary-lou.murphy@sulzer.com*

*Product inquiries: Dorota Zoldosova, Head Marketing & Communications Chemtech Division
Phone +41 52 262 37 22, dorota.zoldosova@sulzer.com*

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