

Sharp's solar panels throw posh light on city high-rise

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(Phys.org)—Yet another eco-conscious announcement from Japan for residents of Japan: Sharp has announced a solar panel of a semi transparent nature for mounting on balcony railings or high-rise windows. These are semi-transparent black solar energy panels that can collect energy from the sun while still allowing the light to shine through. The panels are laminated glass infused with photovoltaic cells. Each panel contains rows of cells arranged so that natural light can shine

through. The new product is said to deliver a solar power conversion efficiency of about 6.8-percent with a maximum output of 95 watts. The module can also act as a heat shield, preventing heat from passing through the glass.

The size of the panel stands at 4.5-feet wide by 3.2-feet tall and is 0.37 inches thick. The product will be promoted to customers in Japan as an opportunity for residents to enjoy power-generating windows. The panels will offer the opportunity to have natural light as well. Sharp had no details on pricing or plans to bring the product further than Japan, but the launch date for its Japanese market will be October.



A reaction to the announcement outside Sharp has been one of interest but also notations about the product's downside in the fact that the maximum power output of the new panels is only 95 watts with around 6.8 percent efficiency, less than the 20 percent efficiency being produced on other modern solar panels.



On the plus side, the Sharp panels will be easy to integrate anywhere glass is used in building construction. Their ability to collect solar power, if widely applied, could turn skyscrapers and other constructions into [power](#) generators. "If we could retrofit every high-rise building's standard windows with this solar panel glass, buildings would each become its own power plant capable of generating at least a percentage of its energy needs," said environmental writer David Quilty.

More information: [Japanese press release](#)

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