tion in these markets due to our portfolio. Combined with a steady growth in the Asian market, rising demand for print in the American market, and a changed market dynamic caused by Covid-19 makes the timing of the expansions just right."

Fibertex Personal Care currently operates five lines at two sites in Malaysia, which make about 90,000 tons of capacity. Its most recent line came onstream in mid-2017. Increased wealth and growth in the Asian middle class segment is leading to growth in the hygiene market of approximately 10%.

Meanwhile, in the U.S. Fibertex Personal Care introduced print production three years ago and continues to experience increased demand for printing on nonwovens. The company began print production through a joint venture Innowo Print in Germany in 2008. It purchased a full stake in the company in 2014 and currently has operations in Germany, Malaysai and the U.S.

"The introduction of print production in the U.S. three years ago was an important strategic milestone for us, and as expected the market now demands new capacity," Axelsen says. "This gives us the opportunity to engage in more development projects with our customers. We have the skills and soon the capacity."

Shemesh Launches 200ppm Canister Line

Shemesh Automation will open a new U.S. showroom in the second half of 2021. The site will feature a new 200ppm total solution canister wipes line, dubbed the TKS-200. Shemesh will invite select market participants to view the new technology during the second half of 2021 before making the line available for sale. Shemesh will also have spares inventory at the U.S. site. These initiatives represent a more than $4 million investment.

Building on decades of perfecting existing technologies, the new line comes in response to increased demand for canister wipes, partially set by the Covid-19 pandemic. The investment is expected to cement the Shemesh brand's reputation as a global leader in the canister wipes packaging machinery arena.

"We have been working tirelessly over the last few decades to optimize our machinery and truly perfect our total turnkey solution for the canister wipes industry," says Shai Shemesh, CEO. "I am so proud of what we have managed to achieve with the ground-breaking TKS-200 total turnkey solution. Indeed, we know of no other company on a global scale with such deep, vertical know-how in such different technologies as Liquid Filling, Round Wipes Rolls Stuffing, Conduction Sealing, Capping, Labelling, and Case Packing – the core technologies underlying the Shemesh great value proposition catered to our customer base."

Canister wipes lines are more sophisticated than lines built for other traditional market sectors such as food and beverage or cosmetics—in which Shemesh also operates—due to complexities such as high speed liquid filling while making allowances for elastic solids, or the round nonwovens, within the containers. This often happens while simultaneously dealing with alcohol-based solutions as well as in a potentially corrosive environment.

Mark Calliari is the director of Shemesh's North American operations. "Following the great success we've had in the market with the TKS-60 and predominantly the TKS-120, I could not be more excited about this new development. I'm sure the new TKS-200 will make a great impact on the market as it not only offers a higher speed, but also better than ever consistency in production, accuracy and user satisfaction," he says. "The new TKS-200 from Shemesh and the substantial investment made into a new U.S.-based showroom and spares inventory demonstrates once again our strong commitment to the industry, our customers and to the U.S. market."

Oceancash to Double Nonwovens Capacity

Oceancash Pacific will double its production capacity for nonwoven materials used in the production of personal protective equipment (PPE). The Malaysian company manufactures and sells air-through bonded nonwoven and thermal bonded nonwoven fabric, which is widely used in disposable hygiene products.

The estimated capital expenditure for the project will be about $10 million (for land and machinery) and will be funded through internal funds, placements and bank borrowings. The investment will double Oceancash's capacity to 16,000 tons per year and will be complete within 18 months.

"We observed that demand for nonwoven materials has accelerated during this Covid-19 pandemic as nonwoven is a key raw material used in the production of PPE. We believe that this pandemic is an opportune time for such an expansion," says Oceancash general manager Lor Seng Thee.

"We are confident that this plan will mark a new major milestone for the group with very strong potential to raise the growth trajectory of our earnings," he adds.

Lor says the new expansion involves a major upgrade in production technology, which will allow the company to make three-ply material for three-ply masks.

"In addition, the nonwoven material from the new plant can be supplied to the disposable hygienic products industry, in which Oceancash already has a steady customer base," says Lor, adding that the company believes the demand for hygiene products will continue to grow, given the improvement of standard of living as well as the higher hygiene awareness arising from this pandemic."

California Start-Up Begins Face Mask Production

A Northern California-based startup is now in the mask making business, producing non-medical, three-ply nonwoven face masks. Salus Supply, a veteran-owned company, and the first and only nonwoven mask manufacturer on the West Coast, guarantees low prices and same-day shipping.

"We bought a machine so that we could make masks in America, put local people to work and help to re-establish a critically important supply chain for personal