

MONTHLY ENERGY WRAP-UP

NOTHING BUT NET ZERO

This Month in Net Zero JULY EDITION

July brought a wave of megaprojects, policy recalibrations, and growing scrutiny over whether the grid can keep pace with AI-driven energy demand. In Asia, China led the charge, launching the world's most powerful hydropower project and confirming a \$557m partnership with Tesla to build an integrated solar, battery, and supercomputing hub. Southeast Asia also made moves, with solar players rolling out commercial solutions tailored to surging demand, but developer margins and supply chains remain strained.

Momentum is rising in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia announced an \$8.3 billion investment to deliver 15GW of new renewable capacity, while cross-sector collaborations involving utilities and healthcare providers shows clean energy is being embedded into essential infrastructure.

Green hydrogen diplomacy advanced as Europe and the Gulf further aligned on trade and infrastructure. Europe focused on regulatory tightening, introducing a low carbon fuels accounting framework. Yet clean power output fell and fossil generation rose, highlighting structural and seasonal risks.

In the US, AI infrastructure is reshaping long-term demand, with a \$25 billion hyperscale investment that is testing grid limits. Smarter infrastructure and resilient systems are now just as critical as adding new capacity.



EUROPE

EU defines low-carbon fuel criteria in new Delegated Act

A new EU Delegated Act outlines emission thresholds and methodology for qualifying low-carbon fuels like green and blue hydrogen.

[Read the full article here](#)

EU renewable share declines in H1 2025 despite record solar

Utilities turned to gas and coal due to price and reliability concerns, causing a slight dip in renewables despite 179TWh solar output.

[Read the full article here](#)

Interreg projects showcased at EU Sustainable Energy Week

13 Interreg-funded projects were featured, highlighting cross-border collaboration for EU's energy transition.

[Read the full article here](#)





MENA

Saudi Arabia and Europe Strengthen Clean Energy Ties Through Green Hydrogen and Renewable Export Agreements at Riyadh

Saudi Arabia and several European energy majors have signed landmark agreements in Riyadh to boost green hydrogen production and renewable energy exports, positioning the Kingdom as a key supplier to Europe's decarbonisation plans. The deals include collaboration with TotalEnergies, Siemens Energy, EnBW, and others, reinforcing cross-regional energy transition partnerships.

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ACWA Power, Badeel and SAPCO to invest approximately \$8.3 billion to develop 15,000 MW of renewable energy projects in Saudi Arabia

The EU will invest 42.5 billion from 2028 onward in MENA to support renewable energy, border stability, and migration cooperation.

[Read the full article here](#)

EWEC renews 100% clean energy deal with Mediclinic

EWEC extends its agreement to supply 100% clean energy to Mediclinic's Abu Dhabi facilities, furthering UAE's decarbonisation efforts.

[Read the full article here](#)

US

New US law scales back clean energy incentives

The 'One Big Beautiful Bill' rolls back key tax credits from the IRA, delays plant closures, and prioritises fossil fuels.

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Executive order increases federal land restrictions for renewables

President Trumps executive order introduces new reviews for wind and solar projects, adding hurdles as incentives phase out.

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Google to invest \$25billion in AI data center grid

Google announces \$25billion for data centers, including \$3billion in hydro projects in Pennsylvania to ensure carbon-free AI power.

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ASIA

China begins construction of the worlds largest hydropower dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo River

China launches the worlds largest hydropower dam in Tibet, aiming to generate 300TWh annually bolstering renewables while raising ecological concerns downstream.

[Read the full article here](#)

Tesla and China Unite in \$557M Deal to Launch the World's Largest Clean Energy Project

In a move that underscores the ambition of both Tesla and China, the two have come together to launch the world's largest energy project.

[Read the full article here](#)

Sungrows Southeast Asia Summit highlights PV and storage innovation

At its Vietnam summit, Sungrow unveiled new inverter and storage solutions, reaffirming its commitment to Southeast Asia's clean energy transition..

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ARTICLE

Powering Intelligence or Creating Crisis? Why AI May Be the Catalyst for the Next Energy Crunch

There's no denying the energy transition has entered a new phase. But this time, it's not being driven by climate policy, geopolitics, or oil prices. It's being driven by artificial intelligence.

From Tokyo to Texas, the rapid rise in demand from data centres, hyperscalers, and generative AI is reshaping grid dynamics faster than policymakers can react. The rise of digital technologies is not without consequence and it's placing growing pressure on our energy infrastructure.

At a recent roundtable with energy transition investors and infrastructure leaders, one figure dominated the discussion: a single generative AI training run can now consume more electricity than 100 US homes do in an entire year. That's not an anomaly. It's becoming the norm.



FROM DATA CLOUDS TO POWER DRAINS

AI may promise greater efficiency and automation, but the infrastructure behind it is anything but lean. Hyperscale data centres consume enormous amounts of electricity, drawing uninterrupted power at levels that local grids were never designed to support.

In Ireland, applications for new data centre capacity have been paused. Northern Virginia, home to the world's largest data centre cluster, is facing years-long delays in grid reinforcement. The

Netherlands has also imposed moratoriums on new data centre developments in certain regions. All of this is happening before AI reaches mass-scale adoption across consumers and industry.

We are entering a new age where access to electricity could determine who gets to innovate, and who falls behind.



THE RISE OF POWER POVERTY IN DEVELOPED MARKETS

Traditionally, energy poverty referred to a lack of access to electricity in developing countries. But in the context of AI, it could start to mean something else entirely: being priced out or outpaced in access to reliable power.

In markets where AI players dominate capacity, traditional users like schools, hospitals, SMEs, and manufacturers may struggle to scale or even survive. They risk being sidelined by limited access and rising tariffs. Which is a scenario already playing out in parts of the US and Asia.

The competitive edge is shifting too. Countries that can offer clean, stable, surplus energy will attract the next wave of digital infrastructure, and those that can't may fall off the map.



THE GRID IS OUTDATED. THAT'S AN OPPORTUNITY.

Most grid systems in operation today were designed decades ago. They were built around centralised generation, predictable loads, and one-way energy flow. AI throws that model out the window.

Addressing this mismatch requires much more than adding solar panels or building wind farms. It demands a fundamental system overhaul:

- Upgrading transmission and distribution networks to manage sharp load fluctuations
- Deploying large-scale battery storage and long-duration energy systems
- Creating distributed generation hubs to ease grid pressure
- Aligning AI data centre development with clean power sources
- Rewarding flexibility and grid services, not just raw capacity
- Without this kind of transformation, the AI economy won't be limited by innovation or hardware. It will be limited by megawatts.



CLEAN ENERGY IS NOW ABOUT SURVIVAL, NOT JUST SUSTAINABILITY

Renewables were once framed as a moral imperative. Today, they are critical infrastructure. Clean energy is now the only politically viable and economically scalable way to meet surging electricity demand.

Battery storage, particularly co-located with data and AI campuses, is becoming one of the most important infrastructure investment opportunities of the next decade. Hydrogen could emerge as a key baseload provider in markets that are politically cautious about nuclear. And offshore wind, once seen as a luxury, is rapidly being reclassified as essential.

In short, renewables are no longer about emissions. They are about continuity, competitiveness, and capacity.



LEADERSHIP WILL BE THE DECIDING FACTOR

Transforming energy systems and building digital infrastructure at the same time is no small feat. Success now depends on hybrid leadership. Executives who understand digital and industrial systems, who can navigate complex regulatory environments, and who can lead in the face of constant volatility.

At Norman Broadbent, we're seeing this shift firsthand. The best leaders in today's market are those who can bridge clean energy, digital infrastructure, and capital deployment. These are the people shaping the next decade.

The energy transition was already urgent. The AI wave has made it existential.



FINAL THOUGHT

Artificial intelligence is a generational opportunity. But it also risks deepening inequality between those who can secure reliable electricity, and those who can't.

This is not the time for half-measures. It's a time to rethink what infrastructure means, how we value clean power, and what kind of leadership is needed to secure progress.

The challenge is clear. But so is the opportunity.



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