

## NEWSLETTER

### ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

18 - 24 May 2026



#### **World's first megawatt-level airborne wind energy system begins grid supply**

China's first megawatt-level airborne wind energy system has begun supplying electricity to the grid in Gansu province. The system uses a drone-like aircraft flying at 500 meters to capture consistent high-altitude winds, generating power via a ground-based generator. It achieves a capacity factor of over 60%, significantly higher than traditional wind turbines. Technology is ideal for remote and mountainous regions with complex terrain. **(National Energy Administration)**

#### **National green methanol standard launched for shipping fuel transition**

China has released its first national standard for green methanol as a marine fuel, accelerating the decarbonization of its shipping sector. The standard defines the carbon intensity and sustainability criteria for methanol produced from renewable sources. Major ports in Shanghai and Ningbo will begin offering green methanol bunkering by the end of 2026. **(Ministry of Transport)**

#### **Closed-loop recycling system achieves 95% recovery rate for solar panels**

A new national recycling network has achieved a 95% material recovery rate for decommissioned solar photovoltaic panels. The system uses automated processes to separate glass, silicon, silver, and copper for reuse in new panels. The network, consisting of 20 regional hubs, can process over 1.5 million tons of panel waste annually. This establishes a circular economy model for China's solar industry. **(Ministry of Industry and Information Technology)**

#### **First commercial sand battery for long-duration energy storage goes online**

China's first commercial "sand battery" for long-duration thermal energy storage has been commissioned in Inner Mongolia. The system stores excess wind and solar power as heat in insulated silos filled with sand, which can be retained for weeks. It then dispatches the heat for district heating or converts it back to electricity, providing over 100 hours of storage capacity. **(Chinese Academy of Sciences)**

#### **Major city mandates green roofs and walls on all new buildings**

Shenzhen has mandated that all new commercial and residential buildings must incorporate green roofs or vertical gardens covering at least 30% of exterior surfaces. The regulation aims to reduce urban heat island effect, improve air quality, and manage stormwater runoff. The policy is estimated to create over 10 million square meters of new urban green space annually. **(China Daily)**