



Planet Pulse

For May 22, 2026

**A rhythmic check-in on
climate issues**



The wrong kind of sun block

I've discussed how damaging coal is to the environment on a multitude of occasions. Here's yet another spin on the downside of coal:

- New research from the University of Oxford and College of London has concluded that in 2023 the particles emitted from coal reduced the power generated by global solar PV installations by 5.8%.
- That equates to about 11 terawatt-hours of lost energy.
- The biggest losses occur where coal and solar are co-located.
- China has lost the most, while U.S. output is estimated to have only been cut by 3.1% from 2013 - 2023.
- However, the researchers estimated that due to aerosol-related pollutants, overall U.S. solar output is declining 1.5% annually.





Faster than the speed of hydrogen

These days I don't highlight hydrogen much, and for good reason: the technology has a multitude of technical challenges that still must be overcome. Still, this story illustrates it's potential, and it's a cool:

- The global body that governs motor sports - the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) - has announced its intention to officiate a new hydrogen land speed record attempt.
- JCB's 32.8-foot long, 1,600 horsepower Hydromax jet car is expected to break the 350-mph mark that the company set in 2006 with its Dieselmex vehicle.
- If successful, it will double the existing land speed record for a hydrogen internal combustion car.
- The test is expected to occur in early August.

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Transformers – and not the movie



Data centers have driven electricity production to the forefront of the news, but this critical grid story remains largely under-the-radar.

The U.S. power grid dates back to 1882. Luckily, most of the key infrastructure was built in the 1950s and 1960s. Still, that makes much of grid 60 to 70 years old.

In other words, we are in desperate need of an upgrade, not to mention a build-out to accommodate data centers and renewable energy. And transformers are integral to both.



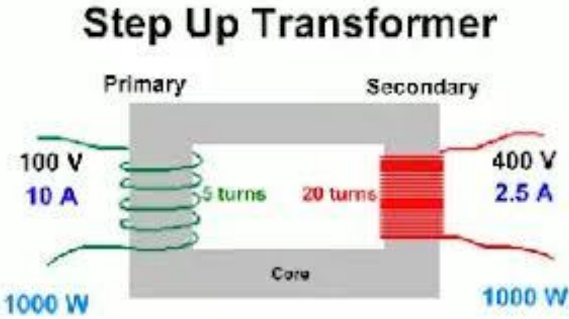
According to Wood Mackenzie, demand for step up transformers has increased 274% from 2019 to 2025.



During that same time demand for substation transformers increased by 116%.



Industry experts estimate that prices have spiked by near 80% over the last five years and that lead times for high-capacity units are as long as four years.





Probably just fake news

This story was published in February. Still, it's worthy of highlighting. Not pointing any fingers, but America, we have a problem.

- According to Transparency International, the U.S. hit an all-time low in the global index that measures perceptions of public-sector corruption.
- The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranks 182 countries and territories on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).
- Top performers: Denmark (89), Finland (88) and Singapore (84).
- At the bottom: Somalia (9), South Sudan (9), and Venezuela (10).
- The U.S. scored a 64, well above the global average of 42, so at least there's that.

Corruption Perceptions Index

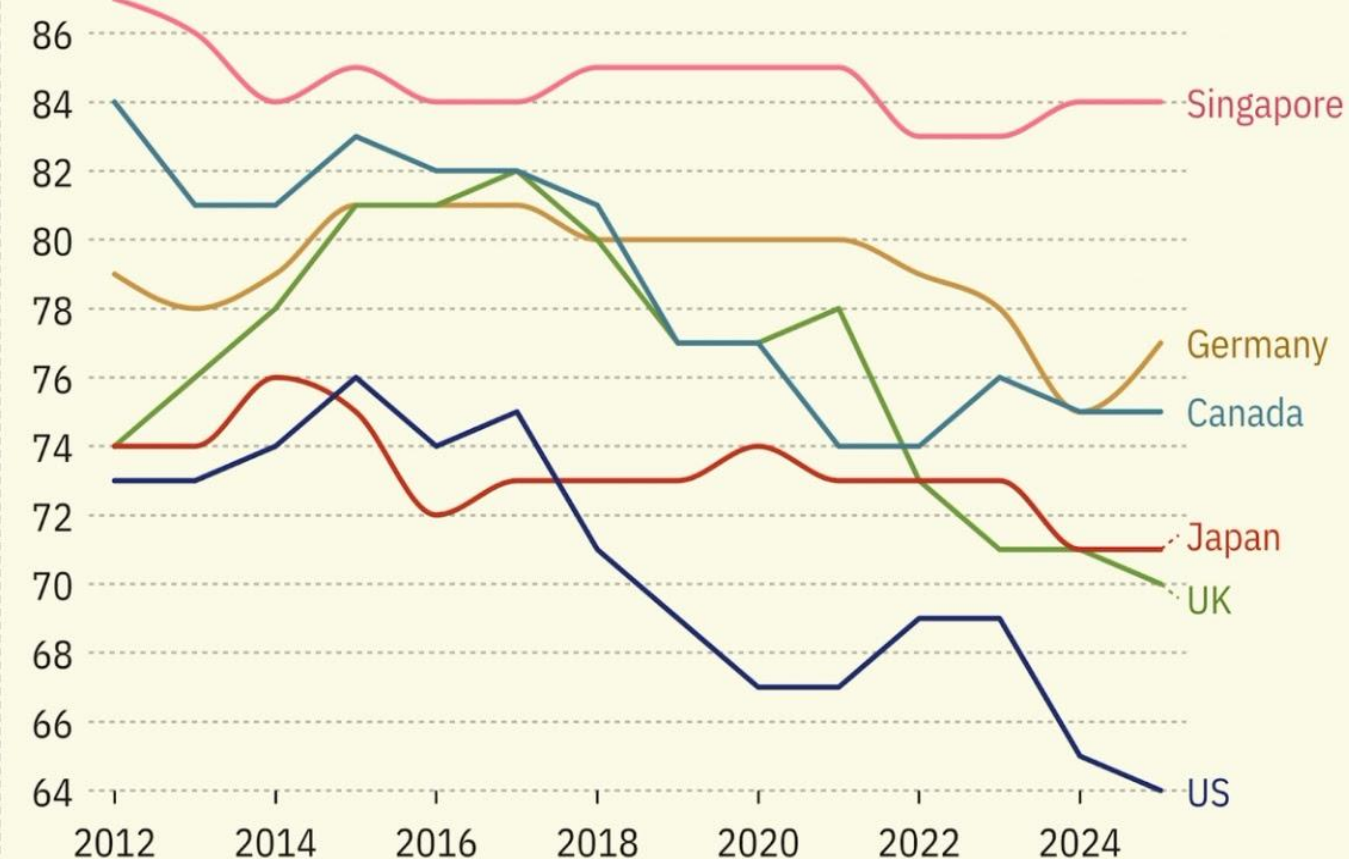
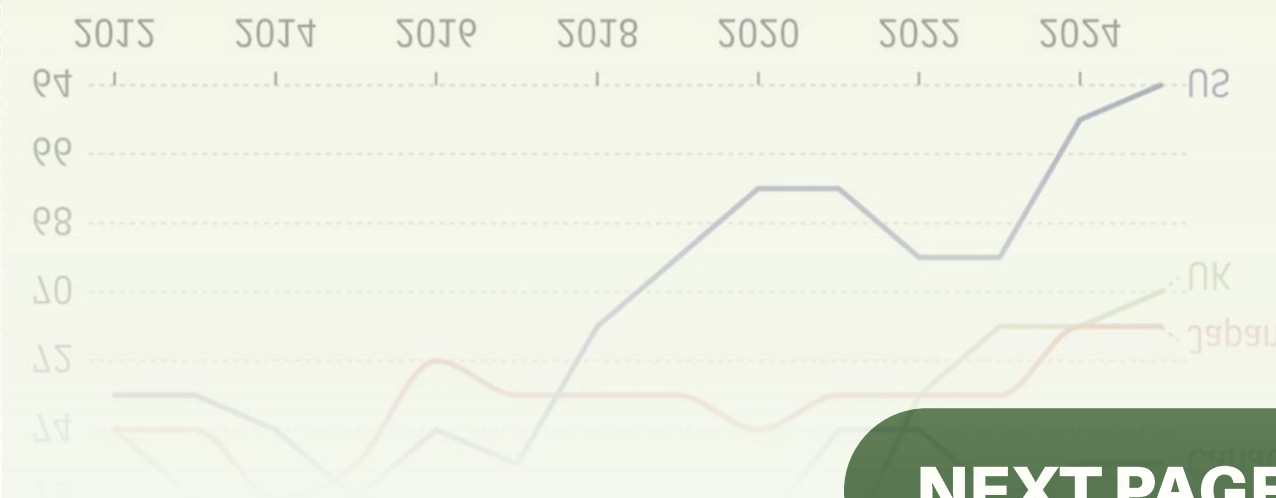


Chart: Brendan Ruberry/Semafor • Source: Transparency International

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Unbiased and Unfiltered

An honest assessment of the cleantech industry and the effort to stem climate change.

