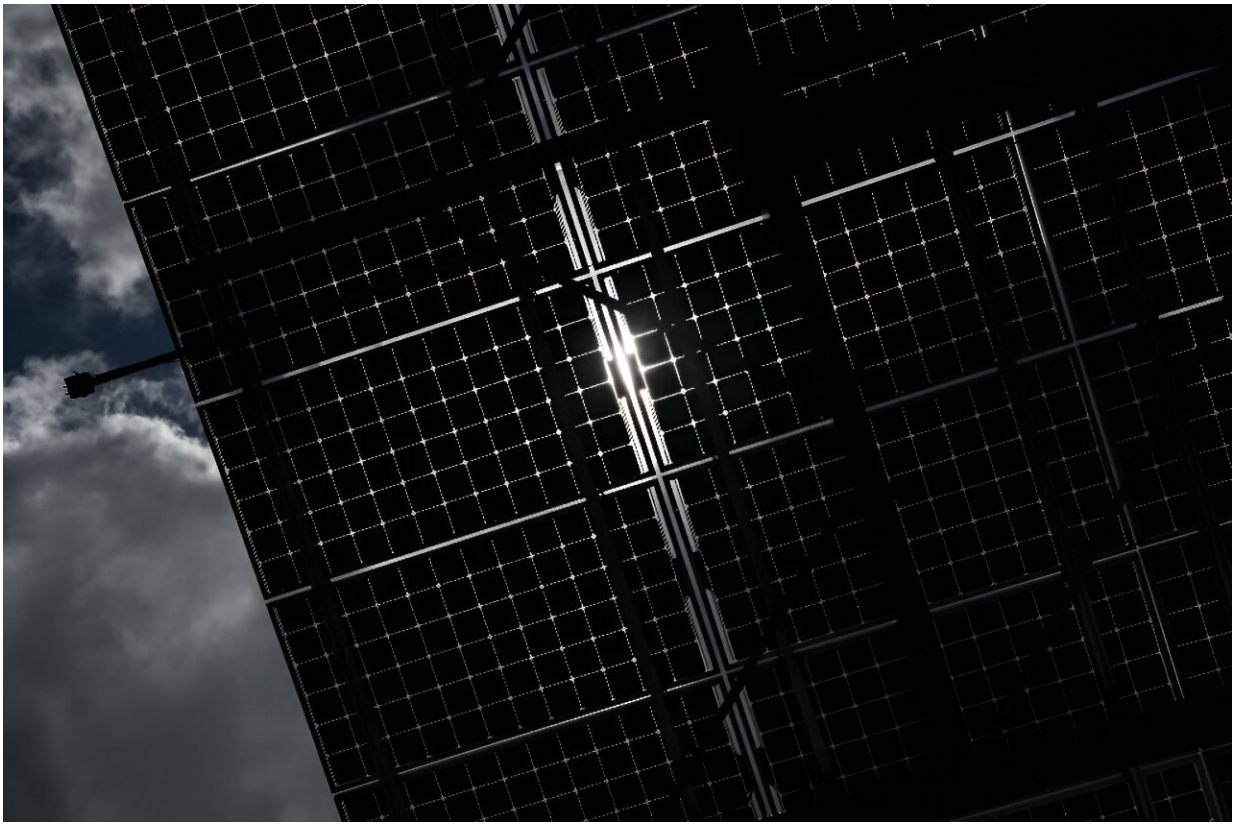
Rio Tinto to build largest solar plant in Canada's north

August 10 2023



Rio Tinto plans to install 6,600 solar panels at Diavik, a major diamond production center in northern Canada.

Anglo-Australian mining giant Rio Tinto announced on Thursday that it will begin construction of the largest solar power plant in northern

Canada on the site of its Diavik diamond mine.

Rio Tinto plans to install 6,600 solar panels at Diavik, a major diamond production center 300 kilometers (185 miles) northeast of Yellowknife near the Arctic Circle.

Construction on the solar site will start within weeks, and when operational in the first half of 2024 will generate around 4,200 megawatt-hours of electricity per year, Rio Tinto said in a statement.

The solar site will power up to a quarter of Diavik's electricity as it moves toward ceasing operations.

Diavik has been in production since 2003 but its lifespan is drawing to a close, with commercial diamond production scheduled to cease in 2026, before complete closure in 2029.

The solar panels will generate electricity not only from sunlight but also from light reflected off the snow, which covers the mine for most of the year.

"This important project reinforces our dedication to reducing our carbon footprint," Angela Bigg, president and CEO of the Diavik diamond mine, said in the statement.

At the end of July, Rio Tinto said it was unlikely to meet its greenhouse gas reduction targets by 2025 due to "underlying emissions growth" in some parts of its business.

On Thursday, the company said it was advancing decarbonization initiatives across its global operations with a view to achieving "carbon neutrality" by 2050.