



# PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

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## WATER SHORTAGES COULD AFFECT 5BN PEOPLE BY 2050

Climate change will put added stress on water supplies because it will make wet regions wetter and dry regions drier. Drought and soil degradation are already the biggest risk of natural disaster, say the authors of this UN report, and this trend is likely to worsen. "Droughts are arguably the greatest single threat from climate change," they note. The challenge has been most apparent this year in Cape Town, where residents face severe restrictions as the result of a once-in-384-year drought. In Brasília close to 2m people have their taps turned off once in every five days due to a unusually protracted dry period. .

[Read More on The Guardian](#)



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## MALE SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE SUFFER IN SILENCE DUE TO STIGMA

In the Central African Republic 45-year-old "Theodore" was captured by an armed group in February 2017 during an attack on his village of Mingala in the country's southeast. He was taken with 21 other men to a nearby ad hoc rebel military base and locked up in a house-turned-prison guarded by six armed men. Violence continues today with 14 armed groups controlling roughly 60-70 percent of the countryside, according to the non-profit advocacy organization Enough Project. The result is a continuing human rights and a humanitarian crisis throughout the country. The lack of government control has created a lawless environment with little justice.

[Read More on IPS News](#)



**NO MORE**  
"THAT DOESN'T HAPPEN TO GUYS"

PETER HERMANN



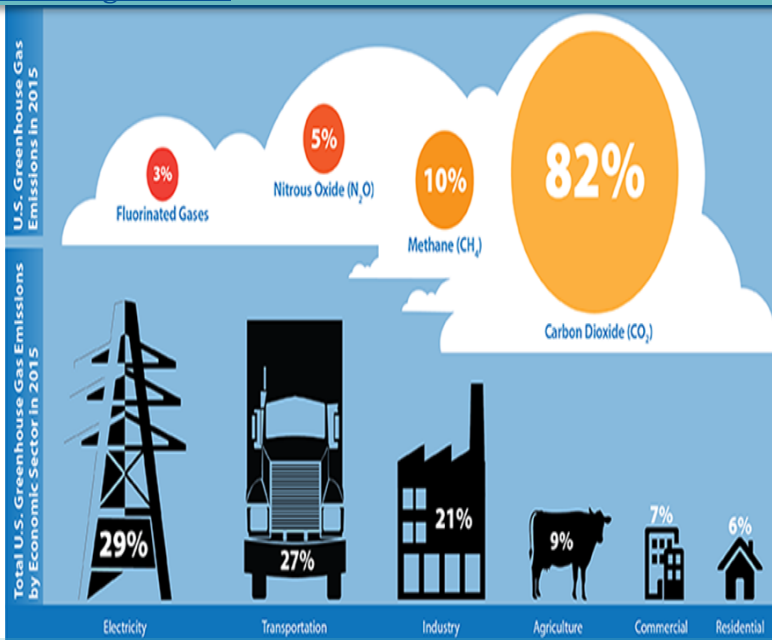
## THE ARCTIC'S CARBON BOMB MIGHT BE EVEN MORE POTENT THAN WE THOUGHT

For some time scientists, fearing the mass release of greenhouse gases from the carbon-rich frozen soils of the Arctic, have had at least one morsel of good news in their forecasts: They predicted most of the gas released would be carbon dioxide, which, though a greenhouse gas, drives warming more slowly than some other gases. Scientists obviously weren't excited about more carbon dioxide emissions, but it was better than the alternative: methane, a shorter-lived but far harder-hitting gas that could cause faster bursts of warming. Now even that silver lining is in doubt. Research released Monday suggests that methane releases could be considerably more prevalent as Arctic permafrost thaws.

[Read More on Washington Post](#)

## GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS ROSE LAST YEAR; HERE ARE THE TOP 5 REASONS

If the world wants to avoid drastic global warming this century, we'll need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions sharply in the years ahead. For now, however, we're still moving in the opposite direction: Carbon dioxide emissions from the use of coal, oil and natural gas increased 1.4 percent globally in 2017 after holding steady for the previous three years, says the International Energy Agency. That's the equivalent of adding 170 million new cars to the road worldwide. The energy agency, which called the findings "a strong warning for global efforts to combat climate change," detailed several big reasons CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are increasing again. [Read More on NY Times](#)



## MASS EXTINCTIONS WITH PRIOR WARNING

Mass extinctions throughout the history of the Earth have been well documented. Scientists believe that they occurred during a short period of time in geological terms. In a new study, palaeobiologists at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität in Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany and their research partners have now shown that signs that the largest mass extinction event in the Earth's history was approaching became apparent much earlier than previously believed, and point out that the same indicators are being observed today. The consequences of the extinction of species that occurred around 250 million years ago at the Permian-Triassic boundary were catastrophic. Gigantic volcanic eruptions and the ensuing greenhouse gas emissions wiped out around 90% of all animal species according to estimates. [Read More on Science Daily](#)



## CANCERS IN THE HEAD & NECK ARE INCREASING IN SWEDEN– FROM USE OF MOBILE PHONES?

Cancers in the head and the neck are increasing in Sweden according to the latest cancer incidence data from the Swedish Cancer Registry. Cancers in the thyroid and the mouth are among the cancers that have seen the sharpest rise during the last decade but also the trend for cancers of the pituitary are on the rise. Among men aged 50 -79 years malignant brain tumours, grade 3-4 are also increasing visibly. The increase of these cancers has coincided with increasing use of mobile phones during the same time period while the increasing trend of malignant brain tumours, gliomas, might be an effect of long term use of mobile phones. Cancers in the mouth, pharynx and of the tongue are also increasing. Men have a higher incidence than women.

[Read More on Stralskyddsstiftelsen](#)

## AT HAMBURGER CENTRAL, ANTIBIOTICS FOR CATTLE THAT AREN'T SICK

Ben Holland holds a Mason jar, tilting it slightly to show the powdery 90 milligrams of the antibiotic tylosin inside. "It's about the amount that one animal gets in a day," he explains, in a small factory that produces feed for 48,000-odd cattle packed in pens in Tulia, Texas, south of Amarillo. Nearby, a rumbling steam tower turns corn kernels into flakes. Dr. Holland is the director of research at Cactus Feeders, a feedlot giant. During a recent visit, I found myself surrounded by men with PhDs and cowboy hats like Dr. Holland. Several wore jackets bearing drug company logos that were sure to smell of steamed corn and flatulent cattle by day's end. Behind Dr. Holland, antibiotics were stacked in large bags rising to his shoulders. Every day, cattle here, whether sick or healthy, are given antibiotics in their feed.

[Read More on NY Times](#)



## 'ATM PHARMACY' GIVES DRUGS TO HIV/AIDS PATIENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa on Thursday launched an ATM-like vending machine to dispense medicines to patients with chronic illnesses such as HIV/AIDS. Officials say the move is aimed at reducing waiting times and congestion in public healthcare facilities. The health department and charity Right to Care said the Pharmacy Dispensing Unit (PDU) designed as an Automated Teller Machine was the first of its kind in Africa, and allows patients with chronic illnesses such as HIV/AIDS to receive repeat medication in a few minutes. The unit, dubbed "ATM Pharmacy", was launched in Johannesburg's Alexandra township. It works like a cash-vending machine but dispenses medicines. Patients can also speak to pharmacists located at a call centre by using a telephone receiver on the PDU/ATM and receive advice on their medicines. Primrose Good, 60, was among the first to try out the PDU on Thursday when she collected her diabetes medication. [Read More on Africa News](#)





## LATIN AMERICAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLE FIGHT NEW PLUNDER OF THEIR RESOURCES

Indigenous communities in Latin America, who have suffered the plunder of their natural resources since colonial times, are reliving that phenomenon again as mega infrastructure are jeopardising their habitat and their very survival. On the island of Assunção in Northeast Brazil, the village of the Truká indigenous people was split in two when the flow of the São Francisco River was diverted. “The Truká people have always been from this region. We are an ancient people in this territory. We have always lived on the riverbank - fishing, hunting, and planting crops. We did not need a canal,” lamented Claudia Truká, leader of the village in the municipality of Cabrobó, in the state of Pernambuco. [Read More on IPS News](#)

## SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY: THE CRIME OF GENDER INEQUALITY IN GLOBAL HEALTH

As the global conversation about sexual predators expands into larger issues about power and the inequitable workplace, it's remarkable to consider how gender issues play out in professions that are overwhelmingly female, yet still controlled predominantly by men. Public health is the perfect example, both of this imbalance in power in a female-majority field and of the impact that inequity has on the activities, and products produced by the profession. The majority of people working in health worldwide are female — by far. But the majority of their bosses and global leadership are men. Worldwide, women make up about 42% of the paid labor force, but 75% of the paid medical and health force in countries that provide gender breakdown data. [Read More on Foreign Policy](#)



## SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS HEALTH: DETERMINANTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S HEALTH: BEYOND THE SOCIAL, 2ND EDITION

The health disparities affecting Indigenous peoples in Canada might well be understood as a national epidemic. Although progress has been made in the last decade towards both understanding and ameliorating Indigenous health inequalities, very little research or writing has expanded a social determinants of health framework to account for the unique histories and present realities of Indigenous peoples in Canada. This timely edited collection addresses this significant knowledge gap, and explores the ways that multiple health determinants beyond the social—from colonialism to geography, from economy to biology—converge to impact the health status of Indigenous peoples in Canada. [Read More on Canadian Scholars](#)



## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“We’ve probably known for 100 years that as the climate warms up in response to loading the atmosphere with greenhouse gases, we would see the changes first in the Arctic. This is what we expected and this is exactly what has happened. It’s a case where we hate to say we told you so, but we told you so.”

Mark Serreze, director of the National Snow and Ice Data Center in Boulder, Colorado  
[Read More on NY Times](#)

## EVENTSTABLE

DATE	CONFERENCE	LOCATION	REGISTER
Available Now	Global Health Watch 5 Launch	Online– Available Now	<a href="http://www.phmovement.org/en/node/10778">http://www.phmovement.org/en/node/10778</a>
April 6-7	Closing The Gap: The Next 150: Reconciliation and Health	Ottawa	<a href="https://www.upstreamconference.ca/">https://www.upstreamconference.ca/</a>
April 20-22	BioVision Alexandria 2018	Alexandria Egypt	<a href="http://www.bibalex.org/bva2018/home/StaticPage.aspx?page=69">http://www.bibalex.org/bva2018/home/StaticPage.aspx?page=69</a>
April 27-29	Pegasus Conference	Toronto Canada	<a href="https://eventdex.force.com/BLN_RegistrationDym?id=a192A00000BChD2QAL&amp;mc_cid=c7ca6f6818&amp;mc_eid=7a76cf866d">https://eventdex.force.com/BLN_RegistrationDym?id=a192A00000BChD2QAL&amp;mc_cid=c7ca6f6818&amp;mc_eid=7a76cf866d</a>
May 25-27	Bethune Round Table: The Role of the Trainee in Global Surgery	Toronto Canada	<a href="https://bethuneroundtable.com/">https://bethuneroundtable.com/</a>
June	McGill University Summer Institutes in Infectious Diseases & Global Health	Montreal Canada	<a href="http://mcgill-idgh.ca/courses/tuberculosis-research-methods/">http://mcgill-idgh.ca/courses/tuberculosis-research-methods/</a>
June 22-24	Annual Conference, The Council of Canadians	Ottawa Canada	<a href="https://canadians.org/conference">https://canadians.org/conference</a>
Oct 8-12	5th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research	Liverpool England	<a href="http://healthsystemsresearch.org/hsr2018/">http://healthsystemsresearch.org/hsr2018/</a>
Nov 15-19	4th People’s Health Assembly	Dhaka Bangladesh	<a href="http://www.phmovement.org/en/node/10805">http://www.phmovement.org/en/node/10805</a>
Nov 19-21	Canadian Conference on Global Health	Toronto Canada	<a href="http://www.csih.org/en/events/canadian-conference-global-health">http://www.csih.org/en/events/canadian-conference-global-health</a>



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In 2017, almost 124 million people across 51 countries and territories faced CRISIS levels of acute food insecurity or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above or equivalent) and required urgent humanitarian action. In 2016 the population in need of urgent action was estimated at 108 million across 48 countries.

When comparing the 45 countries included in both editions of the Global Report on Food Crises, there has been an increase of 11 million people in need of urgent action, an 11% rise from 2016. This is largely attributed to new or intensified conflict and insecurity in Myanmar, northeast Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Yemen. Prolonged drought conditions also resulted in consecutive poor harvests in countries already facing high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition in eastern and southern Africa.

[Read More on Global Report on Food Crises 2018](#)

# CANADA'S OUTDOOR RINKS ARE MELTING: SO IS A WAY OF LIFE



Climate change is warming the Northern Hemisphere rapidly, largely because of the greenhouse gases that humans have put into the atmosphere since the beginning of the industrial age. Mr. McLeman said that life without natural outdoor rinks was not unthinkable. But, he said, it would be sad: "If you take that away from us, life will go on. We'll do the things we've always done. But we'll lose a little bit of that cultural heritage." The National Hockey League also expressed concern about the warming trend as part of its first sustainability report, issued in 2014. The league commissioner, Gary Bettman, wrote that "Our sport can trace its roots to frozen freshwater ponds, to cold climates." Many immigrants to Canada and their families, Mr. McLeman said, find hockey as "an entry point to access mainstream Canadian culture." He pointed to NHL defenseman P.K. Subban, whose parents came to Toronto from Jamaica and Montserrat. "It's our version of the melting pot," he said. "Anybody who shows up with skates and a stick can join in."

Advocacy group Rink Watch has helped Canadians understand the real-life consequences of climate change, Mr. Robertson said: "The fact that this could be taken away and is tied to climate has been a real eye-opener."

[Read More on NY Times](#)



# INDIA IS NOW THE WORLD'S THIRD LARGEST ELECTRICITY PRODUCER



India generated around 1,160.1 billion units of electricity in 2017, up 4.72% from the previous year. The country is behind only China which produced 6,015 terrawatt hours (TWh; 1 TW = 1,000,000 megawatts) and the US (4,327 TWh), and is ahead of Russia, Japan, Germany and Canada. Total electricity production stood at 1,003.52 billion units in India between April 2017 and January 2018. "Multiple drivers (like industrial expansion and rising per capita income) are leading to growth in power demand; this is set to continue in the coming years," said a report by the India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF), an arm of the Indian government's Ministry of Commerce.

The country's installed power generating capacity of 334.4 gigawatts (GW, or 1,000 megawatts) as of January 2018 is the world's fifth-largest. Over the last five years, India put up 99.21 GW of additional capacity. Of this, 91.73 GW came from thermal sources, 5.48 GW from hydro, and 2 GW from nuclear sources. Back in 2016, India became the world's third-largest power consumer, too. The country's consumption is set to continually go up.

However, production levels are not enough to meet the rising demand which has outstripped supply by about 7.5%, the report said. So India now plans to tap the \$14.94 billion opportunity in the power-transmission market. Over the last 17 years, foreign direct investment (FDI) in the sector has reached \$12.97 billion, accounting for 3.52% of all FDI into the country.

[Read More on QZ](#)



# SALVAGE LOGGING IS OFTEN A PRETEXT FOR HARVESTING WOOD



A forest in Eastern Poland is one of the last remaining primeval forests in Europe, for the time being. In 2017, the Polish government had 100,000 more trees logged than previously, despite the fact that large areas of the Natural World Heritage site are under strict protection. They did this under the pretense of preventing the bark beetle from spreading further.

The motor saws are quiet now after protests from environmental activists, Europe-wide criticism in the media, and concerns by the European Commission. The case has been handed to the European Court and the Polish Minister of the Environment was sacked.

But this case is not an exception. "Unfortunately, such salvage logging activities in protected forests are on the rise worldwide." Together with colleagues from the University of Würzburg he wrote a policy perspective recently published in the journal *Conservation Letters* which details that this practice is common also in Germany, other European countries and Asia, making it a global problem.

[Read More on Science Daily](#)



# PREHISTORIC HUMAN FOOTPRINTS UNEARTHED ON CANADIAN SHORELINE

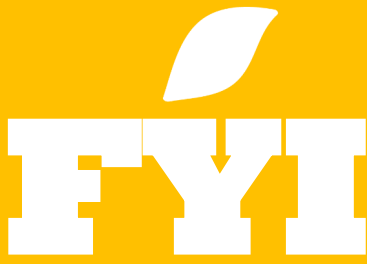


Whether it was a family day out at the beach, complete with the prehistoric equivalent of a bucket and spade, we'll never know, but one thing is for sure: about 13,000 years ago a small band of humans were pottering about on a shore in western Canada.

Researchers have unearthed 29 footprints in a layer of sediment on the shoreline of Calvert Island in British Columbia, about 100 km north of the north end of Vancouver Island. Between 11,000 and 14,000 years ago, as the world was coming towards the end of the last ice age, the sea level there was 2m-3m lower than today.

While it is not clear quite how many humans were responsible for the tracks, the team said there are at least three different sizes of footprints, including one set that appeared to belong to a child. Writing in the journal *Plos One*, the team describe how they began excavations on the island in 2014, noting that nearby there were shell-containing man-made rubbish dumps, or middens, which dated to up to 6,100 years ago, as well as chipped stone tools and manmade arrangements of stone boulders on the seashore.

[Read More on The Guardian](#)



## “THE WIFE OF BATH’S TALE” AS A MODEL FOR LOOKING AHEAD IN POST SECONDARY EDUCATION



Recently, I was asked to think about the contemporary trends, opportunities and challenges for learning and teaching in Canadian universities. The timing of the question coincided with a trip that took me to a national conference, a series of on-campus consultations, a writing retreat and a public lecture. This gave me an opportunity to consult with university presidents, administrators, faculty, educational developers, staff and students.

As you can imagine with a question this broad, the answers varied depending on whom I asked. For some, Indigenization is the most pressing issue, while others cited accessibility and inclusion. Various colleagues identified mental health as an urgent challenge, and others proposed accommodations and universal design as our biggest hurdle. Although many argued that online learning is the most important opportunity, others were equally passionate about experiential learning.

The chorus of diverse perspectives reminded me of Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Wife of Bath’s Tale*, written in the 14th century. The tale, set in Arthurian England, tells the story of a knight who must atone for a heinous crime by answering the question, “What do women want?” If he can find an answer that satisfies all women within a year, he will be pardoned.

Yet how do we anchor this in practice? Chaucer’s Arthurian tale – with its governance model based on a roundtable – offers us a tantalizing clue on how to frame the issue. First and foremost, we must invite under-represented and marginalized people to our existing tables within the university. We must insist that every table includes the voices of our Indigenous peoples – as elders, administrators, faculty, students, community leaders. We must insist that students sit at every table. We must ensure that our existing tables are spaces that reflect equity, diversity and inclusion.

[Read More on University Affairs](#)

**"Fading Flow"  
"Mighty" Mekong River  
Vientiane, Laos  
April 1, 2018**



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