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**CURRENT NEWS ON ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS AND GLOBAL HEALTH** 

Volume 7, Number 6

https://planetaryhealthweekly.com

**February 11, 2021** 

HI,

Contrasting last week's 'negative' editorial, today I'm focusing on what makes me happy these days, in times of Covid-19. While there is so much pressure and emphasis on the negative aspects, as demonstrated by my long list last week, we most surely need to also concentrate on what's better these days, or at least what's. Only then can we positively, even optimistically, carry on and move forward and deal properly with all that's being asked of us.

First, I'm happy that I'm able and happy to work at home, watching the snow fly, as I pass my hours reading, writing and supporting my students and delivering the *Planetary Health Weekly*. Along with this is the ability to spend most of that time with my wife and also see other family as possible. Most fortunately, I love being at my cottage 200 km north of Toronto, in the heart of nature in all its beauty/splendour, which I have been showcasing a lot lately, not having any ability to travel now. I am so fortunate that the pandemic hasn't affected the publication of the *Planetary Health Weekly*, as we've always been operating virtually, and now readership is eveb up these past weeks.

I also like drive-by shopping to pick up things I've ordered off a store's website. This doesn't allow for browsing the aisles, but it sure makes it easy to get what you want, as long as you know what you want.

And how about Sir John Moore, in England, who just passed away at the age of 100, after working hard to support frontline workers by raising 55 million Pounds by getting others to sponsor him walking around his garden.

I also like all the thoughts I have about family and friends and the time, yet to come, when we'll be able to meet, hug, shake hands, chat and play. The anticipation of that, though I don't believe anytime soon, is wonderful.

And isn't the internet fantastic these days, enabling us to continue on with work, relationships and school. Now seeing this technology evolving is so interesting; it is allowing millions to survive well amidst the pandemic.

I'm also able to easily go x-country skiing when I can find the time, and take lovely walks through snow clad forests (as in ENDSHOTS) and gain respite from sitting in front of a computer all day. I am so happy with all frontline workers, including many friends, and thankful to them, giving themselves despite great hardship, possible sickness and even those who doubt them. Mostly, though, I'm happy that my family and I are keeping healthy, and gaining greater appreciation for this blessing, in light of vast millions sick and dead from COVID-19.

Bringing you this newsletter, without problem, each and every week is a great source of happiness for our whole team. Without knowing the outcome of this collective effort, we do know that each week we bring you interesting and important information and trust that with it you, like me, will continually gain more appreciation and motivation for environmental and health protection. Read on for stories about:

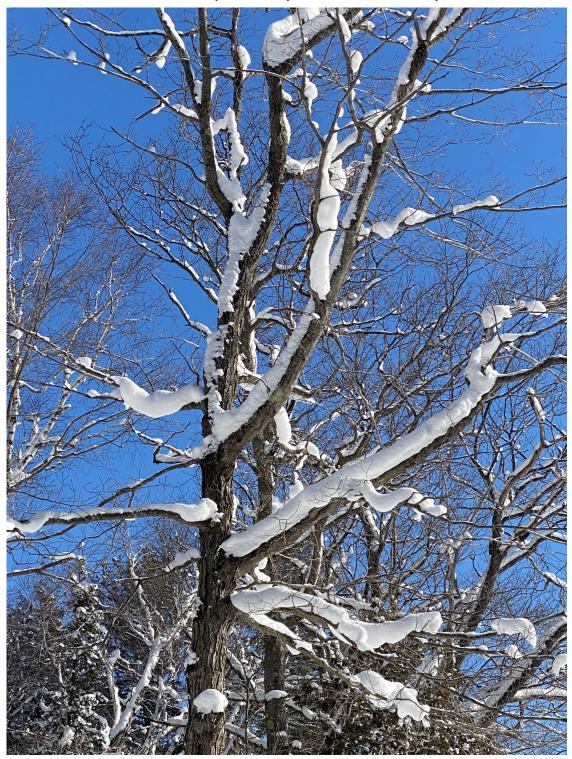
- Scientists say \$2 trillion investment can decarbonize energy by 2050, paid for with a carbon tax,
- Coronavirus Updates:
  - The COVID science wars -shutting down scientific debate is hurting public health,
  - The good news you are not hearing about the vaccines,
  - Nutrients such as zinc and a healthy gut microbiota could be part of tackling Covid-19,
  - Dr. Deborah Birx claims someone gave Trump parallel data on the pandemic,
  - The false rumours about vaccines that are scaring women,
  - The COVAX Facility will bring vaccines to the world,
  - Global vaccine scheme unveils country-by-country plans to distribute 330m jabs by July,
  - The COVAX Facility interim vaccine distribution forecast,
  - Vaccine protectionism endangers the global fight against Covid-19,
  - Pakistan begins vaccine drive days after receiving half a million Chinese doses, and
  - How long until everyone gets a vaccine (podcast), THEN
- Jay's Blog #5 Part Two on Risk Communication in Public Health,
- Jamaica leads homicides in region,
- Environmental groups call out carmakers opposing California standards and EV mandate,
- Water limitations in the tropics offset carbon uptake from Arctic greening,
- U.K. electricity from renewables outpaces gas and coal power,

- U.S. plans to end fossil fuel finance overseas,
- Boycott Africa good intentions with unfortunate consequences,
- Canada's economy already suffering effects of climate change,
- · Upcoming historic Métis Nation BC AGM,
- Quote from Spain,
- Mark calendars for Earth Hour (March 27th),
- Check out The Narwhal,
- · Visualizing countries by share of Earth's surface,
- Extreme poverty is history in China, but is inequality?
- Indian company Carbon Craft Design uses polluted air to make tiles,
- Winter Covid-19 reads,
- Teaching in the age of Covid-19, and
- ENDSHOTS of Snow Laden Trees amid Covid-19 facts and charts.

Please do keep reading.

Best, david

David Zakus, Editor and Publisher



SNOWY TREES FEBRUARY 10, 2021

# Scientists Say \$2 Trillion Investment Can Decarbonize Energy by 2050, Paid by a Carbon Tax



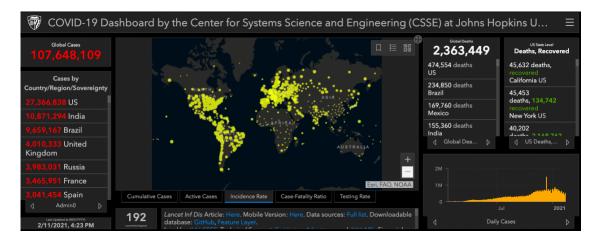
Credits: PV Squared

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine has <u>released</u> the prepublication draft of a 209-page study—<u>Accelerating Decarbonization of the U.S. Energy</u> <u>System</u>—which concludes that a net-zero economy is not only achievable by 2050, but would "also build a more competitive economy, increase high-quality jobs, and help address social injustice in the energy system." The authors sped up the publication of their acceleration study specifically with the idea of influencing the direction of the new administration's climate action, but without consulting the Biden-Harris team.

Stephen Pacala, the Frederick D. Petrie Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Princeton University and chair of the committee that wrote the report, <u>said</u> in press statement, "Because of dramatic decreases in the costs of renewable electricity and batteries, the U.S. can now—during the 2020s—make strides toward achieving a netzero emitting energy system at a cost lower than investing in reduced air pollution alone. Because the energy system impacts so many aspects of society, a transition to net-zero will have profound implications well beyond climate and energy—and it is paramount that we maintain a strong social contract to ensure this transition benefits all communities."

Over the next 10 years, the authors state, \$2 trillion in federal money should be invested in the green transformation that is already underway. And the funding for it? A \$40 ton carbon tax increased by 5% annually possibly with dividends going to the more vulnerable population, especially those already harmed by environmental damage from the extraction, processing, and burning of fossil fuels. The tax, they say, would "would unlock innovation in every corner of the economy and send appropriate signals to encourage a cost effective route to net zero." Read more at <a href="Daily Kos">Daily Kos</a>.

#### SARS-CoV-2 & COVID-19 UPDATES



It's getting better, but still a long way to go. Over the last week globally, deaths remained very high (though down 6000 to 87,000), and the number of new cases declined too (with about 0.4 million fewer this week than last, but still about 3 million).

(See also ENDSHOTS for more COVID-19 charts and stats.)

"It is the plague in seemingly all sincerity." Bob Woodward

The COVID Science Wars - Shutting
Down Scientific Debate is Hurting the
Public Health



Credit: Swedes mostly don't wear masks. Credit: Jonathan Nackstrand Getty Images

When Max von Pettenkofer shot himself to death in 1901, he left behind a storied career as a hygienist and bitter opponent of Robert Koch, the German physician and microbiologist who discovered the cholera bacillus, Vibrio cholerae. Von Pettenkofer, the founder of the Institute of Hygiene in Munich, disputed Koch's germ theory of disease, which held that a germ is both necessary and sufficient to cause illness. Von Pettenkofer asserted that germs could only cause disease in the presence of a "local" or environmental factor. Read more at The Scientific American.

#### **SEE MORE COVID-19 STORIES:**

At Daily Kos: <u>The Good News you are NOT hearing about the</u> Vaccines

At Nutrition: <u>Nutrients Such as Zinc and a Healthy Gut Microbiota</u>
<u>Could be Part of the Puzzle in Tackling COVID-19</u>

At Daily Kos: <u>Dr. Deborah Birx Claims Someone Gave Trump 'Parallel'</u>
<u>Data on Coronavirus Pandemic</u>

At NY Times: <u>The False Rumors About Vaccines That Are Scaring Women</u>

At UN Dispatch: When a COVID-19 Vaccine is Ready, The "COVAX Facility" Will Bring it to the World's Population

At CNN: <u>Vaccine Protectionism Endangers the Global Fight Against Covid-19</u>

At Telegraph: Global Vaccine Scheme Unveils Country-by-country
Plans to Distribute 330m Jabs by July

At GAVI: The COVAX Facility: Interim Vaccine Distribution Forecast

At Telegraph: <u>Pakistan Begins Vaccine Drive Days after Receiving Half</u> <u>a Million Chinese Jabs</u>

At Telegraph: <u>Coronovirus: All Onboard for Year Two; How Long Until</u> <u>Everyone Gets a Vaccine (45 minute podcast)</u>

### Jay's Blog #5

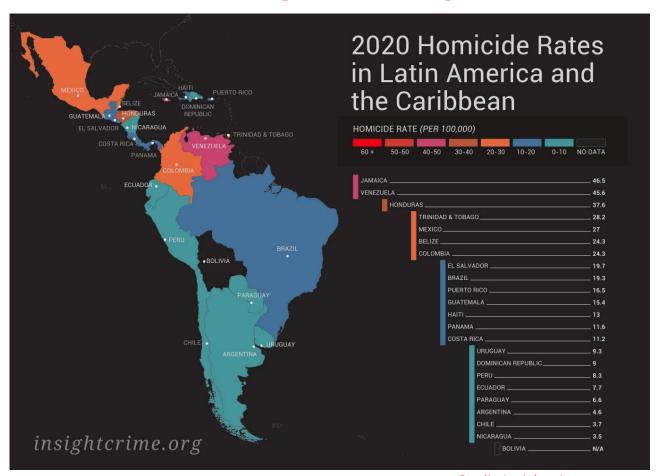
# Risk Communication in the Public Health Realm - Part 2: Observations and Media Guidance



This Blog continues last month's conversation. I repeat part of that introduction with an ironic smile because this may be the most important reading of your day. This might be true especially if risk communication is part of your professional realm – or could be – because overstatement is a risk communication technique; a touch of hyperbole to gain your attention!

Communication during a public health crisis is "an imperfect art." Organizations can compound problems during an emergency if pre-crisis communication planning has been neglected. The psychology and intentions of a public health emergency response must integrate effective local and national emergency agencies' communications and recovery operations. Well-executed messaging directed to the public must include competent public health professionals. Read more at <a href="Planetary">Planetary</a>. Health Weekly Blog Section

## Jamaica Leads Homicides in Region According to New Report



Credit: Insightcrime.org

InSight Crime's 2020 Homicide Round-Up released recently shows that Jamaica leads the islands for most homicides. They even beat Venezuela who scored a close second with 45.6/100,000 and Honduras with 37.6.

Jamaica recorded 1,301 killings in 2020 and had the region's highest homicide rate at 46.5 per 100,000 people, according to official data published by the Constabulary Force. The United Nations considers any homicide rate of 10 per 100,000 citizens or above to be an "epidemic." Jamaica's total killings marked a marginal decline from 2019's total of 1,339 murders and came as another welcome improvement over 2017's sum of 1,647. Read more at NY Carib News.

## Environmental Groups Call Out Carmakers Opposing California Standards, EV Mandate



Credit: Green Car Report

Following a change of allegiance by General Motors, environmental groups are calling out the remaining automakers that still oppose California's ability to set its own, stricter, emissions standards.

In December, leaders of the Sierra Club, Environmental Defense Fund, National Resources Defense Council, and Union of Concerned Scientists issued a <u>statement</u> calling on eight automakers to end support of a Trump administration lawsuit seeking to strip California of its Clean Air Act waiver, which allows the state to set its own emissions standards that go above and beyond federal standards. Read more at <u>Green Car Reports</u>.

## Water Limitations in the Tropics Offset Carbon Uptake from Arctic Greening



Credit: NASA

More plants and longer growing seasons in the northern latitudes have converted parts of Alaska, Canada and Siberia to deeper shades of green. Some studies translate this Arctic greening to a greater global carbon uptake. But new research shows that as Earth's climate is changing, increased carbon absorption by plants in the Arctic is being offset by a corresponding decline in the tropics.

"This is a new look at where we can expect carbon uptake to go in the future," said scientist Rolf Reichle with the Global Modeling and Assimilation Office. Reichle is one of the authors of a study, published in AGU Advances, which combines satellite observations over 35 years from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA's) Advanced Very High Resolution Radiometer (AVHRR) with computer models, including water limitation data from NASA's Modern-Era Retrospective analysis for Research and Applications, Version 2 (MERRA-2). Read more at NASA.

#### **GOOD NEWS**

## **UK Electricity from Renewables Outpaces Gas and Coal Power**



Credit: Murdo MacLeod/The Guardian

The UK's renewable electricity outpaced its fossil fuel generation for the first time in 2020 and could remain the largest source of electricity in the future, according to an independent climate thinktank. The thinktank behind the report, Ember, revealed that renewable energy generated by wind, sunlight, water and wood made up 42% of the UK's electricity last year compared with 41% generated from gas and coal plants together. Although renewable energy has overtaken fossil fuels during the summer months before, 2020 was the first time that renewables were the main source of the UK's electricity over a year.

Renewable energy also outperformed <u>fossil fuels</u> across the EU for the first time, according to the report, following a collapse in the use of coal last year. <u>Read more</u> at The Guardian.

#### **MORE GOOD NEWS**

## U.S. Plans to End Fossil Fuel Finance Overseas, Threatens Billions in Support for Oil and Gas



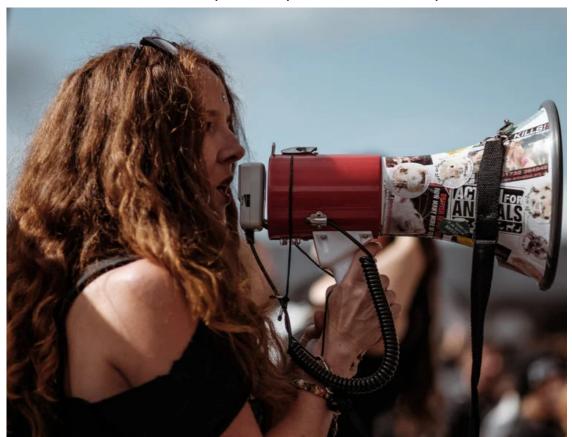
The US Export-Import Bank provided a \$805 million loan for the Kusile coal plant in South Africa.

(Photo: Wikimedia Commons/IMK)

Joe Biden's administration is working to end funding for "carbon-intensive" fossil fuel projects overseas, potentially cancelling billions of dollars in support for oil and gas projects around the world. In one in a series of executive orders aimed at tackling the climate crisis in the US and abroad, Biden committed his government "to identify steps through which the United States can promote ending international financing of carbon-intensive fossil fuel-based energy while simultaneously advancing sustainable development and a green recovery". Read more at <u>Climate Change News</u>.

#### **OPINION**

## Boycott Africa – Good Intentions with Unfortunate Consequences?



Credit: Clem Onojeghuo

Recently, an article by *Africa Geographic* arrived in my inbox on why <u>Hwange National Park</u> should be on everyone's list of places to visit. Having worked in the park for the better part of ten years, I was naturally drawn to it and, as always, drifted to the comments below. To my dismay, one of the first responses to the story stated that she would boycott travel to Zimbabwe on principle, however much she would love to go there. Her comment was made in protest against the country's policies on wildlife sales to other countries. Read more at <u>Africa Geographic</u>.

#### **SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY**

## Canada's Economy Already Suffering Effects of Climate Change



**Credit: APEXPHOTOS VIA GETTY IMAGES** 

A federally funded research group says the costs of climate change are already taking a chunk out of the growth of Canada's economy. In <u>a report</u>, the Institute for Climate Choices adds those costs are only the start of what's coming. And the report finds Canada is well behind other jurisdictions in Europe and the United States in preparing for them.

It says costs from health- and weather-related disasters associated with climate change have risen to where they're now equal to about five per cent of Canada's annual gross domestic product, or GDP. That's five times what they were a decade ago. The report says Canada needs to start evaluating all the costs of climate change, something the U.S. and Europe have been doing for a year. Read more at the <a href="https://example.com/hutps://examp

#### **SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS WELLNESS**

## Dr. Bonnie Henry Highlights Historic Métis Nation BC AGM



**Credit: Metis Nation** 

Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC), the organization representing nearly 90,000 self-identified Métis people in British Columbia, approximately one-third of the Indigenous population in B.C., will hold its Annual General Meeting February 18-20, the highlight of which will be a historic vote on self-government. More than 21,000 Métis citizens from across B.C., including 38 Métis Chartered Communities, are eligible to attend the three-day AGM, which will be held virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions. The AGM will also be streamed live on Facebook.

Opening the AGM will be The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Canada's Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, and The Honourable Murray Rankin, B.C.'s Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. The highlights of the AGM will be the discussion and voting on nine resolutions focusing on issues such as Métis youth, citizenship, children in care, self-governance, Regional Governance Councils, community funding, by-elections and more. Read more at Nation Talk.



**Credit: CN Traveler** 

### **Quote Of The Week**

Every day at 8 p.m., a moving applause can be heard from windows and balconies in every neighborhood of every Spanish city. With this window applause, citizens pay tribute to the corps of health workers at the frontline of the pandemic. Community and public services are now clearly perceived as necessary goods, which generate group and individual strength. The state of alarm alerts us to the need to understand each other as connected bodies, even though we cannot touch each other. Teleleisure and tele-working are meaningless without the underlying social networks (links between people) and supporting digital networks (links between computers). These links are both digital and analogue—they are postdigital.

Carlos Escaño, Seville, Spain, 21 March

Carlos Escaño is an associate professor of art education at the University of Seville, Spain, and visiting professor at UNED, Spain. He lives and works in Seville, but also lives and works on the Internet.

Read More at Springer

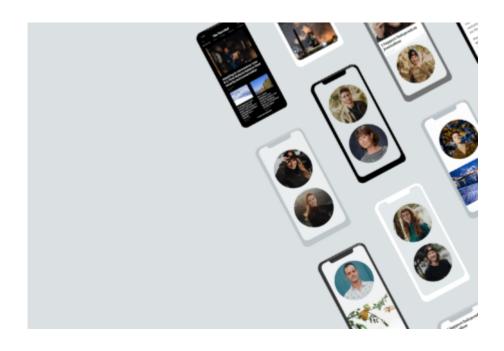
### **Upcoming Events**

- February 22nd-23rd: <u>The Virtual World Conference on Rare Diseases (RARE2021)</u>
- March 12th-14th: <u>Consortium of Universities for Global</u> Health Virtual Conference
- March 13th-14th: 5th Annual South Asian Mental Health Conference (virtual)
- March 18-28, 2021: Virtual <u>Environmental Film Festival in the U.S.</u> <u>Capital</u>
- Earth Hour March 27th at 8:30 Your Local Time

- April 8-11, 2021: <u>Global Health & Innovation Conference</u> (Virtual Event)
- April 25th-30th, 2021: <u>Planetary Health Week</u> (A Free Virtual Conference-Festival)
- May 31st June 18th, 2021: <u>The McGill Summer Institute of</u>
   <u>Infectious Diseases and Global Health</u> (100% online from McGill
   University, Montreal, Canada)
- June 7th 9th, 2021: <u>Executive Course</u>: <u>Global Health</u>
   <u>Diplomacy</u> (Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University
   of Toronto, Canada)
- September 27th October 1st, 2021: <u>12th European Congress On</u> <u>Tropical Medicine And International Health: Global Challenges In</u> <u>Health, Migration And Equity</u>
- November 1st 12th, 2021: <u>2020/2021 UN Climate Change</u> <u>Conference</u> UNFCCC COP26 - Postponed in 2020 and now to be held November, 2021 (Glasgow, Scotland)

#### **FYI#1 SPOTLIGHT ON MEDIA**

### The Narwhal



Check out *Narwhal*, whose team of investigative journalists dives deep to tell stories about Canada's natural world you can't find anywhere else. They have just two rules:

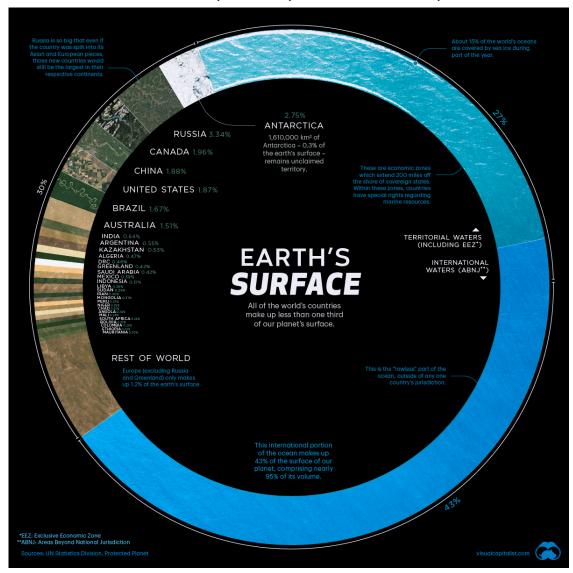
1) Follow the facts. 2) Tell it like it is.

"We're tired of false dichotomies and business-as-usual perspectives. We're not shy about the fact we think Canada's greatest assets are our people, our lakes, our rivers, our forests. We tell stories Canada's big news outlets miss and hustle to help our readers make sense of complex (sometimes downright messy) issues."

Learn more at the Narwhal

#### **FYI #2**

## Visualizing Countries by Share of Earth's Surface



#### Credit: Visual Capitalist

There are over 510 million square kilometers of area on the surface of Earth, but **less than 30%** of this is covered by land. The rest is *water*, in the form of vast oceans.

Today's visualization uses <u>data</u> primarily from the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) to rank the world's countries by their share of Earth's surface. The largest countries by surface area are **Russia** (3.35%), **Canada** (1.96%), and **China** (1.88%). Together they occupy roughly **7.2%** of Earth's surface. Russia is so big that even if we divided the country between its Asian and European sections, those new regions would still be the largest in their respective continents.

Read More at Visual Capitalist

#### **FYI #3**

## The Fruits of Growth - Extreme Poverty is History in China, Officials Say; Inequality is a Different Matter



In December, 2020 China announced that it had eradicated extreme poverty within its territory. This achievement is breathtaking in scale. By the World Bank's estimate, some 800m people in China have escaped penury in the past four decades. It is a triumph for the ages, too, as state media have noted. Never before in the country's history has destitution come anywhere close to being eliminated.

One of the final places declared poverty-free is Ziyun, a county in the south-western province of Guizhou. "Speaking frankly, it's a lie," says Liang Yong, a gruff villager. The official investigation of Ziyun's economy was, he says, perfunctory. Provincial leaders popped into his village, rendered their verdict that it had left poverty behind and then sped off. "It's a show. In our hearts we all know the truth," he grumbles.

Read More at Economist

#### **FYI #4**

## Carbon Craft Design Uses India's Polluted Air to Make Building Tiles



Credit: Carbon Craft Design

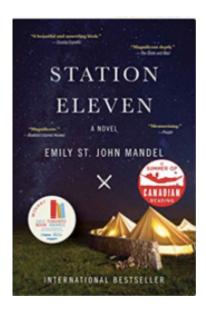
India has the world's <u>worst air pollution</u>. Home to <u>21</u> of the world's 30 most polluted cities, its toxic air kills <u>more than one million</u> people each year. That's partly because the South Asian nation is the world's <u>second largest brick producer</u>. Brick kilns --

which account for <u>20%</u> of black carbon emissions globally -- make a <u>significant</u> <u>contribution</u> to its terrible air. Indian architect Tejas Sidnal was shocked to discover the construction industry's role in the pollution crisis. "That was a crazy eye opener," he says. "As architects, we are responsible for so much air pollution. We can do better. And he has by making tiles out of polluted air.

Read More from CNN

### **FYI #5: Winter Pandemic Reading:**

## Winter Covid-19 Reading Picks by Leslie Wonk, Professor of international relations at University of Ottawa



Credit: Amazon Book Cover

- 2. The Cobra Event by Richard Preston
- 3. The Plague by Albert Camus

#### **FYI#6: SPOTLIGHT ON EDUCATION**

### **Teaching in the Age of Covid-19**



#### **Credit:** ecampusnews

After several months of personal journey towards accepting that the coronavirus pandemic is real (see Jandrić 2020a, b), in early March, it dawned on me that the pandemic does not need only so-called essential workers. Self-quarantined after returning from abroad weeks before the Croatian government locked down the country, I immediately wrote an editorial for *Postdigital Science and Education* and argued that 'While doctors, nurses, politicians, food suppliers, and many other brave people self-sacrifice to support our daily survival, this editorial argues that academics have a unique opportunity, and a moral duty, to immediately start conducting indepth studies of current events.'

Read the Link Springer Here

## **ENDSHOTS**

#### **WINTER TREE SCULPTURES**

#### **Amid COVID-19 Stats and Charts**

HAWKRIGG LAND, SEGUIN, ONTARIO

February 9 and 10, 2021



Whitefish Lake, Ontario

#### COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Last updated: February 04, 2021, 20:20 GMT

Graphs - Countries - News

#### Coronavirus Cases:

105,245,655

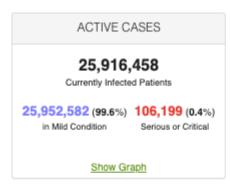
view by country

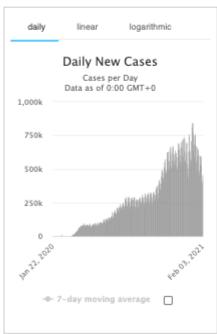
Deaths:

2,286,802

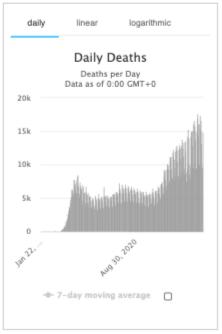
#### Recovered:

76,900,072









#### Source: <a href="https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/">https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/</a>

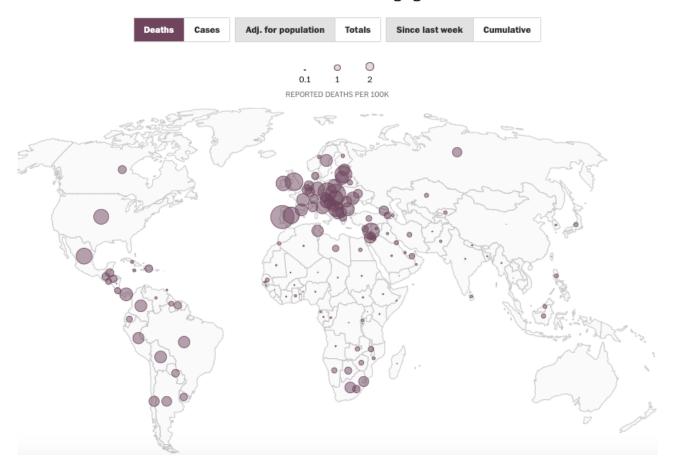


COVID-19 CASES & DEATHS (February 5-11, 2021) Source: <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/world/mapping-spread-new-coronavirus/?itid=sf\_coronavirus">https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/world/mapping-spread-new-coronavirus/?itid=sf\_coronavirus</a>

#### Where the virus is surging



#### Where the virus is surging

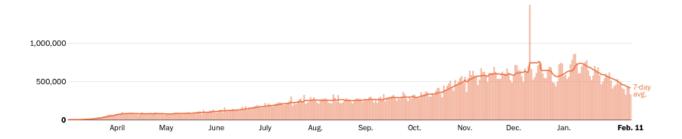




#### New daily reported cases across the world

Deaths Cases

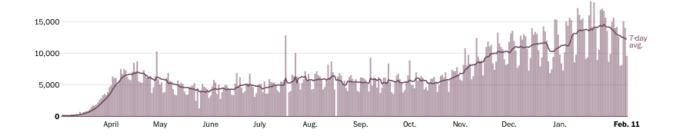
At least 107,576,840 have been reported since Feb. 29.

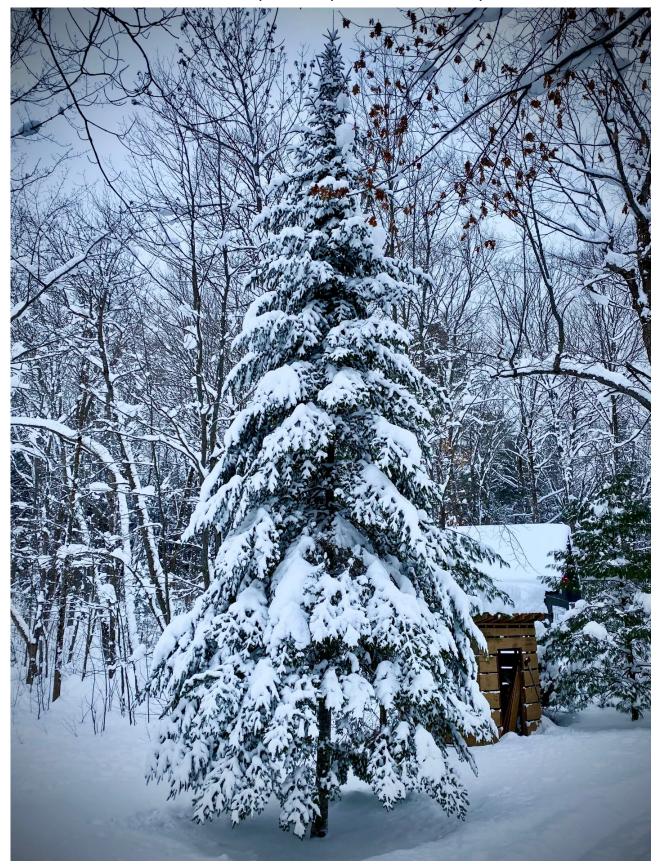


#### New daily deaths reported across the world

Deaths Cases

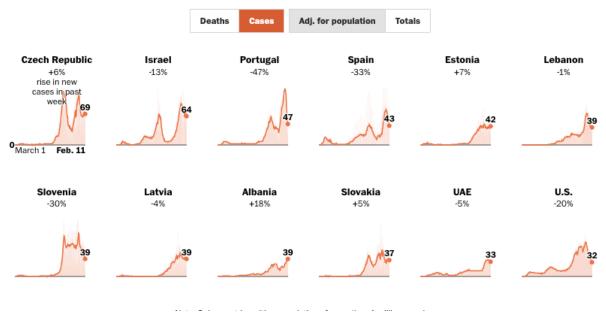
At least 2,361,842 have been reported since Feb. 29.





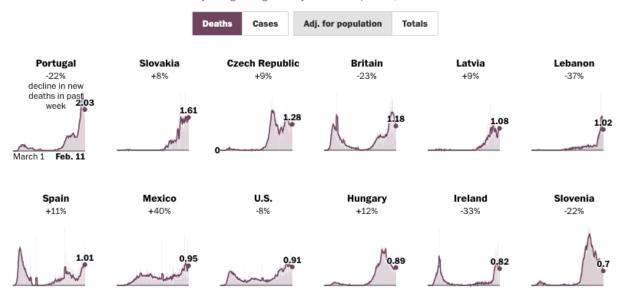
#### Global hot spots for reported cases per capita

- 7-day rolling average of daily new reported cases per 100,000 residents



#### Global hot spots for reported deaths per capita

- 7-day rolling average of daily new deaths per 100,000 residents

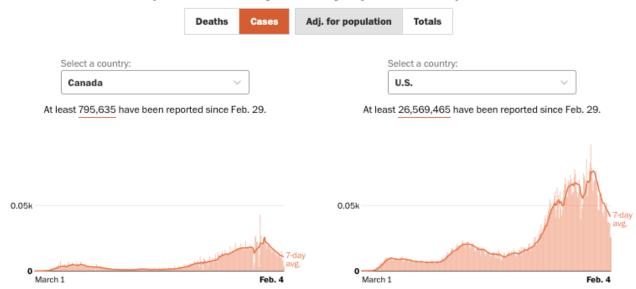


Note: Only countries with a population of more than 1 million are shown.

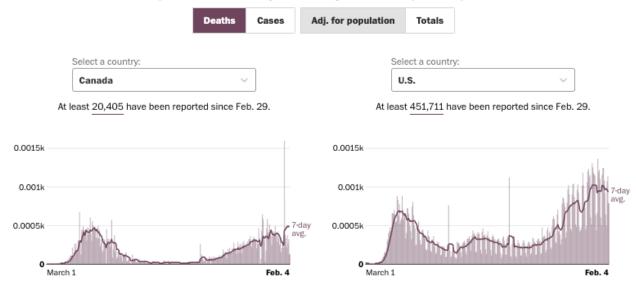




#### Compare countries by new daily reported cases per 100k

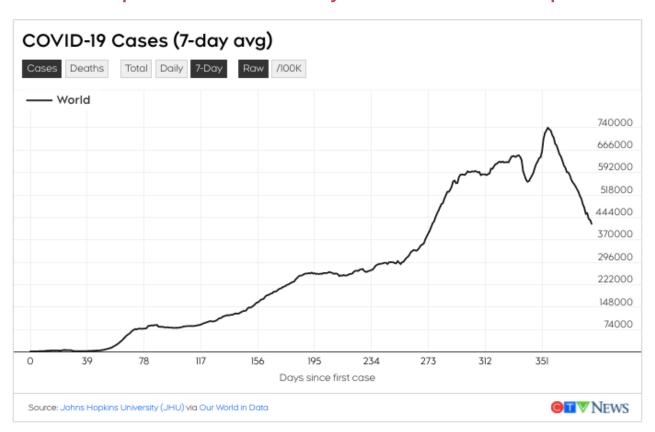


#### Compare countries by new daily deaths reported per 100k



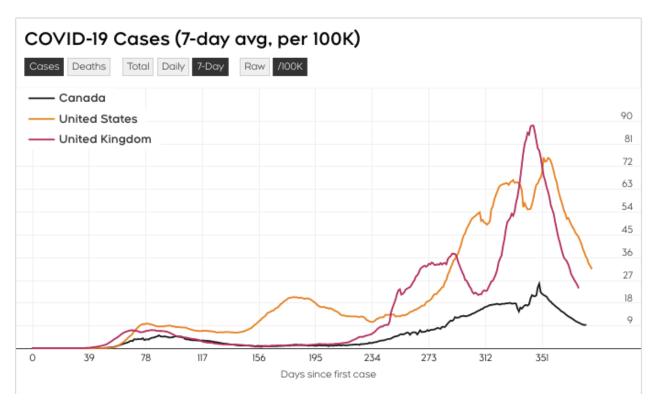


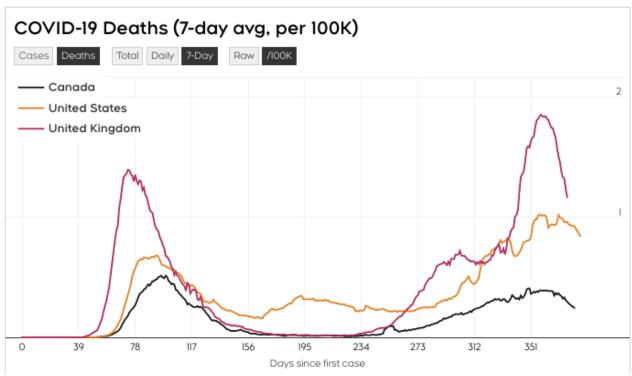
Source of World and Canadian Data Below (February 11, 2021): https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/covid-19-curves-compare-canada-and-other-key-nations-1.4881500#link-top

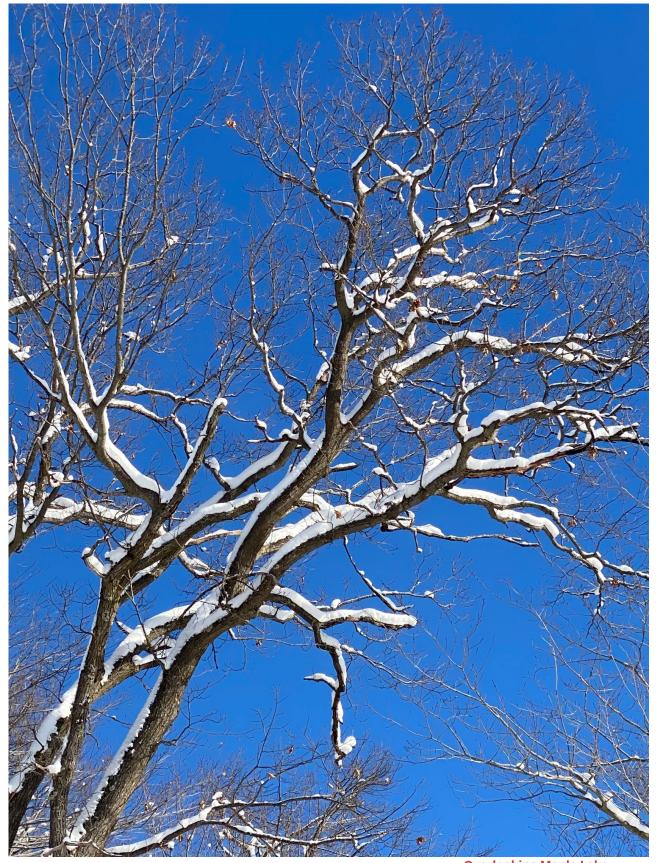




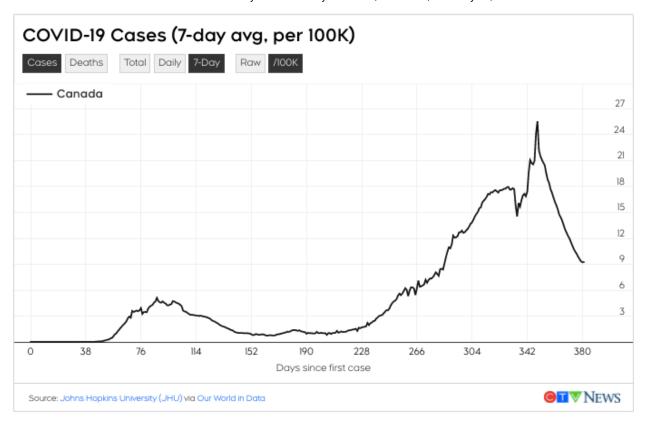


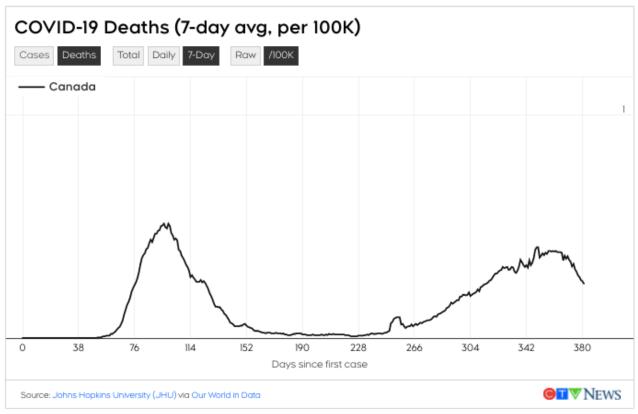




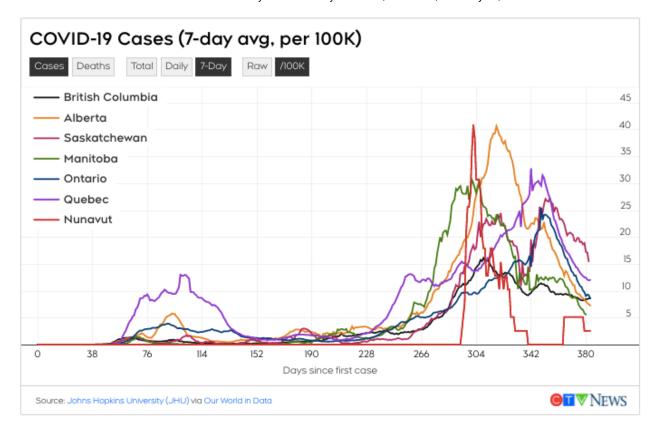


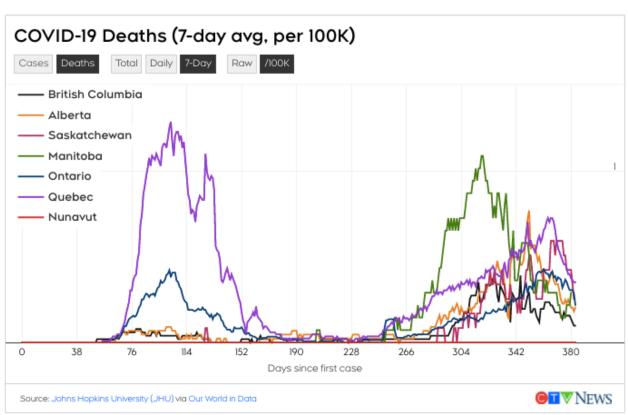
**Overlooking Maple Lake** 













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49 Beresford Avenue, Toronto ON M6S 3A9 Canada

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