

Cactus leather, wildlife restoration and a ‘peeolution’. Can we save the world?

Every week, Maddyness looks at the good, the bad and the ugly in climate change news.

Today, we look at indigenous climate activism, leather made from anything but cows, and the big banks on a sustainability drive.

Monday was what used to be called Columbus Day, and what is – in 15 states across the USA, at least – now called Indigenous Peoples’ Day. It’s a kind of counter-celebration, to recognise the loss of Native American lives during colonial rule and to honour indigenous cultures, histories, and contributions to the world we know.

What better time to celebrate the contribution of indigenous groups to the preservation of our natural environment. They make up just 5% of the world’s population, but protect 80% of its biodiversity. To quote [Kamea Chayne](#), who has made a brilliant Instagram post on indigenous environmental activism,

“Sustainability cannot be achieved while indigenous peoples, their land rights, food sovereignty, and

biocultural knowledge continue to be dispossessed, marginalised and erased.”

Elsewhere, IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva has told finance ministers across the world that “climate change is a profound threat to growth and prosperity”. “It is macro-critical. And macroeconomic policies are central to the fight against climate change,” she said, urging countries to make green investments with COVID-19 stimulus packages. This is a great step, though many question whether we should ditch the ‘economic growth’ benchmark entirely to be truly green.

Also, the European Parliament voted to ramp up the EU’s climate target to a 60% from 40% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030 – in line with Bangladesh’s demand that the countries within the Climate Vulnerable Forum raise their game too. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged each of these countries to submit more ambitious emissions reduction targets by the end of the year.

The big ideas

For *Maddyness*, I recently published profiles of vegan dining club SayPlants! and unsold stock sustainability solution Purple Dot. I’m just off a Zoom with Josh from CanO Water, where we talked all things aluminium, single-use plastic and David Attenborough effect. The interview will be published soon.

Beyond this, have a look at the ideas and innovations from across the spectrum of politics, social justice and big business that caught my eye this week:

There is a campaign to erect a 235MW wind farm on Standing Rock. If built, the Anpetu Wi Wind Farm, will be owned by a Native nation that prioritises people, land, and nature over profit – and will become the single largest revenue source for the people on Standing Rock, who face a 70% unemployment rate.

Singapore is pioneering green cooling solutions, working towards a future where air-conditioning doesn’t rely on fossil-fuelled power generators and hydrofluorocarbons.

Mexico, where 20% of the population are veggie or vegan, looks set to become ‘the cradle of vegan entrepreneurship in Latin America’. It’s already

home to cactus leather company Desserto and dairy alternative provider Heartbest.

If you don't want your leather made from cacti, [how about mushrooms?](#)

HSBC [has committed](#) \$1T in financing clients to become more environmentally-friendly, as well as creating a \$100M VC fund for clean tech. JP Morgan also said it would commit to financing goals in line with the Paris Agreement.

Tanzania's Jumeme [has been spotlighted](#) for its renewable power supply to rural communities that would otherwise be off-the-grid.

Could [government-linked foundations](#) speed the spread of new clean energy tech?

Have a look at the winners of Fast Company's 2020 Innovation by Design Awards – from skis made from algae-based composite to a Norwegian building that produces twice as much energy as it consumes – [here](#).

All but destroyed in the civil war, Mozambique's Gorongosa National Park [has been regenerated](#) – partially due to coffee production – and become 'one of the most successful stories of wildlife restoration in Africa'.

Toopi Organics are calling for a '[peevolution](#)' and hoping to turn vast quantities of urine into fertiliser.

Further reading

If you're still reading, here's even more reading:

[Yosemite's indigenous erasure](#), past and present, via *Atmos*.

[How resilient cities share](#) strategies for adapting to a changing climate, focusing on water management in Rotterdam, Surat and Paris, via *Resilient Cities Network*.

[Explaining the exact links](#) between bushfires and climate change, via Australia's Climate Council.

Read also

Coal-powered u-turns and plastic-eating enzymes. Can we save the world?

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