

# A wide lens on the Taliban, life without tourists and a big fix

The world has looked on aghast at the desperate scenes in Afghanistan since the western troop withdrawal and the subsequent Taliban takeover. As critics round on President Joe Biden's abrupt handling of the US pullout from Kabul in particular, our world affairs editor Julian Borger asks whether the fall of Kabul signals the end of the long era of American interventionism - and if so, what will take its place?

Then, Guardian correspondents Jason Burke and Emma Graham-Harrison - both of whom have spent time in Afghanistan - examine what the takeover signifies for Islamist extremism around the world, and how far the Afghan Taliban's claims to be a more tolerant ruling force than before can be taken at face value.

**The big story** Page 10 →

For many people in the northern hemisphere, August is a time for summer vacations. But with the pandemic having put the squeeze on most foreign travel, communities that depend heavily on the tourist dollar have been hit hard, and those in developing countries even more so. We visit four destinations on the road less travelled to find out how people are coping with the lack of visitors - and whether they want them back.

**Spotlight** Page 17 →

One of the many challenges of meeting net zero targets is how we can live more sustainably and extend the lifespans of the everyday things we depend on. As new "right to repair" laws are floated in the UK and the US, we take a look at what mending really means and how we can learn to re-evaluate the objects that surround us.

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**On the cover**  
As Julian Borger writes in our cover story: "It has been an era in which the US was supposed to act as the world's policeman, maintaining order ... and stepping in when necessary to stop the worst crimes against humanity. The reality often turned out to be far short of that ideal, but is the whole project now coming to an end?"  
*Photograph: 4x6/Getty Images/iStockphoto*