

# The Taliban takeover, goodbye to Merkel and the lives of trans kids

As the last remaining US troops left Kabul this week, focus turned to what form the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan will take. While the group has insisted it wants to engage with other nations and allow citizens more freedoms than its previous incarnation, last week's deadly Islamic State suicide attack at Kabul airport highlighted some of the problems the insurgents turned rulers face. Emma Graham-Harrison reports, while Jason Burke considers the moral dilemma facing the west in choosing its Afghan friends and enemies.

**The Big Story** Page 10 →

Over the past 16 years, Angela Merkel has led Europe's leading power through challenging and tumultuous times. As Germany's chancellor enters her final days in office, Philip Oltermann reflects on the substantial legacy Merkel leaves in differing diplomatic spheres, and how a scientific mind has guided her political principles.

**Spotlight** Page 15 →

The rights of transgender people have advanced greatly in recent years, but it's a subject that still divides many.

Our feature by Shon Faye detailing the problems that trans kids face to gain inclusion and acceptance is a revealing and poignant window into a world that is still misunderstood by many.

Also in our features pages, we catch up with Sally Rooney, the superstar Irish author who would much prefer to avoid the trappings of fame. And there's an entertaining look behind the scenes of the fast, furry world of cat shows.

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As Emma Graham-Harrison writes this week: "The Taliban have made clear they want to avoid a repeat of their 1990s rule when they presided over an international pariah state ... What is less clear is whether they can achieve that, or how they will attempt it."

Photograph: Wakil Kohsar/Getty



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