

Abortion rights under threat, gang crime in Sweden and Omicron

Last week the US supreme court heard an abortion rights case considered the most important of its kind in nearly five decades. While the verdict will not be heard until June 2022, the conservative-dominated court's justices seem willing to allow restrictions on abortion at 15 weeks and perhaps earlier in a pregnancy. Many suspect that the court's real agenda is ultimately to reverse the 48-year-old Roe v Wade ruling and effectively ban abortion in the US.

Jessica Glenza sets out how the argument came to this and the societal shockwaves such an outcome could cause. And Ed Pilkington considers how the politicisation of the supreme court is threatening to destroy its legitimacy.

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Sweden is renowned for its liberal, tolerant values, but lately it has also gained a less-welcome reputation for ultra-violent gang crime. Mark Townsend went to Gothenburg to find out how police are tackling a series of brutal attacks that have shocked the nation.

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As fears grow over the spread of the Omicron Covid variant, we consider what it might mean for the pandemic generally. And, with travel restrictions tightening once again, Cal Flyn reflects on the consequences for the world of a year when air travel pretty much ground to a halt.

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On the Culture front, there's an interview with Diane Morgan, the British comedy actor who is surely set for wider global recognition. And we ask if a roving art exhibition can succeed in its ambitious goal of reuniting Europe.

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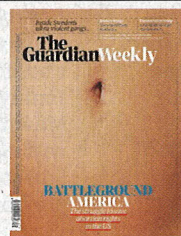
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On the cover
The politics of abortion have opened deep divisions in the US in the last five decades, with the religious right having been laying the foundations of its legal challenge for years. The movement has intersected with nearly every major issue in American politics, from segregation to campaign finance.
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