

# Hotspot for the Winter Games, a battling PM and the reluctant star

**Sochi in 2014, Seoul in 2018 ... and now Beijing in 2022.** In recent years the Winter Olympics has gained an intriguing reputation for pitching up in geopolitically sensitive places. With concerns about human rights issues, and an Omicron outbreak disrupting preparations, the big story this week considers how China still hopes to stage manage the Games to its political advantage. And, amid rising global temperatures, there's a fascinating look at the long-term future of the Winter Olympics, given the fast-declining number of cities with reliably cold enough weather to host the event.

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**A redacted report into the lockdown party culture** in Boris Johnson's Downing Street operation was released this week. Despite a police-enforced lack of detail, the "update" compiled by civil servant Sue Gray conveyed heavy criticism of No 10 - but more damaging was Johnson's apparent lack of contrition in the face of parliamentary and public outrage. Tory leadership rebellion fears seemed to have subsided for now - but whether voters will prove as understanding remains to be seen.

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**For a generation of infants who have grown up** with masks and social distancing, the end of the pandemic will represent an entirely new way of living. How are they coping with the new normal, asks Gaby Hinsliff in our features section.

Then, in Culture, we catch up with Ben Whishaw, the reticent but in-demand actor who seems to pop up everywhere from James Bond to Paddington.

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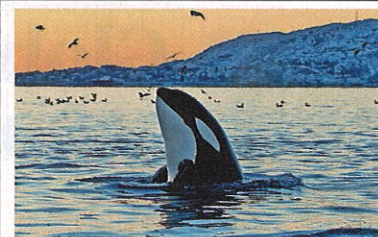
SPOT ILLUSTRATIONS:  
MATT BLEASE



**On the cover**

Illustrator Steven Gregor writes: "I wanted to show both parties wearing their respective armour - a Chinese Olympic official in a hazmat suit and face shield, and a visiting athlete in goggles and helmet. Factors conspire to keep people apart, but let's hope common ground can be found and the Olympic spirit prevails."

*Illustration: Steven Gregor*



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