

Herostratus sets fire to the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus, one of the Seven Wonders of the World

Crete Earthquake followed by tsunami around the Eastern Mediterranean allegedly destroys Alexandria

Apollo 11: Neil Armstrong becomes the first person to step on the Moon at 2:56:15 AM (GMT)



Aswan High Dam opens in Egypt, enables human control of the flooding of the Nile

Hajj with 'pre-packed' pebbles



crowded and people were jostling and scrambling at Jamarat and some were hurt," said Mohammed Salehi, a Syrian living in Saudi Arabia, referring to the site of the stoning ceremony. "Now the place is very spacious." Some pilgrims shaved their heads after casting stones. In a speech marking Eid al-Adha, King Salman lauded measures taken by the kingdom to ensure a safe Hajj "in the shadow of this pandemic" including deploying technology to allow physical distancing. With the coronavirus the main

concern, authorities have restricted access to pilgrims aged 18 to 65, who have either been fully vaccinated or have recovered from the virus and do not suffer from chronic diseases. This year, face-masked pilgrims clad in white robes signifying a state of purity walked in small groups, each at their own pace and socially distanced. "They had pre-packed stones for us," said Pakistani pilgrim Urooj Qasmi. "I'm not scared. Everything is very clean and well organised."

Workers will return to Jamarat over the next two days before continuing onto Mecca to pray at the Grand Mosque at the end of Hajj, a once-in-a-lifetime duty for every able-bodied Muslim who can afford it.

A pilgrim casts stones at a pillar symbolizing Satan during the annual Hajj pilgrimage

Global quest underway to speed COVID-19 vaccine trials



Vials labelled "Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccine" are seen in this illustration picture

Reuters | Chicago

Scientists are working on a benchmark for COVID-19 vaccine efficacy that would allow drugmakers to conduct smaller, speedier human trials to get them to market and address a huge global vaccine shortage.

Researchers are trying to determine just what level of COVID-19 antibodies a vaccine must produce to provide protection against the illness. Regulators already use such benchmarks - known as correlates of protection - to evaluate flu vaccines without requiring large, lengthy clinical trials.

"You could use it to predict efficacy from a vaccine, which will be more important as we are less able to conduct placebo-controlled trials," said Stanley Plotkin, inventor of the Rubella vaccine and an expert on correlates of protection.

"The information is flowing in," he said. "By the end of this year, I think there will be enough data to convince everyone." An established benchmark for COVID-19 would allow drugmakers to conduct

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With an established correlate, drugmakers could test blood samples from a smaller number of trial participants who receive an experimental vaccine to see whether they produced that benchmark level of protective antibodies.

vaccine trials in just a few thousand people, about one-tenth the size of the studies conducted to gain authorization for currently widely-used coronavirus shots, researchers and drugmakers told Reuters.

Researchers at Oxford University late last month proposed a potential correlate of protection based on antibodies found in people who had received the AstraZeneca vaccine. The work awaits peer reviewed by other scientists.

'We lost': Some US veterans say blood spilled in Afghan was wasted

Reuters | Gardem Grove, California

Jason Lilley was a special operations forces Marine Raider who fought in multiple battles in Iraq and Afghanistan during America's longest war.

As Lilley, 41, reflects on President Joe Biden's decision to end America's military mission in Afghanistan on Aug. 31, he expresses love for his country, but disgust at its politicians and dismay at the blood and money squandered. Comrades were killed and maimed in wars he says were unwinnable, making him rethink his country and his life.

"A hundred percent we lost the war," Lilley said. "The whole point was to get rid of the Taliban and we didn't do that. The Taliban will take over."

Biden says that the Afghan people must decide their own future and that America should not have to sacrifice another generation in an unwinnable war.

Al Qaeda's 9/11 attacks on America triggered a nearly 20-year conflict that led to more than 3,500 U.S. and allied military deaths, the deaths of more than 47,000 Afghan civilians, the killing of at least 66,000 Afghan troops, and over 2.7 million Afghans fleeing the country, according to the nonpartisan Costs of War project at Brown University.

"Was it worth it? It's a big ass question," said Lilley, who was on the front lines of America's Global War on Terror in Iraq and Afghanistan for almost 16 years.

He said he deployed believing troops were there to defeat the enemy, stimulate the economy and uplift Afghanistan as a whole. They failed, he said.

"I don't think one life was worth it on both sides," Lilley said as he described his service and his perspective in an interview at his home in Gardem Grove, southeast of Los Angeles.

Lilley is not alone in reflecting on the U.S. withdrawal after nearly 20 years of war. Many Americans are. The perspectives of Lilley and other veterans can help inform the country about the costs of entering war and the lessons to be learned from Afghanistan.

Lilley's opinions are his own and some veterans differ, just as Americans generally have different estimations about a war that improved women's rights and led in 2011 to U.S. Navy SEALs killing al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in Pakistan.

Lilley and other Marines who served in Afghanistan and who spoke to Reuters compared it with the conflict in Vietnam. They say both wars had no clear objective, multiple US presidents in charge, and a fierce and non-uniformed enemy.



A U.S. special forces veteran Jason Lilley is shown during his deployment in Farah, Afghanistan in 2009.



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01



On the auspicious occasion of Ashadhi Ekadashi, my greetings to everyone. On this special day, we pray to Lord Vitthal to bless us with abundance of happiness and good health. The Varkari movement represents the finest of our traditions and emphasises on harmony and equality.

@narendramodi

02



Eid Mubarak! My warmest wishes to everyone celebrating. All of us can draw inspiration from the values of solidarity, empathy and compassion that are celebrated during

@antoniogeterres

03



Glad to be in #Japan to address the International @Olympics Committee. I've come with a simple but urgent message: we can defeat #COVID19, but only if everyone plays their part. May these #Tokyo2020 Olympics be a source of hope & unity to achieve #VaccineEquity & end the pandemic.

@DrTedros

04



This pandemic is far from over and that is why it is essential to keep up the system of Test, Trace & Isolate. We will protect crucial services by making sure that a very small number of fully vaccinated, critical workers can leave isolation solely for work.

@BorisJohnson

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