

El Salvador's new parliament voted to dismiss top Supreme Court judges hostile to populist President Nayib Bukele, triggering a political storm as the opposition derided the move as a coup, AFP reported.

India struggled to contain one of the world's worst coronavirus outbreaks with nearly 400,000 new infections reported Sunday, as more international aid arrived in the South Asian nation to help end the crisis.

Surges in Brazil and Canada also highlighted the persistent threat of the pandemic, with the COVID-19 death toll approaching 3.2 million even as many nations ramp up their vaccination drives, according to AFP.

India expanded its vaccination program to all adults on Saturday, but many of its states are struggling with shortages despite an export freeze for shots produced in the country.

Long queues were seen at vaccination centers in cities across India on the weekend, with people desperate to be inoculated against a disease that has overwhelmed the country's healthcare system and even crematoriums and graveyards.

"We are here early in the morning to get vaccinated... I left my three-year-old at home to get vaccinated," said Megha Srivastava, 35, at a private vaccination center in the capital New Delhi.

"It is a necessity now. We are seeing so many people testing positive."

Social media platforms have been flooded with desperate pleas from people looking for oxygen cylinders, medicines and hospital beds as the COVID-19 wave causes widespread shortages.

India reported more than 392,000 new cases and nearly 3,700 COVID-19 deaths on Sunday.

The dire situation prompted



Health workers care for patients inside a banquet hall temporarily converted into a COVID-19 ward in New Delhi on May 1, 2021.

More COVID-19 aid lands in India as Canada, Brazil struggle with outbreaks

many nations to dispatch emergency supplies including oxygen generators, face masks, and vaccines.

New Delhi, one of the hardest-hit parts of the country, extended

its lockdown by a week on Saturday.

Anthony Fauci, the top US pandemic advisor, said in comments published Saturday that India should go into lockdown to

fight this wave.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has resisted imposing a national shutdown but many states have imposed heavy restrictions.

Global infections

Known global infections are approaching 152 million, and fresh waves have also shaken many countries in the Americas.

Brazil, the worst-hit Latin American nation, has crossed 400,000 COVID-19 deaths – second only to the United States, with many of its hospitals pushed to the brink of collapse.

And in Canada, the epicenter is in the most populous province Ontario, where the surge has been so intense that the government sent in the military and the Red Cross to help care for critical patients.

Ontario's healthcare system is nearing the breaking point, said intensive care nurse Fariel Faquary at Toronto's Humber River Hospital.

"We're stretched thin," Faquary told AFP.

"We're tired and exhausted. Just exhausted."

Many health professionals and caregivers are also frustrated with citizens who have not followed precautions.

Canada's vaccine rollout has also stumbled because of supply issues, unlike its southern neighbor the United States which has given at least one dose to more than half its adult population.

Despite the COVID-19 threat in sharp focus because of the outbreaks in Brazil and India, populations in many parts of the world are growing weary of virus measures.

Anti-restriction protesters gathered in several European countries on Saturday, including Finland, Sweden, Belgium and Germany.

UK PM under pressure as voters back second Scottish independence referendum

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is facing intense pressure to allow a second Scottish independence referendum if the Scottish National Party (SNP) wins a majority at Holyrood – an area in Edinburgh – on Thursday, after a new poll showed British voters think he would be wrong to deny a fresh ballot.

The UK government argues that now is not the time for another vote and that politicians should focus on rebuilding the economy in the wake of the COVID pandemic, according to The Independent.

But Nicola Sturgeon's SNP has said outright victory in this week's Holyrood elections would be a mandate for a second referendum.

And a new BMG poll for The Independent suggests Britons agree.

The survey found that 41 percent of those asked said Johnson should allow another vote within four years if pro-independence parties win a majority in

the Scottish Parliament this week, compared to just 33 percent who opposed and 26 percent who said they did not know.

Just 19 percent said Scottish independence would be positive for the UK, while 41 percent believe it would be negative.

The only part of the UK where voters were more likely to back Johnson's position than oppose it was in Scotland.

There 41 percent thought the prime minister should grant another referendum while 44 percent thought he should not.

In response, Sturgeon said, "What this poll shows is that Boris Johnson and the Tories can't deny democracy forever.

"When the Scottish Parliament decides it is the right time for the people of Scotland to choose their future, it would be foolish for a Westminster Tory government to stand the way of the democratic will of the people of Scotland."



ALAN WILSON/ALAMY

But a UK government spokesperson said the SNP's push for a "divisive referendum" was "irresponsible".

The poll also shows that across Britain as a whole, only the over-65s believe

Johnson's government has taken the right approach.

Scotland held an independence referendum seven years ago in 2014, and voted to remain in the UK.

Nearly 100 German police injured in May Day rallies

At least 93 police officers were injured and 354 protesters were detained after traditional May Day rallies in Berlin turned violent, Berlin's top security official said on Sunday.

More than 20 different rallies took place in the German capital on Saturday and the vast majority of them were peaceful. However, a leftist march of 8,000 people through the city's Neukoelln and Kreuzberg neighborhood, which has often seen clashes in past decades, turned violent. Protesters threw bottles and rocks at officers, and burned garbage containers and wooden pallets in the streets, according to AP.

"Violence against police officers and a blind, destructive rage has nothing to do with po-

litical protest," Berlin State Interior Minister Andreas Geisel said.

Geisel condemned the throwing of bottles and rocks and the burning barricades on the streets and especially the violence toward police saying, "The high number of injured officer leaves me stunned. I

wish all of those who were injured in the line of duty a quick recovery."

There's a nightly curfew in most parts of Germany currently because of the high number of coronavirus infections. But political protests and religious gatherings are exempt from the curfew.



TOBIAS SCHWARZ

The German capital deployed around 5,600 officers on May 1, 2021 to monitor the May Day protests.

Somali Parliament unanimously votes to cancel presidential extension

Somali lawmakers voted unanimously to cancel a two-year presidential term extension they had approved last month, after clashes in the capital Mogadishu between factions of the security forces, which are divided over the issue.

In a speech following the vote in the lower house on Saturday, Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble ordered the army to return to barracks and urged politicians to avoid inciting violence, according to Reuters.

The political crisis has raised fears that Al-Qaeda-linked Al-Shabaab insurgents could exploit a security vacuum if state forces split along clan lines and turn on each other. The group has taken over at least one Somali town in the past week as heavily armed fighters moved from the countryside into the capital city.

President Mohamed Abdullahi Mo-

hamed's attempt to extend his term has also angered foreign donors, who have backed his government in an attempt to bring stability to Somalia after more than two decades as a failed state following a civil war that began in 1991.

Saturday's lower house vote was broadcast on Somali television and came shortly after Mohamed addressed Parliament and said he was directing the prime minister to prepare to hold a delayed parliamentary election.

Mohamed's term expired in February, but without a new crop of lawmakers, Parliament was unable to choose a president.

The term extension was approved by the lower house last month but rejected by the Senate, provoking the crisis that has intensified in the past week.

Several dead as Myanmar forces fire at anti-coup protesters



AFP

Anti-coup protesters in Myanmar march despite a bloody crackdown by the military junta on May 2, 2021.

Myanmar security forces opened fire on some of the biggest protests against military rule in days, killing at least five people on Sunday, media reported, three months after a coup plunged the country into crisis.

The protests, after a spell of dwindling crowds and what appeared to be more restraint by the security forces, were coordinated with demonstrations in Myanmar communities around the world to mark what organizers called "the global Myanmar spring revolution", according to AFP.

"Shake the world with the voice of Myanmar people's unity," the organizers said in a statement.

Streams of demonstrators, some led by Buddhist monks, made their way through cities and towns including the commercial hub of Yangon, the second city of Mandalay.

Two people were shot and killed in the central town of Wet-let, the Myanmar Now news outlet reported, while two people were killed in different towns in Shan State in the northeast, two media outlets reported.

One person was also killed in the northern town of Hpakant, the Kachin News Group reported.

The protests are only one of the problems the generals have brought on with their Feb. 1 ouster of the elected government led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

Wars with ethnic minority insurgents in remote frontier regions in the north and east have intensified significantly over the past three months, displacing tens of thousands of civilians, according to UN estimates.

In some places, civilians with crude weapons have battled security forces while in central areas military and government facilities that have been secure for generations have been hit by rocket attacks and a wave of small, unexplained blasts.

The state-run broadcaster in its main Saturday evening news bulletin gave details of at least 11 explosions over the previous 36 hours, mostly in the main city of Yangon. It reported some damage but no casualties.

There have been no claims of responsibility.

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners advocacy group says security forces have killed at least 759 protesters since the coup.

The military, which ruled for almost 50 years until launching a tentative reform process a decade ago, acknowledged in mid-April the death of 248 protesters, saying they were killed after they initiated violence.

Several members of the security forces have been killed in the protests, the military says.

Large fuel truck fire in Kabul kills seven

Gasoline tanker trucks burst into flames in Kabul overnight, killing at least seven people and starting large fires that caused power cuts to some parts of the Afghan capital, officials said on Sunday.

The tankers were parked in northern Kabul and burst into flames late on Saturday, according to the Interior Ministry. Fourteen people were injured, Reuters reported.

The cause of ignition was not immediately known but the fires come as the city remains on "high alert" with officials bracing for attacks from the Taliban over the foreign troops' continued presence in the country.

Two security sources had earlier told Reuters they believed it was caused by a Taliban rocket fired in the area, however, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid has said they were not involved.

Tariq Arian, the Interior Ministry's spokesman, said they were still investigating the cause of the fire.

Arian said the fire began when a spark set one fuel tanker ablaze. Several tankers nearby were quickly engulfed, sending giant flames and plumes of smoke into the night sky.

The Taliban have said US President Joe Biden's announcement last month that American troops would leave by Sept. 11 violates a 2020 agreement under the Trump administration that offered a May 1 withdrawal deadline.

It wasn't immediately known if the fire was accidental or intentional coming on the official start of the final withdrawal of US and NATO troops, ending America's longest war. The Interior Ministry said Sunday the incident is under investigation.

All 2,500 American soldiers and about 7,000 NATO allied forces will be out of Afghanistan at the latest by Sept. 11, the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attacks in the United States that first brought them into the country.



RAHMAT GUL/AP

Firefighters work to extinguish a burning fuel tanker in Kabul, Afghanistan, on May 2, 2021.