VOA NEWS

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VOA news. I'm Christopher Cruise reporting.

As Democratic lawmakers continued to call on the Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to allow a vote on bills the House passed to reopen the government, federal workers are trying to keep going without pay.

Associated Press correspondent Julie Walker reports.

Antony Tseng is an EPA engineer who was furloughed. He is a single dad raising two daughters in college and says one word sums up his feelings about asking for help.

"Demoralizing. I'm not a good person to ask for help. I usually give help."

Like many he lives paycheck to paycheck.

"I have bills that I have to figure out which ones I'm gonna pay late if I get the money eventually."

Democratic congresswoman Nydia Velazquez is challenging Mitch McConnell to let the bills the House passed to reopen the government go to the Senate for a vote.

"I'll challenge the precedent to veto them and then use the power to override it if you care."

The longest government shutdown in U.S. history does continue entering its 23rd day on Sunday.

The shutdown stemming from Trump's demand for billions of dollars to build a wall between the United States and Mexico, a move the House of Representatives has refused to fund.

The president says the wall is needed to keep out migrants whom he called criminals and rapists during his excessive presidential campaign.

The shutdown has affected about 800,000 federal workers who've been furloughed or who are working without pay, including those at the Voice of America.

Venezuela's opposition leader was briefly detained Sunday, days after he challenged the legitimacy of President Nicholás Maduro following his re-election.

Juan Guaidó, the head of the increasingly defiant opposition-run Congress, held a rally after his brief detention in Caracas.

He said, "I want to send a message - the game has changed."

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U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Sunday that an ongoing boycott [by] of Qatar by four of America's allies in the Middle East has drawn on too long, although he gave no sign of any coming breakthrough in the dispute. He visited the small energy-rich nation as part of a Mideast tour.

"We're all more powerful when we're working together when disputes are limited and when we have common challenges in the region and around the world. Disputes between countries that have a shared objective are never helpful."

He also said Sunday the U.S. will ask the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to make sure those who murdered journalist Jamal Khashoggi are held accountable for their crime.

The head of Iran's nuclear program says the Islamic Republic has begun "preliminary activities for designing" a modern process for 20-percent uranium enrichment for its 50-year-old research reactor in Tehran, signaling new danger for the nuclear deal.

Associated Press correspondent ??? reports.

"We'll continue to talk about ...."

The comment on state television from Ali Akbar Salehi increased the pressure on the international community as 20-percent enrichment would mean Iran has abandoned the terms of the 2015 atomic accord.

President Donald Trump already pulled America out of the accord in May and resumed sanctions on Tehran. So far, United Nations inspectors say Iran continues to comply with the deal's terms, which limits enrichment to 3.5 percent.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a rare acknowledgement said Sunday that a recent Israeli airstrike in Syria targeted Iranian weapons.

However, Israel's outgoing military chief of staff revealed in a recent *New York Times* interview that Israel had "struck thousands of targets without claiming responsibility or asking for credit."

Netanyahu said Sunday that the accumulated number of recent attacks proves that Israel is determined more than ever to act against Iran in Syria.

The leader of the Republican minority in the U.S. House of Representatives said Sunday that "action will be taken" against Congressman Steve King, a Republican lawmaker from rural Iowa who has questioned why the terms "white nationalist" and "white supremacist" are offensive.

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy told CBS News that he will be holding a "serious conversation" with the 69-year-old King on Monday, reviewing whether King should be stripped of his House committee assignments, which would leave him all but powerless to shape legislation in the House of Representatives.

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