

**NATIONAL, WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF**

FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Major San Francisco Bay Area transit strike averted at least for day as sides keep talking**

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A major San Francisco Bay area transit strike was averted for at least a day after two labor unions extended contract talks beyond a midnight deadline and agreed not to walk off the job Monday to allow more contract negotiations.

The deal announced late Sunday about an hour before Bay Area Rapid Transit workers were set to go on strike gives the two sides a chance to work out a labor contract and hundreds of thousands of commuters at least a temporary reprieve from scrambling to find alternative ways to get around.

But the unions warned that workers will go on strike at midnight Monday if an agreement isn't reached by then.

"We are not going to go on strike because the public deserves to have a riding system that works. We will give the (transit agency) one more day to get it together," said Antonette Bryant, leader of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1555, one of the two unions in talks with BART.

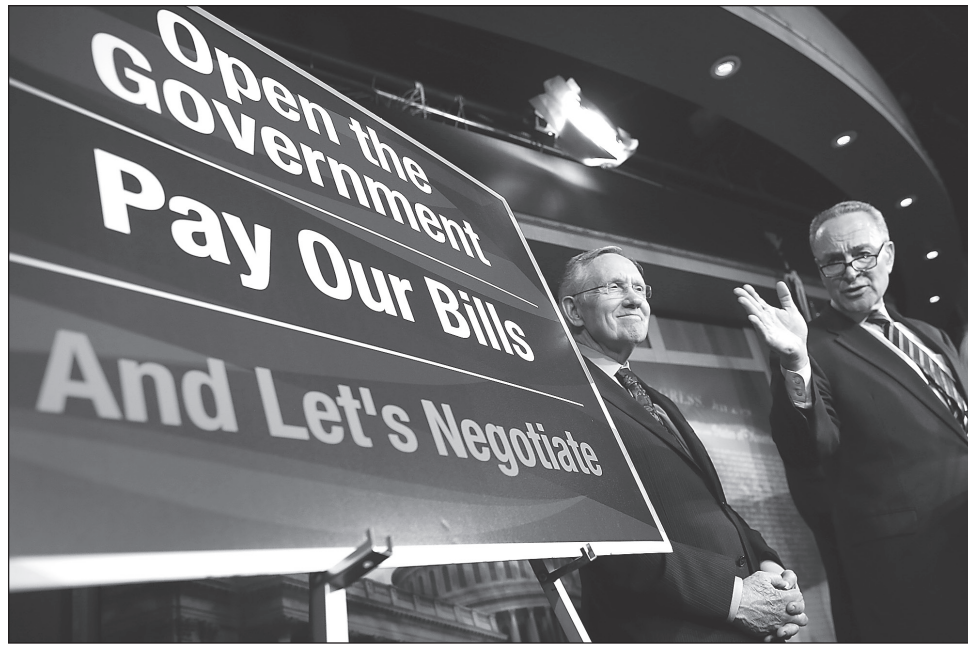
The 11th hour announcement came after weekend-long talks to avert a second commute-crippling strike in less than three months.

**Poll shows retirement coming later in life, no longer exit from work**

CHICAGO (AP) — Stung by a recession that sapped investments and home values, but expressing widespread job satisfaction, older Americans appear to have accepted the reality of a retirement that comes later in life and no longer represents a complete exit from the workforce. Some 82 percent of working Americans over 50 say it is at least somewhat likely they will work for pay in retirement, according to a poll released Monday by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

The survey found 47 percent of working survey respondents now expect to retire later than they previously thought and, on average, plan to call it quits at about 66, or nearly three years later than their estimate when they were 40. Men, racial minorities, parents of minor children, those earning less than \$50,000 a year and those without health insurance were more likely to put off their plans.

"Many people had experienced a big downward movement in their 401(k)



CHARLES DHARAPAK | AP PHOTO

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada, left, and Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., speak to reporters about their meeting with Senate Republicans regarding the government shutdown and debt ceiling on Capitol Hill in Washington, Saturday.

plans, so they're trying to make up for that period of time when they lost money," said Olivia Mitchell, a retirement expert who teaches at the University of Pennsylvania.

About three-quarters of working respondents said they have given their retirement years some or a great deal of thought. When considering factors that are very or extremely important in their retirement decisions, 78 percent cited financial needs, 75 percent said health, 68 percent their ability to do their job and 67 percent said their need for employer benefits such as health insurance.

Graphic designer Tom Sadowski, 65, of Sterling, Va., had expected to retire this year, but the recession caused his business to fail and his savings to take a hit. With four teenage daughters, he knew he had to put retirement off.

**Default looming on Day 14 of shutdown, Senate leaders at impasse over spending**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States moved perilously closer to an economy-rattling default and a partial government shutdown entered its third week as Senate Democratic and Republican leaders remained at odds over spending in their last-ditch negotiations to

end the crises gripping the nation.

Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., spoke by phone Sunday but failed to agree on a deal to raise the nation's borrowing authority above the \$16.7 trillion debt limit or reopen a government still shuttered on its 14th day. Congress is racing the clock with Treasury Secretary Jack Lew warning that the U.S. will quickly exhaust its ability to pay the bills on Thursday.

The reaction of world markets and the Dow Jones on Monday could provide the necessary jolt to Senate leaders, who represent the last, best chance for a resolution after talks between President Barack Obama and House Republican leaders collapsed.

The shutdown has furloughed 350,000 federal workers, impeded various government services, put continued operations of the federal courts in doubt and stopped the IRS from processing tax refunds. Some parks and monuments remain closed, drawing a protest at the National World War II Memorial on Sunday that included tea party-backed lawmakers who had unsuccessfully demanded defunding of President Barack Obama's 3-year-old health care law in exchange for keeping the government open.

Economists see greater fi-

ancial danger from an historical default. Christine Lagarde, the International Monetary Fund's managing director, spoke fearfully about the disruption and uncertainty, warning on Sunday of a "risk of tipping, yet again, into recession" after the fitful recovery from 2008.

**Treasury has never defaulted on its debt? Not so fast, historians say**

WASHINGTON (AP) — You hear the same proud claim every time Washington wrestles with the debt limit: The United States has never defaulted. But the record's not that clean. America has stiffed creditors on at least two occasions.

Once, the young nation had a dramatic excuse: The Treasury was empty, the White House and Capitol were charred ruins, even the troops fighting the War of 1812 weren't getting paid.

A second time, in 1979, was a back-office glitch that ended up costing taxpayers billions of dollars. The Treasury Department blamed it on a crush of paperwork partly caused by lawmakers who — this will sound familiar — bickered too long before raising the nation's debt limit.

These lapses, little noted outside financial circles in their day, are nearly forgotten now.

Indeed, Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew frequently declares that the United States has always met all of its obligations; a Treasury spokeswoman declined to discuss any possible exceptions. President Barack Obama, reminding Congress of the urgency of raising the debt limit before a Thursday deadline, warned of "the chaos that could result if, for the first time in our history, we don't pay our bills on time."

**With suicide blasts and waves of car bombs, al-Qaida picking up tempo of attacks in Iraq**

BAGHDAD (AP) — First came the fireball, then the screams of the victims. The suicide bombing just outside a Baghdad graveyard knocked Nasser Waleed Ali over and peppered his back with shrapnel.

Ali was one of the lucky ones. At least 51 died in the Oct. 5 attack, many of them Shiite pilgrims walking by on their way to a shrine. No one has claimed responsibility, but there is little doubt al-Qaida's local franchise is to blame. Suicide bombers and car bombs are its calling cards, Shiite civilians among its favorite targets.

Al-Qaida has come roaring back in Iraq since U.S. troops left in late 2011 and now looks stronger than it has in years. The terror group has shown it is capable of carrying out mass-casualty attacks several times a month, driving the death toll in Iraq to the highest level in half a decade. It sees each attack as a way to cultivate an atmosphere of chaos that weakens the Shiited government's authority.

Recent prison breaks have bolstered al-Qaida's ranks, while feelings of Sunni marginalization and the chaos caused by the civil war in neighboring Syria are fueling its comeback.

"Nobody is able to control this situation," said Ali, who watches over a Sunni graveyard that sprang up next to

the hallowed Abu Hanifa mosque in 2006, when sectarian fighting threatened to engulf Iraq in all-out civil war.

**Hopes for progress high as U.S., partners meet with Iran this week over its nuclear program**

VIENNA (AP) — Don't expect a breakthrough — but the chances for progress have seldom been better. This is the message coming from Iran and six world powers ahead of renewed talks this week meant to end a decade of deadlock on Tehran's nuclear program.

The two sides come to the negotiating table in Geneva on Tuesday and Wednesday amid a feel-good atmosphere that began with the June election of centrist Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. Subsequent conciliatory comments by Iranian officials were capped last month by a phone call between Rouhani and President Barack Obama — the first conversation between U.S. and Iranian leaders in more than three decades.

Iran insists it does not want nuclear weapons. But building on the momentum of that telephone call, Iranian officials from Rouhani down say their country is ready to meet some international demands to reduce its nuclear activities.

If so, the talks — including the U.S., Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany — could be the launching pad for a deal that has proven elusive since negotiations on Iran's nuclear program began in 2003. A deal would also reduce the threat of war between Iran and Israel and possibly the United States.

The latter two nations' leaders have repeatedly warned they would never accept a nuclear-armed Iran, a pledge repeated ahead of the talks by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry. Speaking on Sunday in London he noted that while "the window for diplomacy is cracking open," Obama "means what he says" when he vows not to allow Tehran to progress to such weapons.

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