

jam-packed holding cells where children sleep on concrete floors and huddle in plastic sheets for warmth. # A group of Democratic lawmakers led by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus will travel to New Mexico on Monday to the Border Patrol station where 8-year-old Felipe Alonso Gomez was detained before he died on Christmas Eve with flulike symptoms. But Democrats critical of the administration's treatment of migrant families have offered few solutions to stem the unprecedented influx of parents with children that is buckling the U.S. immigration system. # The government shutdown has made the strains worse. Many immigration judges have been furloughed, deepening dysfunction in a court system crippled by a backlog of nearly 1 million cases. Along the border, U.S. agents and officers are being forced to work indefinitely without pay. " Morale is down in the dumps, " said one border agent in South Texas who was not authorized to speak on the record. # Yet in Washington, the president has continued to sound the alarm for a border wall, appearing at the White House on Thursday with representatives of the Border Patrol union to make another pitch to reporters. # Adam Isacson, a security analyst at the Washington Office on Latin America, said there appears to be little political incentive for conservatives to hash out a deal if it doesn't deliver on Trump's signature issue. With Trump eyeing a reelection bid amid increasing pressure from his conservative base, the debate over the wall could dominate Washington for the foreseeable future. # " They are stuck on this wall thing because of its emotional appeal, " he said.