

Flight reductions to affect Houston

FAA cutting traffic at 40 of nation’s busiest airports because of government shutdown

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

U.S. airlines prepared to phase in hundreds of flight cuts at the country’s busiest airports, including in Houston, starting Friday due to the government shutdown, according to a list distributed to the airlines and obtained by the Associated Press.

The Federal Aviation Admin-

istration’s order to reduce air traffic at 40 of the busiest airports across the nation includes locations across more than two dozen states and is likely to ripple far beyond those targeted places.

With just hours to go, airlines scrambled Thursday to figure out where to cut, and travelers with plans for the weekend and beyond were waiting nervously

to see if their flights would take off as scheduled.

The affected airports include busy connecting hubs and those in popular tourist destinations, including Dallas, Atlanta, Denver, San Francisco, Miami and Orlando, Fla.. In some of the biggest cities — such as Houston, New York and Chicago — multiple airports will be affected.

Airlines will phase in the cuts at the direction of the FAA, starting with eliminating 4% of flights at the 40 airports on Friday and working up to 10%, ac-

cording to three people familiar with what the agency said who were not authorized to discuss it publicly.

United Airlines will cut 4% of its flights over the weekend based on guidance from the FAA, company spokesperson Josh Freed said.

The FAA had not yet published an official order as of mid-day Thursday and didn’t immediately respond to questions about implementation details.

Houston airport officials said they were ready to support fed-

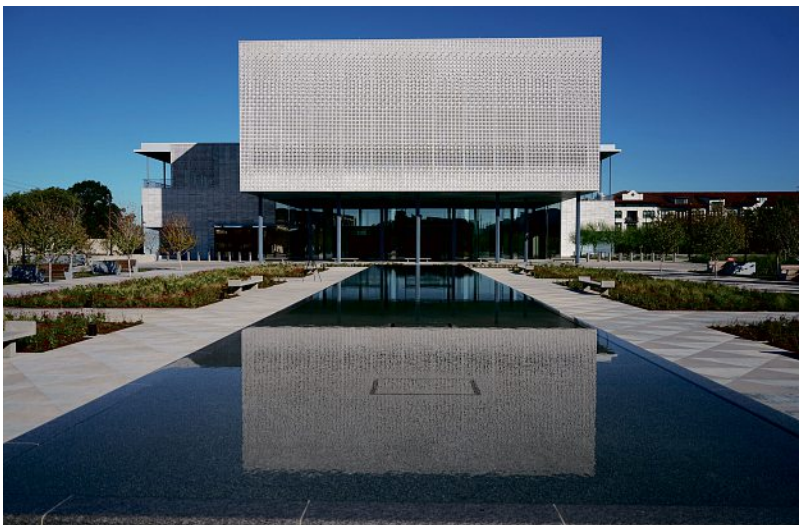
eral and airline operations. They did not say whether George Bush Intercontinental Airport and William P. Hobby Airport would be affected.

Both of those airports have faced longer than usual security lines due to staffing shortages over the past week. Bush’s security line waits topped three hours Sunday and Monday. Those waits have since decreased and were projected to last 60 to 75 minutes on Thursday. At Hobby, waits were ex-

Flights continues on A3

“This building may be called an Ismaili Center, but it is not here for Ismailis only. It is for all Houstonians to use, a place open to all who seek knowledge, reflection and dialogue.”

Aga Khan V



Melissa Phillip/Houston Chronicle

First Ismaili Center in U.S. opens here



Brett Coomer/Houston Chronicle

Spiritual leader visits to dedicate cultural, religious site

After nearly two decades of planning and construction, a vacant property near Buffalo Bayou has been transformed into a majestic, 150,000-square-foot Ismaili Center — a new cultural and religious landmark that is the first of its kind in the United States.

While the Ismaili Center, Houston will serve as a prayer venue, its representatives hope locals also embrace it as a peer to the likes

By Haajrah Gilani
STAFF WRITER

of the Menil Collection, Rothko Chapel, Asia Society Texas, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The center plans to host art exhibitions, lectures and music recitals.

The center opened its doors Thursday morning in a grand ceremony, welcoming 500 guests and

civic leaders.

“We’re here to recognize the Ismaili community’s greatness, and in doing so, we get to show the greatness of the city of Houston,” Mayor John Whitmire told the audience in a speech that praised the city’s diversity.

“This is a historic event,” Whitmire added. “Pause a moment and realize what we’re experienc-

Center continues on A8

TOP: The Ismaili Center, Houston is located on Allen Parkway and Montrose Boulevard and is the seventh such building in the world. **ABOVE:** Architect Farshid Moussavi, right, gives a tour to Mayor John Whitmire, center, Aga Khan V, center right, and other dignitaries during the dedication ceremony Thursday.

Millions spent so far on Guard mission

Texas troops still in Illinois despite court block on use

By Bayliss Wagner
STAFF WRITER

Hundreds of Texas soldiers remain stationed in Illinois at a significant cost to the federal government, even as a court order issued nearly a month ago has blocked them from deploying to the streets or guarding a Chicago-area immigration facility.

The U.S. military’s Northern Command, which is overseeing the mission, told Hearst Newspapers on Tuesday that approximately 200 Texas troops remain under federal control in Illinois. A spokesperson gave no indication that the Trump administration plans to bring them home while a lawsuit over the deployment plays out. In the meantime, the command says the troops are training on deescalation, crowd control and use-of-force rules.

“Any decisions regarding their return to Texas will depend on mission requirements and will be announced as appropriate,” the spokesperson wrote in response to questions from Hearst,

Guard continues on A8



Elizabeth Conley/Houston Chronicle

Volunteers help load a vehicle on Wednesday during a food distribution at the San Antonio Food Bank.

Judge: Feds must fully fund SNAP this month

By Geoff Mulvihill and Michael Casey
ASSOCIATED PRESS

A federal judge in Rhode Island on Thursday ordered the Trump administration to find the money to fully fund SNAP benefits for November.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge John J. McConnell Jr. gave President Donald Trump’s administration until Friday to make the payments through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, though it’s unlikely the 42 million Americans — about 1 in 8, most of them in poverty — will see the money on the debit cards they use for groceries nearly that quickly.

The order was in response to a challenge from cities and nonprofits complaining that the administration was offering to cover only 65% of the maxi-

Benefits continues on A6