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NEW YORK NEWS

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From New York

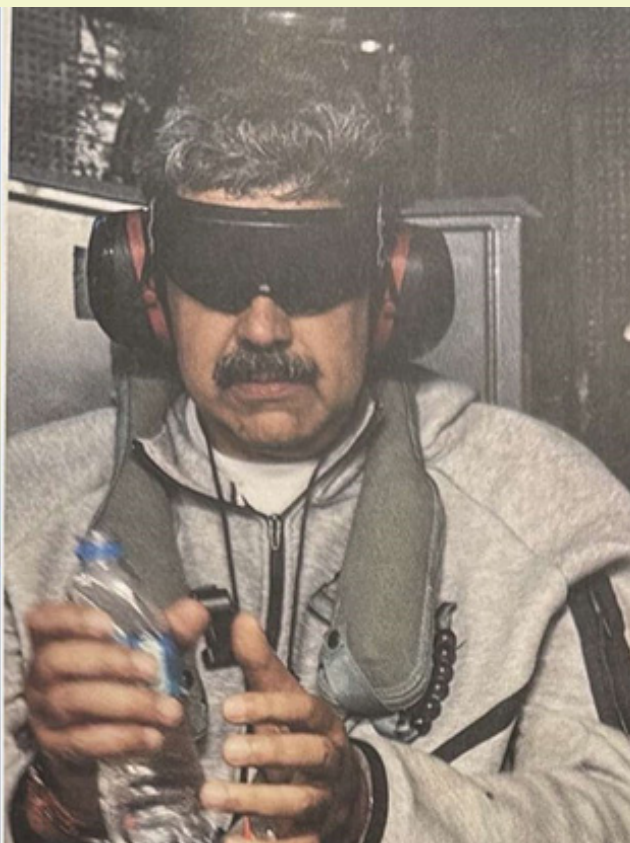
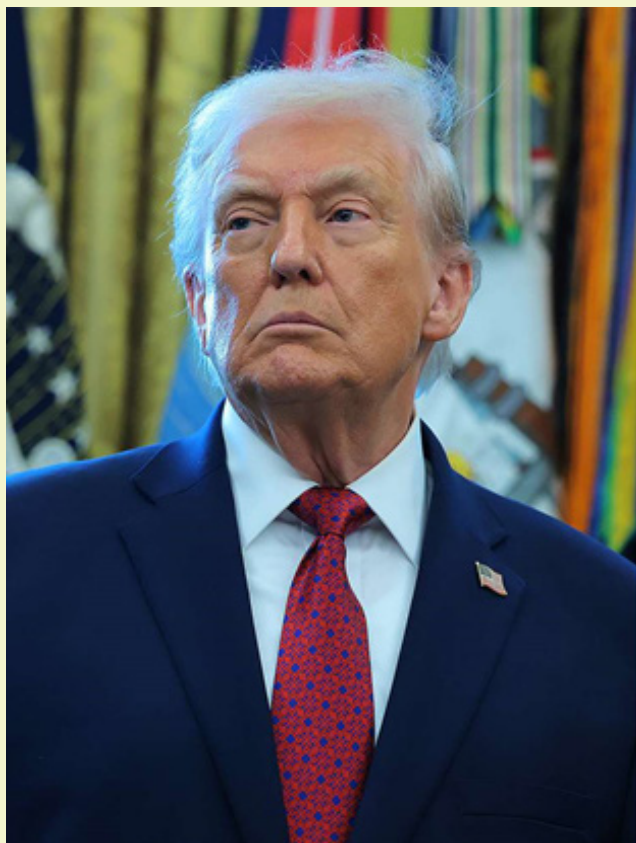


Photo: Trump Shares Photo of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro Blindfolded, Handcuffed
Image Source: Online

U.S. Captures Maduro

Inside the raid that reshaped Venezuela's future

Alexandar Sullivan

In a dramatic overnight operation, the United States captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, marking the culmination of a months-long

pressure campaign ordered by Donald Trump and raising profound questions about the future of Venezuela and U.S. foreign policy in Latin America. The raid unfolded in the

early hours of Saturday in Caracas, where elite Delta Force soldiers stormed Maduro's fortified residence. According to U.S. officials, the Venezuelan leader attempted to flee to a reinforced

safe room before surrendering. He and his wife, Cilia Flores, were taken into custody and flown out of the country under heavy military protection. The operation, known as Operation Absolute

Resolve, followed months of covert intelligence work by the Central Intelligence Agency, which tracked Maduro's movements, habits and security arrangements. Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the mission involved more than 150 aircraft, cyber operations and precision strikes to neutralize Venezuelan air defenses. Trump monitored the raid in real time from Mar-a-Lago, later describing the operation as "fast" and "decisive." Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Maduro had been offered multiple chances to step aside peacefully and refused, calling the outcome unavoidable. In Caracas, streets emptied amid explosions and power outages, while regional leaders warned the action set a dangerous precedent. In Washington, some lawmakers criticized the lack of congressional authorization and questioned what comes next. Trump, however, signaled a readiness for deeper involvement, declaring the United States would oversee Venezuela's transition, a stance that underscores the far-reaching consequences of one of the most consequential U.S. interventions in decades.

Starmer Eyes Single Market

PM signals deeper EU alignment without customs union

John Paul

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has said the UK should pursue closer alignment with the EU single market, calling it a better option than joining a customs union and offering his strongest signal yet of a potential reset with Brussels. In an interview with BBC's Laura Kuenssberg, Starmer said Britain should consider "even closer alignment" with the single market if it serves the national interest. He pushed back against calls from some Labour figures to seek a customs union, arguing that recent trade deals with the US and India made that route less attractive.

HIGHLIGHT

●Keir Starmer said closer alignment with the EU single market is preferable

●He ruled out joining a customs union

●Comments mark his clearest signal yet on post-Brexit EU relations

●No return to freedom of movement, Starmer said

Starmer stressed that any future talks would not include a return to EU freedom of movement, though he defended plans for a limited youth mobility scheme. His remarks come amid growing debate inside Labour over how far to deepen ties with the European Union, as the government looks to boost growth while avoiding renewed political division over Brexit.

UK, France Strike IS Cache

Allied jets hit underground arms bunker in Syria

Lily Anderson

British and French forces carried out a coordinated airstrike on an underground Islamic State weapons facility in

HIGHLIGHT

●Royal Air Force Typhoon jets joined French aircraft in a joint strike

●Target was an underground Islamic State arms and explosives facility

●Site was located near Palmyra in central Syria

central Syria, signaling continued allied efforts to prevent a resurgence of the militant group. According to the UK Ministry of Defence, Royal Air Force Typhoon FGR4 jets joined French aircraft late



Photo: UK and France bomb underground IS arms bunker in Syria
Image Source: EPA / Shutterstock / BBC

Saturday to target an arms cache believed to store explosives and weapons. The facility was located in mountainous terrain just north of Palmyra, an area previously exploited by IS fighters.

"Our aircraft used Paveway IV precision-guided bombs to strike multiple access tunnels to the underground site," the ministry said, adding that initial assessments indicated the target was successfully engaged.

The jets were supported by a Voyager aerial refueling tanker, and all aircraft returned safely to base. British officials reported no signs of civilian harm, and a detailed post-strike assessment

remains ongoing. John Healey, the UK defense secretary, said the operation demonstrated Britain's commitment to working alongside allies to counter extremist threats. "This action shows our determination to stand shoulder to shoulder with our partners to stamp out any resurgence of Daesh," Healey said, using another name for IS. The strike comes amid ongoing coalition efforts to contain the group, which once ruled large parts of Syria and Iraq before its territorial defeat in 2019. The United Nations estimates that between 5,000 and 7,000 IS fighters remain active in the region, keeping international forces on alert despite years of sustained military pressure.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

IMM North America returns to NYC in 2026

NYN Desk

IMM North America is scheduled to bring travel brands and travel-focused media together in Manhattan, New York, on January 21–22, 2026, with organizers billing the event as a tightly structured marketplace for pitching and commissioning travel stories. Run by TravMedia, the 14th-year edition is planned for the Javits Center and will pair tourism organizations with editors, journalists,



broadcasters, and content creators, largely through meetings arranged in advance. Pre-booked appointments are set to anchor the program, with exhibitors expected to hold up to 24 one-on-one meetings in fixed time slots using a dedicated scheduling system. Organizers say the format is designed to help travel representatives share destination updates, campaign ideas, and story angles efficiently while giving media attendees concentrated

access to a wide range of tourism stakeholders. The first day will include the TravMedia Summit, a professional development program slated to cover 2026 travel trends, publishing and freelancing, editorial strategy, wellness tourism storytelling, and the role of AI in media. Networking breaks, sponsored lunches, and cocktail events are also planned to support informal conversation alongside the appointment-driven agenda.

Brooklyn records historic drop in violence



Photo: Brooklyn DA touts gang violence prevention program for record safe year
Image Source : CBS New York

Staff Reporter

Brooklyn closed out 2025 as the safest year in its recorded history, a milestone city leaders say was fueled in part by a focused gang violence prevention effort aimed at young men most vulnerable to street crime. Officials highlighted Project Restore, a city-led pilot launched in

2023 in Bedford-Stuyvesant, as a key contributor to the borough's sharp decline in violence. The program identifies young men with ties to rival gangs and offers them paid internships that combine therapy, mentorship, and workforce development. Participants say the approach helped redirect their lives.

"This was probably the best thing to ever happen to me," said Darnell Bowers, a Bed-Stuy resident who now works for a nonprofit and hopes to attend Columbia University. City data shows murders dropped over the past two years in the 79th and 81st precincts, areas served by the program. Officials say trauma-informed mental health support and income stability were central to its success. A spokesperson for Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez called the effort "lasting public safety," emphasizing prevention over punishment. Encouraged by the results, city leaders said they plan to expand Project Restore to additional neighborhoods, including parts of the Bronx, as a long-term strategy to reduce violence and build opportunity.



Photo: Police investigate after a 55-year-old man was found dead in a for-hire SUV on Morris Avenue in the Bronx
Image Source: Theodore Parisienne / New York Daily News

Road rage suspected in Bronx New Year homicide

Community Desk

A Bronx Uber driver was shot to death behind the wheel of his SUV early Thursday morning, marking New York City's first homicide of the new year, authorities said. Firefighters responding to an unrelated vehicle fire discovered a blue Toyota RAV4 with Taxi & Limousine Commission plates crashed into a parked car on Morris Avenue near the Cross Bronx Expressway service road just before 7 a.m. Police later determined the driver, 55-year-old Issa Mbolo Isac, had been shot at least twice in the head. Advocates with the New York State Federation of Taxi Drivers said the

killing may have stemmed from a road rage incident following a minor collision. "They might have gotten into a little fender bender," said spokesman Fernando Mateo, adding that the suspects allegedly chased Isac and fired through the window as he tried to drive away. Isac, a resident of Throgs Neck, was married with four children living in Burkina Faso, relatives said. His brother described him as a hardworking man devoted to supporting his family. Police said no arrests have been made. Taxi advocates are offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to an arrest, urging witnesses to come forward amid continued concerns about violence on Bronx roadways.

NYC hospitals face historic strike threat



Photo: Nurses with New York City Health + Hospitals holding a strike while seeking a new contract in 2023.
Image Source: Max Parrott / AMNY

Senior Reporter

A potentially historic nurses' strike is looming in New York City, as the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) has issued a 10-day strike notice to a dozen private hospitals, warning that up to 20,000 nurses could walk off the job if contract talks fail. The notice, delivered on

Friday, follows the expiration of union contracts on Dec. 31 and escalating tensions over staffing levels, healthcare benefits, and workplace safety. NYSNA leaders accuse hospital management of attempting to roll back safe staffing standards secured in a 2023 strike and of failing to address protections against workplace violence.

Hospitals where nurses have voted unanimously to strike beginning Jan. 12 include Montefiore Medical Center, Mount Sinai Hospital, Maimonides Medical Center, Flushing Hospital Medical Center, and several other facilities, many of them safety-net hospitals serving uninsured and underinsured patients. "This is a last resort," said NYSNA President Nancy Hagan, adding that nurses are focused on protecting patient care amid the city's worst flu surge since 2017–18. Hospital groups, including the Greater New York Hospital Association, have called the strike threat "irresponsible," warning of millions in costs to hire temporary staff and pointing to federal funding cuts. Negotiations are continuing as hospitals prepare contingency plans ahead of the possible walkout.

Prayer Time IN New York

FAJR	DHUHR	ASR	MAGHRIB	ISHA
05:59	12:01	02:24	04:43	06:04
05:59	12:02	02:25	04:44	06:05
05:59	12:02	02:26	04:45	06:06
05:59	12:03	02:27	04:46	06:07
05:59	12:03	02:28	04:47	06:08
05:58	12:03	02:29	04:48	06:09
05:58	12:04	02:30	04:49	06:10

OPINION

Inauguration of New York City's First Muslim Mayor

— Imam Shamsi Ali

The New Year's Day, January 1, will be remembered not just as a routine calendar flip. In New York City it became a landmark moment for people worldwide—especially for Muslims and immigrants. For the first time, the city that houses the United Nations and Wall Street was officially led by a mayor who practices Islam. Chilled air bit my face as I stood among thousands of New Yorkers witnessing history. I was there not only because I wanted to bear witness, but also because I was invited as a member of the mayor-elect's transition team—a joyful, honored, and proud way to start the year. Zohran Mamdani, who's been the talk of the globe for the past two years, was sworn in as New York's first Muslim mayor on the Qur'an. What made the moment striking was that he placed his hands on two copies of Holy Qur'an: one that had been used by his grandfather/grandmother to teach him, and another ancient Qur'an that

has long been displayed in the New York Public Library—reportedly copied in the 16th century. Using both scriptures highlighted his personal faith and his public commitment as a Muslim. The ceremony, held on the steps of City Hall, was both festive and solemn. It was paired with the inaugurations of two other city officials: City Comptroller Mark Levine (Jewish) and Public Advocate Jumané Williams (Christian). Thus three holy books—Qur'an, Torah, and Gospel—were held during the oath, a vivid snapshot of New York's diversity. Attendees included U.S. officials such as Senators Chuck Schumer and Bernie Sanders, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC), Governor Kathy Hochul, former mayors Bill de Blasio and Eric Adams, plus family members—including Mamdani's wife Rama, his parents and his wife's



— Imam Shamsi Ali :
Director of Jamaica Muslim Center,
Member of Mayor Elect Mamdani's Transition Team

parents and sister. The program opened with the U.S. national anthem, followed by a interfaith prayer led by Imam Khalid Latif of the Islamic Center of New York, joined by clergy from Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. In their opening remarks, both AOC and Senator Sanders both underscored that Mamdani's win was historic: New York had elected its first Muslim, immigrant, South-Asian mayor. After the oath, Mamdani delivered a roughly 25-minute inaugural address—some called it the most compelling speech in the city's history; others dubbed it a "love letter" to New Yorkers. He declared that a new era had begun, with hope re-ignited despite the January chill. He refused to lower expectations, promising to govern with bold ambition and fearless resolve. He emphasized that he is mayor for all 8.5 million

residents—voters and non-voters alike—and pledged to protect, celebrate, and mourn with them. Mamdani reiterated his plan to create a Department of Community Safety to tackle the mental-health crisis, allowing police to focus on core public-safety duties. He also vowed to reform property taxes, raising corporate and income taxes for those earning over \$1 million a year. He affirmed his democratic-socialist principles, urging New Yorkers to replace "frozen individualism" with "the warmth of collectivism." Finally, he called on citizens to demand more from government and from themselves, measuring success by tangible impact on everyday lives, not just vote counts. His inclusive tone embraced Italians, Irish, Hispanics, Africans, Russian Jews and Palestinian Muslims in Brooklyn alike, embodying a "Rahmatan lil-alamin" spirit. Congratulations Mr. Mayor, congratulations to our community and congratulations to all New Yorkers!

“

“For the first time, the city that houses the United Nations and Wall Street was officially led by a mayor who practices Islam.”



Photo: 'I Will Govern as a Democratic Socialist,' Mamdani Says at Inauguration
Image Source: Online

“

“Thus three holy books—Qur'an, Torah, and Gospel—were held during the oath, a vivid snapshot of New York's diversity.”

Reflections on Mayor Zohran Mamdani's Historic Address

— By Akbar Haider Kiron

We did not merely listen to Zohran Mamdani's inaugural address as the new Mayor of New York City—we witnessed a moment of history unfolding in real time. Accustomed as we are to predictable political rhetoric, this speech startled us into attention. It compelled reflection, stirred emotion, and quietly redefined what leadership can sound like in a city as complex and layered as New York. The sense of wonder did not arise solely from the content of his words, but from his presence, his tone, and—above all—his vision. New York has seen many mayors and heard countless speeches, yet this moment felt different. This was not the language of power; it was the language of inclusion. A Moment Rooted in History New York City has always been shaped by immigrants, workers, minorities, and cultural crossings.

Still, when a mayor stands before the city and declares—implicitly and explicitly—this city belongs to everyone, the statement transcends political promise and becomes a moral position. Zohran Mamdani's address reflected that moral clarity. He narrowed the distance between authority and citizen, dismantling the invisible wall that so often separates those who govern from those who are governed. Tone and Language: Politics with Humanity What distinguished this speech most was its human tone. There were no excessive slogans, no theatrical outrage, no manufactured urgency. Instead, there was a calm confidence—suggesting a leader who understands that governing is not only



— Akbar Haider Kiron
Journalist, Editor,
Author, and Digital Media Professional

about making decisions, but about listening. He spoke of New York not merely as a city, but as a living narrative—one in which every immigrant, every worker, every dreamer holds a chapter of their own. The Immigrant City Reflected When leadership speaks in the voice of lived immigrant experience, representation becomes more than symbolic—it becomes deeply personal. For millions who have long felt unseen, this address functioned as recognition: your story matters. In that sense, Mamdani's speech resonated far beyond City Hall. It echoed through neighborhoods, kitchens, subway platforms, and crowded apartments where hope often survives quietly.

Why We Listened in Silence We listened in astonishment because the speech contained politics without hostility, vision without arrogance. In an era dominated by polarizing rhetoric and performative outrage, such restraint felt rare—and powerful. This was not a speech that demanded applause at every line. It invited trust. A Beginning, Not a Conclusion Zohran Mamdani's address marks the beginning of a conversation rather than its conclusion. What lies ahead will be tested by time, policy, and practice. Yet this moment will endure—because it reminded us that leadership can still be grounded in empathy. That day, New York City did not simply welcome a new mayor. It rediscovered its own voice—measured, diverse, and quietly hopeful.

NEW ERA

Mayor Zohran Mamdani Ushers in a New Progressive Era

Inauguration blends bold policy promises with historic symbolism

James Anderson

In a sweeping inauguration that broke with tradition and political caution, Zohran Mamdani was sworn in as the 112th mayor of New York City, launching his administration with fiery rhetoric, urgent action, and a resounding message: the era of bold progressive governance has arrived.

A democratic socialist, Mamdani, 34, made history as the city's first Muslim, first South Asian, and youngest mayor in more than a century. His inaugural address, delivered from the steps of City Hall in front of tens of thousands of supporters, was a defiant and optimistic declaration of intent. "I was elected as a democratic socialist, and I will govern as a democratic socialist," he proclaimed. "We may not always succeed, but never will we be accused of lacking the courage to try."

Senator Bernie Sanders administered the public oath, praising New



Yorkers for choosing leadership that "gives hope and inspiration to people all over this country." Sanders and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez flanked Mamdani during the ceremony, underscoring the national significance of the moment for the American left.

Mamdani's campaign focused on affordability, public transit, and tenants' rights. His platform includes free and fast city buses,

universal childcare, and a rent freeze for nearly 2 million rent-stabilized tenants. These promises remained central in his inaugural speech. "We will not reset to low expectations," Mamdani declared. "The only expectation I seek to reset is that of small expectations."

Earlier, in a symbolic midnight swearing-in beneath City Hall at the historic subway station shuttered since 1945, New York Attorney General Letitia James

administered the official oath. Mamdani placed his hand on two Qurans—one from the New York Public Library, once owned by Afro-Latino historian Arturo Schomburg, and another passed down from his grandfather.

The celebrations extended into a massive seven-block-long block party in Lower Manhattan, where bundled-up New Yorkers gathered despite frigid temperatures. It was a striking departure from

the typically exclusive, indoor inaugural ceremonies—fitting for a mayor who campaigned on openness and equity. On his first day in office, Mamdani moved swiftly to implement policy. At a press conference in a rent-stabilized building in Brooklyn, he signed three executive orders focused on the housing crisis, including the formation of two task forces to identify city-owned land for housing and strategies for development.

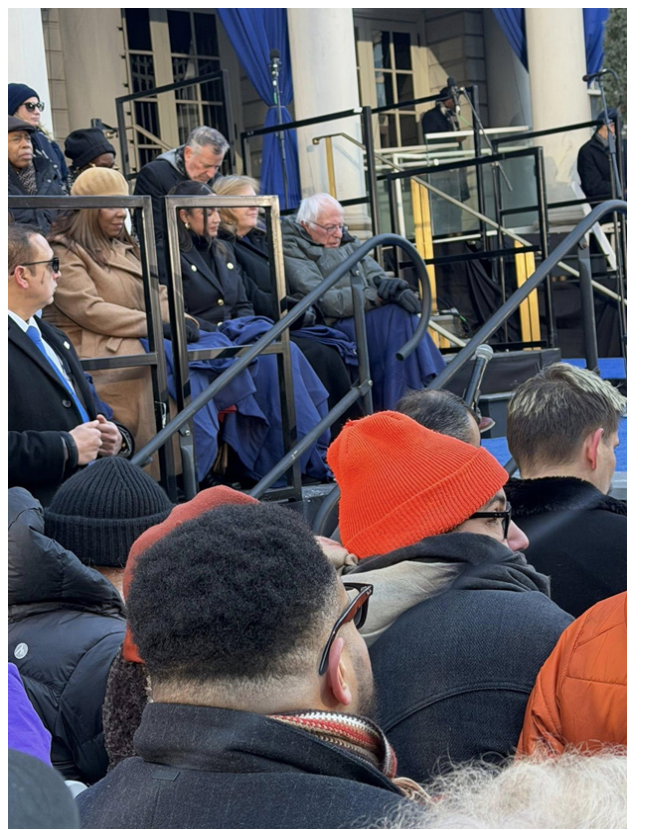
"We will not wait to deliver action," Mamdani said, emphasizing urgency. Deputy Mayor for Housing and Planning Leila Bozorg affirmed the administration's intent: "Protecting tenants, going after bad landlords, and building more affordable housing—that's the mission."

The inauguration, attended by a broad coalition of faith leaders, city officials, and community members, also spotlighted New York's pluralism. Oaths were taken on the Quran, Bible, and Torah, with speeches delivered in English, Spanish, Hebrew, and Greek. For many New Yorkers, the day was about more than politics—it was a collective affirmation of the city's diversity, hope, and demand for economic justice. "My fellow New Yorkers, today begins a new era," Mamdani said. And for thousands who stood with him, it felt like one already in motion.



NEW ERA

Zohran Mamdani's swearing-in kicks off ambitious plans for affordability and equity



ORGANIZATION

Bangladesh Society of NY Holds Spirited General Meeting

Discussions over leadership, funds, and community vision spark intense debate

William Henry

In a session marked by high turnout, spirited debate, and moments of tension, the Bangladesh Society USA, one of the oldest umbrella organizations representing Bangladeshi Americans, held its annual general meeting on Saturday evening at Queens Palace in Woodside. Over 150 members gathered for the meeting, which was convened under tight private security due to expected disputes stemming from allegations against former leaders, financial concerns, and cemetery-related issues. The society currently has a membership base of 1,322. Presided over by President Ataur Rahman Selim, and moderated by General Secretary Mohammad Ali, the meeting began with the recitation of the Qur'an, Gita reading, and a minute of silence in remembrance of martyrs. Religious readings were



conducted by Jamil Ansari and Ganesh Kirtania. The event proceeded with the national anthem and welcome remarks from the president. General Secretary Mohammad Ali and Treasurer Mofizul Islam Rumi presented the society's annual report. According to the report, the organization earned \$441,703 and spent \$505,995 over the past year, with \$71,382



remaining in the bank. The presentation of the financials sparked immediate discussion and heated exchanges between current and

former leadership. Accusations centered on former General Secretary Ruhul Amin Siddiqui, and various expenses incurred during the previous term. Mr. Siddiqui was later given the floor to respond to the allegations. The situation was defused following repeated calls for calm by the president. Speakers included former presidents M.A.

Aziz, Azmal Hossain Kunu, former general secretaries Fakhru Alam, Mohammad Hossain Khan, and community figures like Prof. Rana Ferdous Chowdhury, Badrul Hossain Khan, and Trustee Board Chairman Shah Newaz. Several members expressed concerns over transparency, use of society funds, and adherence to

constitutional norms. In a notable moment, Shah Newaz reaffirmed his commitment to the organization's goals, stating, "We will not take any action that harms the society." He confirmed having already donated \$125,000 toward a new building and pledged up to \$2 million more if needed, assuring members that "the society will have its own building, Insha'Allah." Despite the controversies, a majority of members present voted in favor of adopting the financial reports, as called by President Selim. The evening concluded on a positive note with a community dinner, emphasizing reconciliation and unity. While tensions were high, the general meeting ultimately reaffirmed the importance of community engagement, accountability, and collective vision for the future of the Bangladeshi-American diaspora.





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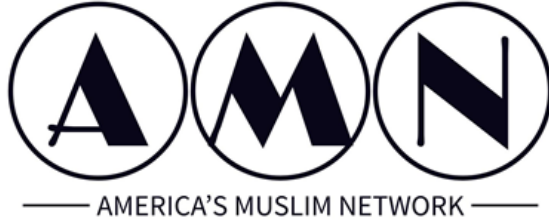
Top 65 Most Influential Muslims in New York State Honored

More honorees from America's Muslim Network's list and the work driving their impact

Carlos Stewart

This installment continues our ongoing coverage of America's Muslim Network's Top 65 Most Influential Muslims in New York State, highlighting more individuals whose leadership and service are shaping communities across the state. America's Muslim Network has officially unveiled its Top 65 Most Influential Muslims in New York State, a recognition rooted in

impact, service, and meaningful contribution rather than popularity or titles. This list honors individuals whose work continues to shape, strengthen, and uplift Muslim communities across the state through leadership, advocacy, faith, entrepreneurship, education, and civic engagement. New York is home to one of the most diverse Muslim populations in the country, and the individuals recognized reflect that diversity in every sense. They



Courtesy : America's Muslim Network

include community organizers working at the grassroots level, religious leaders guiding congregations, professionals influencing public policy, educators shaping young minds,

and entrepreneurs building institutions that serve far beyond the Muslim community. What unites them is a consistent commitment to showing up for others and translating values

into action. According to America's Muslim Network, this recognition is not a ranking. Each person on the list is acknowledged equally for their unique role and the tangible difference they have made in their respective spaces. The goal is not only to celebrate achievement, but to tell stories that are often overlooked and to amplify voices that inspire progress, unity, and resilience. In this ongoing series, we will highlight a

selection of individuals from this list and explore the work that led to their recognition. By learning more about their journeys, initiatives, and leadership, readers will gain a deeper understanding of the breadth of influence Muslim New Yorkers have across social, civic, and cultural life. Together, these honorees represent a powerful snapshot of a community that continues to contribute, lead, and build for the future.



Mohammad Mohsin Awais

Mohammad Mohsin Awais is the Director of Muslim Affairs at the New York State Attorney General's Office, serving as the top law-enforcement representative and liaison to New York State's Muslim community. A trained attorney with a strong background in international affairs, he has advised global institutions and worked closely with migrant and refugee communities in New York City. His experience includes serving as a legislative advisor to the Office of Tibet and an advisor to the Somali Ministry of Foreign Affairs, alongside teaching and public service work. He holds a J.D. from Albany Law School, a master's from NYU in Global Affairs, and a bachelor's from Stony Brook University, and has represented the U.S. in youth diplomacy programs abroad.



Kwani O'Pharrow

Kwani O'Pharrow has a long record of public service, serving in the U.S. Navy (1990–1994) as a Radioman Petty Officer 3rd Class (RM3)-Intel and retiring from the NYPD as a Detective after 25 years. His career included roles in school safety, community patrol, domestic violence, and gang investigations, with his final assignment in the Intelligence Bureau, helping protect dignitaries including Presidents Obama, Biden, and Clinton. Beyond law enforcement, he leads youth development through Starrett City Boxing, where he is a USA Boxing Coach and Boxing Fitness Trainer. He also co-founded Cops N' Kids Long Island (2019) and launched Operation Giveback, supporting families during the holidays.



Charles D. Fall

Assemblyman Charles D. Fall made history as the first Muslim elected to the New York State Assembly and the first African-American to represent Staten Island. Elected in 2018 and raised in Staten Island by West African immigrant parents, he has focused on results for constituents, including equitable education funding, public safety, expanded mental health services, and addressing housing insecurity. He currently serves as Assistant Majority Leader and holds key roles on multiple legislative committees, earning recognition for bridge-building leadership across communities. A father of two, he is also a strong advocate for youth civic engagement and Muslim American representation, leading with faith and service.



Sara M. Pervez

Sara M. Pervez is a New York-admitted criminal defense and vehicle and traffic law attorney, also admitted in EDNY and SDNY. As the founder of the Law Office of Sara Pervez, she provides state and federal legal defense known for strategic, compassionate, and results-driven representation. Recognized for sharp judgment and professionalism, she handles complex, high-stakes matters with precision and integrity. Beyond the courtroom, she is active in statewide community service and civic education, helping people understand their rights while supporting efforts around food insecurity and civic engagement, including food drives, meal distribution, and voter and census registration.



SQ

SQ is a leading Muslim content creator, filmmaker, and digital storyteller with over 2 million YouTube subscribers, known for combining compelling media with authentic Islamic messaging. He gained international attention through viral street dawah videos across the U.S. and by organizing the widely watched Taraweeh prayer in Times Square. His work also includes humanitarian storytelling from crisis regions such as Palestine and Yemen, amplifying voices often overlooked. Today, he is pioneering IRL dawah livestreams and developing an Islamic animation series aimed at educating and inspiring young Muslims through values-driven storytelling.



Afaf Nasher

Afaf Nasher is the Executive Director of CAIR-NY (Council on American-Islamic Relations, New York Chapter) and a civil rights attorney with a J.D. from St. John's University School of Law and a B.S. in Criminal Justice. After previously serving as Board President, she now leads policy advocacy and direct legal representation for Muslim New Yorkers facing discrimination, including lawsuits involving major private and government entities. Under her leadership, CAIR-NY has expanded Know Your Rights workshops, built a digital resource library, and published Feeling the Hate, a widely cited, data-driven report on bias incidents. She is frequently quoted in major outlets including MSNBC, CNN, The New York Times, Al Jazeera, and The Washington Post.



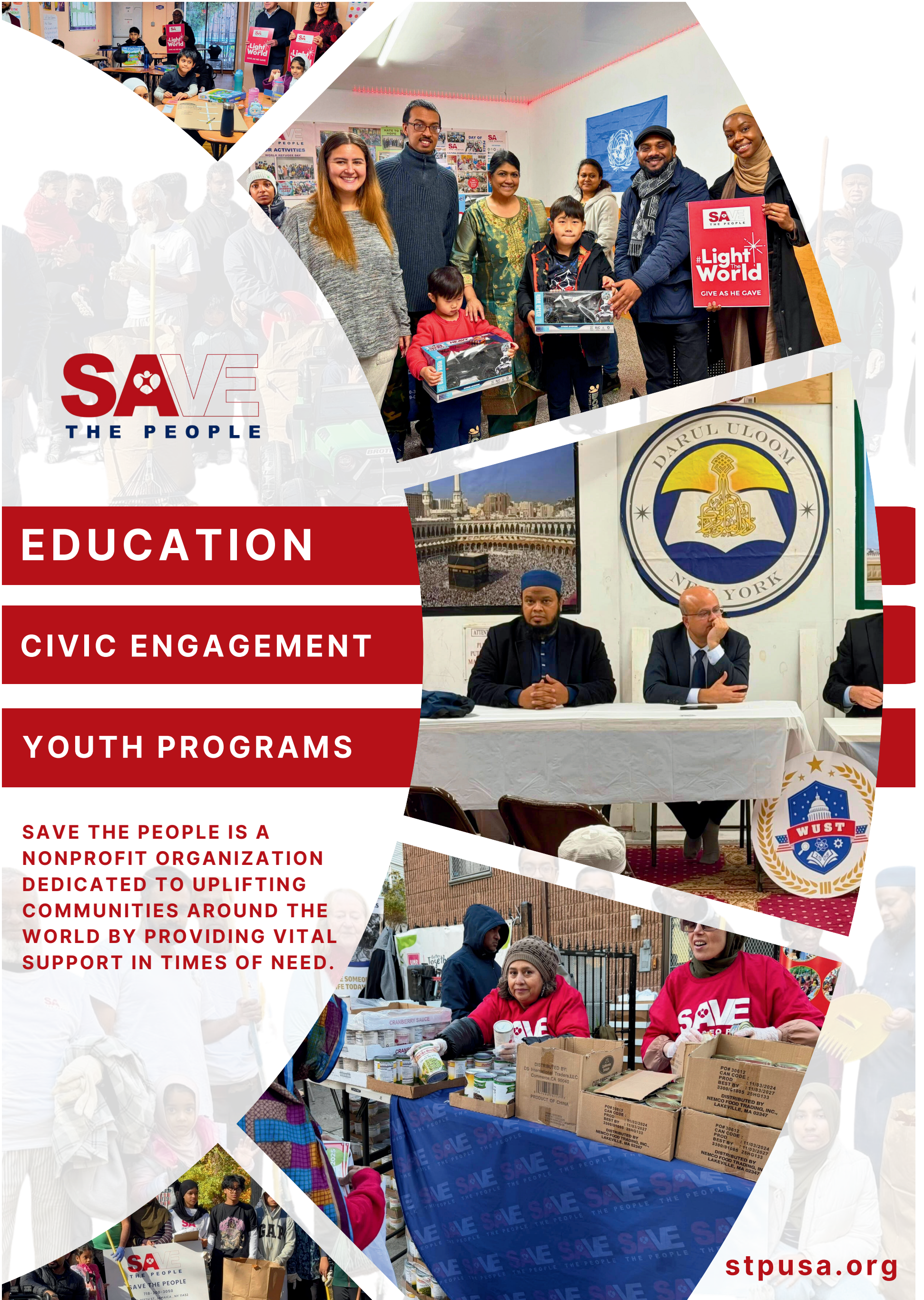
Shahana Hanif

Council Member Shahana Hanif represents NYC's 39th Council District and made history in 2021 as the first Bangladeshi and Muslim woman elected to the New York City Council, and the first woman to represent the district. Re-elected in June 2025, she has delivered millions in funding for schools, parks, sanitation, tenant organizing, youth programs, and cultural and faith-based institutions, including Muslim-led organizations. A former organizer, she champions Participatory Budgeting and has passed landmark laws on universal composting (Local Law 85), abortion access (Local Laws 75 & 76), immigrant worker protections (Local Law 161), and survivor safety upgrades (Local Law 45). She serves as Co-Chair of the Progressive Caucus and co-chairs the Task Force to Combat Hate.



Isma Chaudhry

Isma Chaudhry is a physician and public health leader, trained in Internal Medicine at Brookdale University Hospital, and an associate at the Metropolitan Center for Sleep Medicine. She serves as Executive in Residence for Graduate Public Health Programs at Hofstra University and works as a diversity, inclusion, and cultural humility consultant. A longtime interfaith leader, she made history as the first female President (2015) and later first female Chair of the Board (2018) of the Islamic Center of Long Island, which was named one of the eight most spiritual sites in America during her tenure. Founder of the Waris Foundation, she has led humanitarian and refugee support initiatives, advised global institutions including the United Nations, and received numerous honors, including repeated placement on the Long Island Press Power 50 and induction into its Hall of Fame.



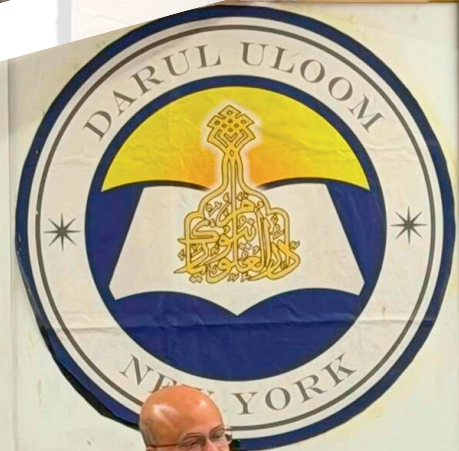
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HONOUR

A Historic First in New York

Governor Hochul Proclaims January Muslim American Heritage Month

Ashley Reed

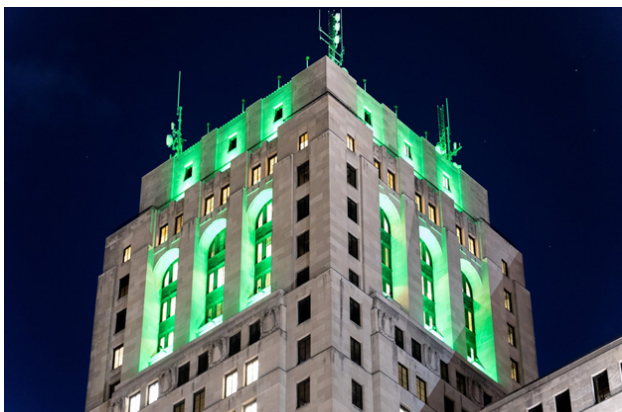
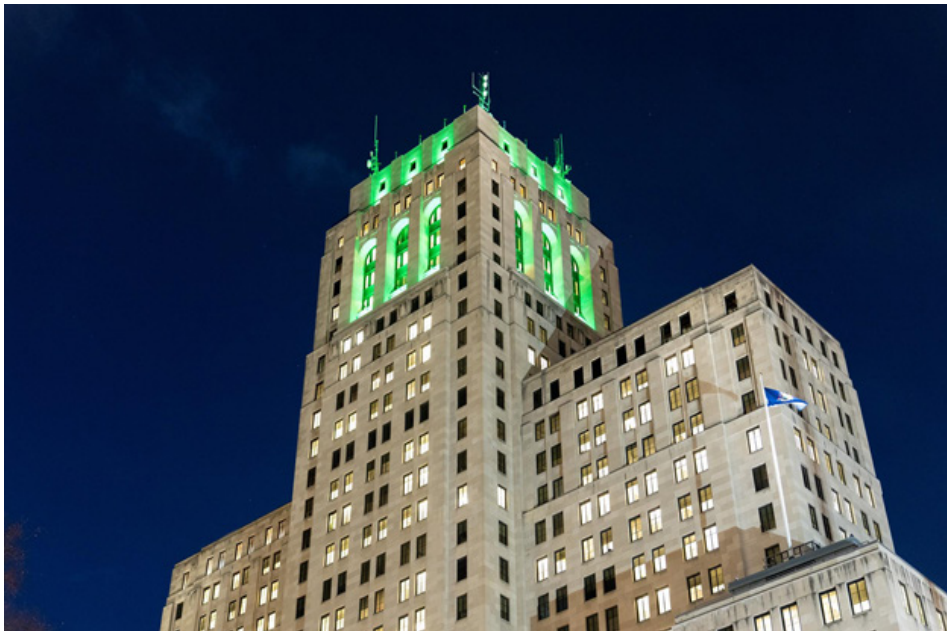
For the first time in state history, Governor Kathy Hochul has proclaimed the month of January as Muslim American Heritage Month in New York State, marking a historic step in recognizing the contributions, faith, and cultural legacy of Muslim Americans. In a powerful gesture of inclusion, 16 iconic landmarks, including One World Trade Center, Niagara Falls, and Grand Central Terminal, were illuminated green to honor the occasion. "Home to the largest Muslim American population in the nation, New York is proud to join in this month-long celebration, recognizing the values, faith and



NYC Governor Kathy Hochul



traditions of our Muslim American communities," Governor Hochul said in a statement. "New York remains committed to being a beacon of hope, tolerance, and inclusivity that celebrates the diversity of its Muslim American population and protects them from Islamophobia, hate, bias, and harm." This statewide celebration is a milestone in affirming the role that over 1 million Muslim New Yorkers play in shaping the state's civic, cultural, and economic life. Community leaders, elected officials, faith figures, and advocacy groups across the state welcomed the proclamation with heartfelt appreciation.



HONOUR

State and local officials, activists, and faith leaders honor a long-awaited milestone.



Zohran Mamdani

New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, the city's first Muslim mayor, welcomed the historic proclamation, saying, "While I was proud to be sworn in as our city's first Muslim mayor yesterday, Muslims have been part of New York for centuries. We have built small businesses, raised our families, pursued every profession, enriched our culture and cuisine, and been a part of what makes our city what it is today. I am grateful for Governor Hochul's leadership in recognizing these many contributions and ensuring that every January, Muslim New Yorkers can see ourselves reflected and recognized in a city and state that is also our home."



Shahana Hanif

New York City Councilmember Shahana Hanif, the first Muslim woman elected in New York State, emphasized how deeply intertwined her identity is with the state she serves, saying, "As the first Muslim woman elected in New York State, I applaud Governor Hochul's designation of January as Muslim American Heritage Month. My Muslim identity is inseparable from being Brooklyn-born and raised. From Brooklyn to Buffalo, Muslim New Yorkers reflect the extraordinary diversity, resilience, and contributions that define our state. This recognition is more than symbolic—it affirms that New York's history and future cannot be told without its Muslim communities, and I am proud to be a Muslim New Yorker."



Dr. Debbie Almontaser

Dr. Debbie Almontaser, Senior Advisor at Emgage Metro NY and a longtime educator, emphasized the importance of visibility for young Muslims, stating, "As a longtime educator and one who believes in diversity, equity and inclusion, I commend and thank Governor Hochul for inaugurating January as Muslim American Heritage Month in the State of New York. This has been a lifetime dream where every Muslim child will feel acknowledged, heard and valued by their government."



Charles D. Fall

Assemblymember Charles D. Fall, the first Muslim elected to the New York State Assembly representing Staten Island and Lower Manhattan, underscored the importance of visibility, stating, "As the first Muslim elected to the New York State Assembly to represent Staten Island and Lower Manhattan, I've always believed leadership is about uplifting every voice in our state. Muslim New Yorkers are vital to our communities as neighbors, parents, business owners, and public servants. Declaring January as Muslim American Heritage Month affirms that Muslim New Yorkers are seen, valued, and respected for the role they play in moving New York forward. Governor Hochul's proclamation reinforces a simple truth: New York works best when its leadership reflects the people it serves."



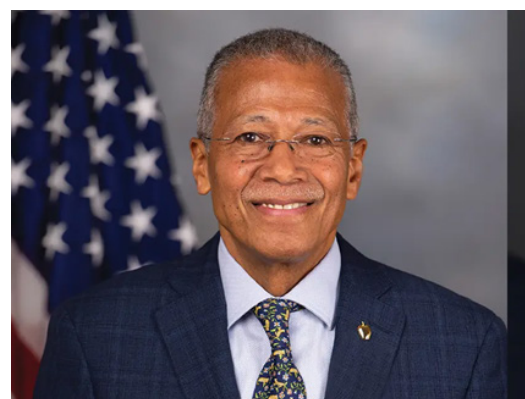
Yusef Salaam

New York City Councilmember Yusef Salaam, a criminal justice reform advocate and member of the Exonerated Five, highlighted the lasting significance of the official designation, saying, "For the first time, New York is proclaiming January as Muslim American Heritage Month and lighting state landmarks green to honor the state's vibrant Muslim community — and I thank the Governor and the many Muslim advocates who fought to make this recognition a reality. This acknowledgment affirms our deep roots and lasting contributions to the fabric of New York."



Dr. Khalid J. Qazi

Dr. Khalid J. Qazi, Inaugural President of the Muslim Public Affairs Council of Western New York, framed the proclamation as a commitment to shared humanity and inclusive values, saying, "The declaration of Muslim American Heritage Month affirms New York's enduring commitment to diversity, dignity, and inclusion. It honors the rich history, faith, and profound contributions of generations of Muslim New Yorkers whose leadership, service, and innovation strengthen our communities, enrich the fabric of our state and celebrates our shared humanity."



Robert Jackson

State Senator Robert Jackson, New York's first Muslim state senator, praised the recognition and reflected on the strength of the state's diversity, saying, "As the first Muslim Senator in New York State, I am deeply proud to join Governor Hochul in celebrating and honoring the invaluable contributions of my Muslim brothers and sisters during Muslim American Heritage Month. New York is home to one of the largest and most ethnically diverse Muslim populations in the world, and we are stronger because of it. This month, as we commemorate Muslim American Heritage, we pause to honor the profound impact that Muslims have made on our economic prosperity, cultural fabric and civic life, and reaffirm our steadfast commitment to dignity, opportunity and respect for all."



Amira H. Muflahi

Lackawanna First Ward Council Member Amira H. Muflahi, representing Muslim communities in western New York, welcomed the designation as a meaningful act of inclusion. "The proclamation of January as Muslim American Heritage Month is a meaningful milestone that honors the rich history, faith, and contributions of Muslim Americans across New York State. The lighting of state landmarks in green is a beautiful and symbolic gesture of recognition and inclusion. We are deeply grateful to Governor Hochul for acknowledging the vital role Muslim communities play in the fabric of our great state. May this moment continue to inspire unity, understanding, and celebration of our shared values."



Imam Mansoor Rafiq Umar

Imam Mansoor Rafiq Umar, of the Muslim Community of Bethlehem, emphasized that the designation affirms Muslims as part of the fabric of the nation. "As a Muslim born in the great state of New York, I carry with me the confidence of 'One nation under God' to the same tune as passionate believers of all faiths across America. Honoring the heritage of our people is truly a significant statement by our Governor that we are a part of the fabric of our nation that undergirds the common threads of goodwill. To all those honoring Muslim-American Heritage Month, we stand together, green lights a-lit on every monument, saluting our past giants, honoring our present stewards, and lifting the future leaders yet to come."

HONOUR

Politicians, imams, educators, and advocates commend the symbolic and civic importance of the move



Carolynn B. Sozen

Carolynn B. Sozen, Executive Interfaith Council Member at the NYS Office of Faith and Nonprofit Developmental Services, celebrated the occasion as a moment of recognition for the contributions of American Muslims. "Today is a momentous occasion for American Muslims across New York State! We are honored to be recognized as valued and integral citizens in our richly diverse communities. The contributions of American Muslims — past, present, and future — continue to strengthen and enrich our great State. Thank you, Governor Hochul, for your determination to cherish and uplift all individuals."



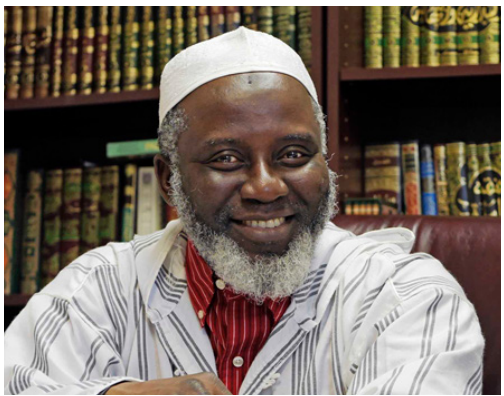
Mehak Jamil

Mehak Jamil, Co-founder of the Albany Muslim Advocacy Coalition (AMAC), highlighted the importance of engagement and representation. "The Albany Muslim Advocacy Coalition (AMAC) welcomes Governor Hochul's proclamation of Muslim American Heritage Month as an opportunity to highlight the contributions of Muslim communities in the Capital Region and across New York. As the first Muslim advocacy organization in the Capital Region, AMAC is committed to fostering understanding and equitable representation, and encourages all public leaders to deepen their engagement by visiting local mosques and hearing directly from their Muslim constituents."



Imam Dr. Tahir Kukaj

Imam Dr. Tahir Kukaj, of the Albanian Islamic Cultural Center, described the landmark lighting as a message of belonging. "We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Governor Kathy Hochul for proclaiming January as Muslim American Heritage Month in New York State. This historic recognition affirms that Muslim New Yorkers are a valued part of the fabric of this great state—serving our neighbors, strengthening our communities, and contributing to the common good. Lighting state landmarks in green is more than a symbol — it is a message of unity, dignity, and shared belonging."



Imam Abdul-Rahman Yaki

Imam Abdul-Rahman Yaki, of the Islamic Center of the Capital District, expressed appreciation for the acknowledgment and called for unity. He stated, "Many thanks to Governor Kathy Hochul for recognizing the contributions of Muslim Americans to our great New York State. As Muslims, we appreciate, we care and vow to protect NYS together. Those of us who arrived yesterday and us today and those coming tomorrow, the attitude of positivity must be our greatest strength."



Imam Shaffieq Chace

Imam Shaffieq Chace, of the Westchester Muslim Center, called for public engagement and remembrance, stating, "This Muslim American Heritage Month, we look forward to opening the doors of our mosques and community centers, to sharing stories of our history, and to engaging in dialogue that builds bridges of understanding. We hope this month will foster a deeper appreciation for the approximately 1 million Muslims who call New York home, who serve as doctors, teachers, first responders, artists, and entrepreneurs. Many also gave their lives like NYPD Detective Didarul Islam. May this initiative inspire greater harmony, dispel misconceptions, and remind us all that our collective heritage is one of our greatest strengths."



Abdul Aziz Bhuiyan

Abdul Aziz Bhuiyan, Chairman of Hillside Islamic Center and representative of the Muslim Community of Nassau County (MCNC), reflected on the long-standing presence of Muslims in the region. "The history of Muslims as integral members of the United States, particularly in New York, spans centuries. This includes the early presence of enslaved individuals brought by ships and later, migrants arriving on merchant marine vessels. As the Muslim population in New York has grown, it is fitting that their contributions and presence are recognized and appreciated. We express our sincere gratitude to Governor Kathy Hochul for dedicating and proclaiming January as Muslim American Heritage Month."



Mohammad Razvi

Mohammad Razvi, CEO of the Council of Peoples Organization (CPO), reflected on the resilience of Muslim communities post-9/11 and the message of pride the proclamation sends. "Governor Hochul's acknowledgment of Muslim American Heritage Month represents an important and affirming moment for Muslim New Yorkers across the state. For a community that has demonstrated resilience in the years following 9/11—while continuing to strengthen New York through immigrant contributions, civic leadership, and service—this recognition affirms our place in the social, cultural, and civic life of our state. CPO will light up green on January 2nd to honor Muslim American Heritage Month and to send a message of pride and belonging to our youth and families."



Husein Yatabarry

Husein Yatabarry, Executive Director of the Muslim Community Network, emphasized the value of public recognition amid rising Islamophobia. "Muslim Community Network welcomes Governor Hochul's proclamation of January as Muslim American Heritage Month and the lighting of state landmarks in green. For Muslim New Yorkers, this is more than symbolism. It is public recognition that our families, workers, students, and small businesses have helped build this state for generations. At a time when Islamophobia and misinformation are rising, visible inclusion like this matters."



Mai Abdullah

Mai Abdullah, Executive Director of Refugees Helping Refugees of Rochester, highlighted the symbolic and emotional value of the month. "This is a historic and deeply meaningful moment for Muslim New Yorkers and for our state. Recognizing Muslim American Heritage Month affirms that our stories, contributions, and presence are an integral part of New York's fabric. Lighting our landmarks in green is a powerful symbol of visibility, belonging, and pride. We celebrate this landmark recognition with gratitude and hope."

HONOUR

Reflections and reactions from Muslim leaders marking a first in New York history



Imam Amir Durić

Imam Amir Durić, Assistant Dean for Religious and Spiritual Life at Syracuse University, pointed to the civic contributions of generations of Muslims. “This historic proclamation affirms that Muslim Americans are an integral part of New York’s past, present, and future. It honors generations who have contributed to the civic, cultural, and moral life of this great state. By celebrating Muslim American heritage, NYS reaffirms its commitment to the rich tapestry of diverse constituents who work hard for our common good.”



Imam Muhammad Shahidullah

Imam Muhammad Shahidullah, Board Chair of Elhaam Academy, called the proclamation a pivotal moment. “This is a historic turning point for New York. By formally recognizing Muslim American Heritage Month for the first time, we honor the generations of faith, service, and civic courage that have built this State — affirming once and for all that Muslim New Yorkers are an essential part of our shared American story.”



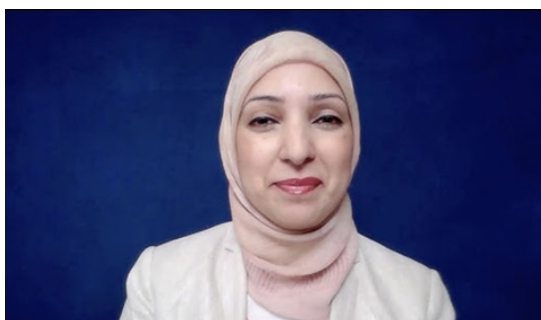
Hisham Tawfiq

Hisham Tawfiq, of the Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood (MIB), offered a broader reflection on the value of heritage months. “Muslim American Heritage Month is a celebration of the history, culture, and contributions of Muslims both in the U.S. and globally. It highlights Muslim achievements in science, arts, and leadership, helps counter stereotypes and Islamophobia, and affirms the unity of deity. The month also promotes understanding and a more inclusive narrative by showcasing the diverse heritages and positive impacts of Muslims around the world.”



Tuqa Nusairat

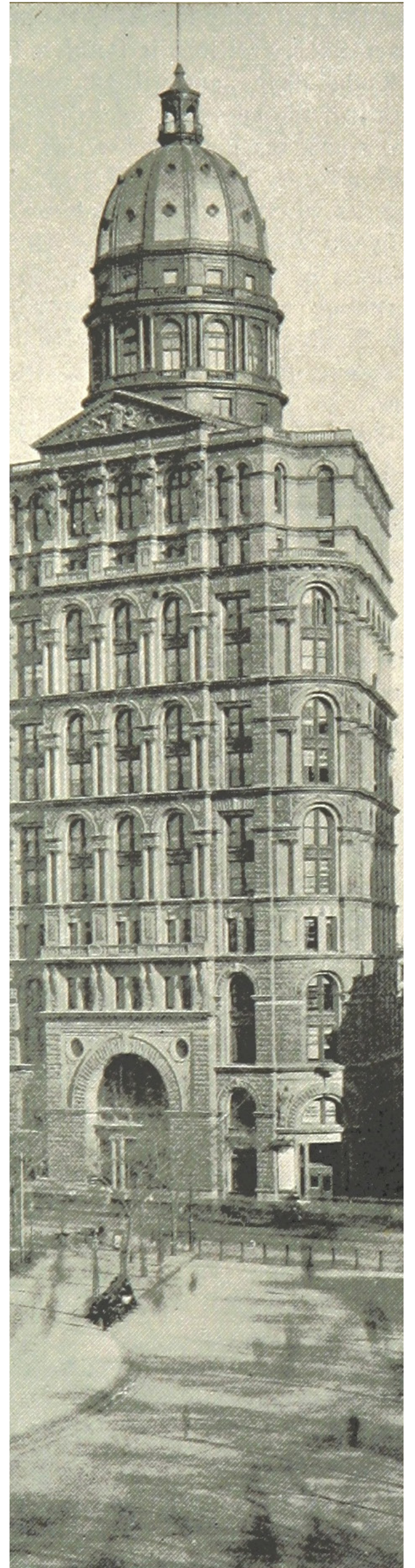
Tuqa Nusairat, Executive Director of the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU), backed the proclamation with community data and significance. “Governor Hochul’s proclamation not only honors the indispensable contributions American Muslims have made to the cultural, economic, and civic life of New York, but also serves as a meaningful step in pushing back against rampant Islamophobia by fostering greater understanding, visibility, and respect. Our research shows this dynamic and diverse community makes up 12.5% of all pharmacists, 40% of taxi drivers, and over 57% of street food vendors. In 2016, Muslims owned 95,816 small businesses in NYC, employing over 250,000 workers. This is only a snapshot of the profound contributions Muslims make to New York City — Muslims are not a marginal presence, but a vital part of what keeps New York running.”



Dr. Uzma Syed

Dr. Uzma Syed, Founder and President of the Eid Holiday Coalition, celebrated the proclamation as an inclusive milestone. “The recognition of Muslim American Heritage Month in New York State is a momentous and meaningful occasion. As the most diverse state in the nation and home to the largest Muslim population in the country, New York is strengthened by the contributions of Muslim New Yorkers who help shape a brighter future for all who call the Empire State home. Together, we can continue working toward a tomorrow where every New Yorker feels seen, valued, and a true sense of belonging.”

This landmark moment has not only brought visibility to the nearly 1 million Muslims residing in New York, but also positioned New York as a national leader in recognizing and institutionalizing Muslim American contributions. As mosques, civic groups, and individuals continue to mark Muslim American Heritage Month, the green glow across the state’s skyline stands as a vivid, enduring reminder that every New Yorker belongs.



WOMEN

From Bedroom to Boardroom

Becci Hollis' nail side hustle grows into a six-figure international brand



Emily Parker

What started as a way to save money on manicures has grown into a booming business empire for Becci Hollis, who now runs a six-figure training academy and a successful beauty brand from Shrewsbury, UK. The 29-year-old entrepreneur is the founder of Blossom

Academy, where she trains future nail technicians, and Muse, a nail product brand that has already opened a fulfilment centre in the United States and ships globally — including as far as Australia. At 17, Hollis began doing her own nails at home. She never imagined this small act would lay the foundation

for a business that would one day deliver over 1,000 orders a month. "We've gone from, this time last year, sending maybe 50 orders a month, to over a thousand a month now," she said. "It has boomed, and we're kind of a household name in the industry, which is just a dream come true." The real transformation

came during the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. Unable to work due to lockdowns, Hollis focused her energy on building her teaching credentials. "I couldn't do nails, so I started my teaching qualification, did lesson plans and manuals, and as soon as we were allowed to work again, I started offering courses," she explained. Those early lessons took place one-on-one in her mother's bedroom, before she expanded to a village hall to accommodate growing demand. After a year working in Australia, Hollis returned home to establish Blossom Academy, which now runs two to three courses a week and employs a team of 10 women offering treatments onsite. Her product brand, Muse, complements her training curriculum

by supplying tools such as e-files, gel polishes, and nail art accessories. "Blossom is a six-figure business on its own," she said. "Muse has done amazing in its first year, definitely over six figures." But the journey hasn't always been easy, especially navigating a male-dominated business world. "When I was a full-time nail technician I would go to things like business networking and be in rooms with a lot of male business owners, and if you say 'I do nails', they literally just dismiss you," Hollis recalled. "I think now, people take me more seriously because they can see what it's grown into." She believes women-led beauty businesses deserve more recognition. "They're creating their own income, they're still able to do the school run,

they're providing for their families — that is just amazing." Looking ahead, Hollis plans to expand into new global markets, including Europe, Australia, and the US. For Blossom, she's eyeing new courses and more trainers to keep up with demand. Her advice to aspiring entrepreneurs is grounded in resilience. "Business is not linear," she said. "It's actually how you show up in the dips that is most important. Even if it feels like you are talking to an empty room, you have to keep on shouting about what you're doing." From a teenager doing nails at home to a global brand owner, Hollis' story is a testament to what passion, persistence, and polish can achieve.



Walking for Change

Northamptonshire Police launch initiative to improve women's safety

Fran Chilwell

In an effort to address public safety concerns and rebuild trust with the community, Northamptonshire Police have launched a new series of "Walk and Talk" events aimed at giving women a voice when it comes to safety in their neighborhoods. Women over the age of 18 who live or work in the eastern part of the county—including Rushden, Oundle, Thrapston, Raunds, Higham Ferrers, and Irthlingborough—are invited to join police officers on 30-minute walks to share their experiences, worries, and ideas.

The initiative, which police describe as the "brainchild" of neighborhood officer Sgt Leigh Françoise, focuses on listening to women in the very locations where they feel most vulnerable. "Women who take



part in our Walk & Talk events will be able to share their views and experiences with officers as they walk through any areas they may feel vulnerable in," Sgt Françoise explained. "Patrols can take place at any location, including those where there is

less footfall, traffic, and light, so officers can get a real sense of what people's thoughts are." The walks are scheduled for January 9 and 30, February 10 and 28, March 12 and 27, and April 7 and 24, and are open to any woman who registers

via email with the local neighborhood policing team. These one-on-one or small-group walks are meant to foster open dialogue and help police gain direct insight into the everyday concerns women face. Tackling violence against women and girls

is a key priority for the force, according to Sgt Françoise. "That means really listening to their worries and concerns, and then doing whatever we can to address them," she said. The scheme follows a wider national movement to improve

women's safety in public spaces, particularly in the wake of the tragic 2021 kidnap and murder of Sarah Everard by a serving Metropolitan Police officer. The resulting outrage sparked a reckoning over how law enforcement engages with women's safety concerns, prompting similar programs in other parts of the UK. By bringing police officers and local women together in the very places that provoke fear or anxiety, the Walk and Talk events are designed to shift the culture, increase visibility of law enforcement in vulnerable areas, and inform future safety strategies on the ground. While simple in concept, the initiative could mark a meaningful step toward restoring trust and building safer, more inclusive communities.

REMEMBRANCE

Legacy of Leadership

Khaleda Zia remembered as Bangladesh's first female PM and symbol of democracy

Jessica Morgan

In an unprecedented outpouring of national grief, hundreds of thousands of people gathered in the streets of Dhaka on Wednesday to attend the state funeral of Khaleda Zia, Bangladesh's first female prime minister, who passed away on Tuesday at the age of 80 following a prolonged illness. Draped in the national flag, her coffin was carried through Manik Mia Avenue to the grounds outside the national parliament, where waves of mourners—some of whom had traveled overnight from distant villages—waited in silence, prayer, and tears. "She was our mother," said a crying mourner as she watched the motorcade pass. Flags flew at half-mast, 10,000 security personnel were deployed, and Wednesday was declared a public holiday to allow citizens to pay their final respects. The emotion was palpable across the capital and beyond as crowds filled city streets, many raising their hands in prayer or holding flags bearing Zia's image. Khaleda Zia, who served as prime minister in 1991 and 2001, was not



only a political leader but a symbol of resistance and democratic aspiration. She entered politics after the assassination of her husband, President Ziaur Rahman, in 1981, and went on to lead the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) through decades of turbulent political history. Her decision to boycott military-controlled elections in the 1980s earned her the moniker of an "uncompromising leader." "She showed us the way to democracy," one mourner told reporters, echoing the sentiments

of many who saw her as a foundational figure in Bangladesh's modern political landscape. Even critics came to pay tribute. "I never voted for her, but her contributions will always be remembered," said Minhaz Uddin, a retired official, standing beside his grandson. Zia's final journey was attended by regional leaders and foreign dignitaries. India's Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar, Pakistan's Speaker Ayaz Sadiq, and Bhutan's Foreign Minister DN Dhungyel were among the attendees. Local

media reported that representatives from 32 countries were present. The current acting chairman of the BNP, Zia's son Tarique Rahman, returned to the country last week from 17 years of exile in London to be by his mother's side. "The country mourns the loss of a guiding presence that shaped its democratic aspirations," Rahman said. "Her resilience was unbreakable." Despite poor health and years of imprisonment, Zia had planned to run in the upcoming February 2026 elections,

the first since last year's mass uprising that unseated long-time rival Sheikh Hasina. According to the party's candidate list, she was set to contest in three constituencies. Many now see Rahman as her political heir, poised to carry forward her legacy. Zia's life was marked by imprisonment, political battles, and unwavering resolve. During the rule of the military-backed caretaker government in 2007, she was detained. Under Hasina's Awami League, she faced criminal charges, was jailed in 2018,

and denied medical care abroad. Yet her popularity never waned. Even during her final days, she remained a unifying figure for a fractured nation. One woman, Sharmina Siraj, remembered how Zia's education stipends had transformed her daughters' futures. "She was an inspiration," Siraj said. "It's difficult to imagine women in leadership again anytime soon." Zia was buried beside her husband in the martyrs' section of a park near the parliament. Floral wreaths, military salutes, and tearful farewells marked the end of a chapter that helped shape Bangladesh's post-independence democracy. As the nation observed three days of mourning, Khaleda Zia's legacy left an unfillable void in the political fabric of Bangladesh. More than just a politician, she was a presence that demanded attention, asked hard questions, and—most importantly—believed deeply in the power of elected leadership. Her passing closes a tumultuous yet vital chapter in South Asia's political history.





New Mayor, Big Expectations

New Yorkers weigh in on Zohran Mamdani



Photo: Zohran Mamdani will be burdened with great expectations
Image Source: CBS New York

Amkel Nourush

With Zohran Mamdani now officially serving as mayor of New York City, residents across the five boroughs are voicing a mix of optimism and concern about what comes next. In conversations

held ahead of his inauguration, New Yorkers outlined clear expectations for the city's new leader, from improving public safety to easing the rising cost of living. On the Upper East Side, residents said they want a mayor

who governs without ideological blinders. "Balance dreams with reality," one neighbor cautioned, pointing to crime and business retention as pressing issues. In the South Bronx, others praised Mamdani's advocacy for immigrants and urged

him to address fears sparked by recent ICE raids, while also calling for stronger mental health support for the homeless.

In Astoria, Queens, where Mamdani previously served as a state assemblyman, residents expressed hope he will tackle food prices, infrastructure, and child care. Similar affordability concerns echoed in Brooklyn, where renters called for stability and safer streets. Skepticism was sharpest on Staten Island, where business owners questioned whether Mamdani's ambitious proposals can be funded without driving investors away. As his administration begins, Mamdani faces a city eager for change—and quick to demand results.



Photo: A national day of mourning has been announced in Switzerland for 9 January
Image Source: Getty Images / BBC

Grief in Crans-Montana

More victims identified after deadly bar fire

Julian Alvez

A somber Mass was held Sunday in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, as authorities identified 16 additional victims of the catastrophic New Year's Eve fire that tore through the crowded Le Constellation bar, killing 40 people and injuring 119 others. Swiss officials said 24 victims have now been formally identified, most of them teenagers and young adults. The dead include 18 Swiss citizens aged 14 to 31, along with victims from Italy, Romania, Turkey, France, and the United Arab Emirates. Identification has been slow due to the severity of burns, requiring DNA analysis, authorities said. Among those confirmed dead was 16-year-old Arthur Brodard, whose mother, Laetitia Brodard, announced the news on

Facebook after days of anguished searching. "We can start our mourning, knowing that he is in peace and in the light," she wrote. Families and residents gathered at Chapelle Saint-Christophe, followed by a silent march to the fire site, as grief rippled through the Alpine resort. Investigators believe sparkling candles atop Champagne bottles ignited flammable ceiling materials. Prosecutors in the Valais region, led by Beatrice Pilloud, have opened a criminal investigation into the bar's operators on suspicion of involuntary homicide and safety violations. Swiss President Guy Parmelin announced a national day of mourning on Jan. 9, as several victims continue receiving treatment across Europe.

Tech Beyond Today

Predictions for a radically changed world

Charles Lewis

Experts say the world of 2050 could look radically different as fast-moving advances in AI, nanotechnology, and cybernetics push science closer to ideas once reserved for fiction. Professor Steven Bramwell of the London Centre for Nanotechnology expects the boundaries between biology and electronics to blur, with implants used to monitor health and improve communication. Cybernetics pioneer Professor Kevin Warwick predicts brain-linked tech could expand, including "deep brain electronic stimulation" as a partial treatment for some conditions. In education, futurist Tracey Follows foresees AI teachers that adjust lessons in real time, replacing standard textbooks with immersive simulations. Roger Highfield of the Science Museum Group points to "digital twins" that could help people test how medicines or lifestyle changes might affect their bodies. Transportation may shift, too: autonomous vehicles could reduce congestion and crash deaths. And in space, experts anticipate a liveable Moon base and more industry moving off Earth, including drug development in microgravity.



Photos: While the S&P 500 surged in 2025, it trailed behind most international markets.
Image Source: Charly Triballeau / AFP / Getty Images

World Stocks Take the Lead

Why overseas markets beat US equities in 2025

Nassr Al Shams

US stocks delivered solid gains in 2025, but international markets emerged as the year's clear winners, fueled by artificial intelligence growth, government spending, and a weaker dollar. The MSCI All Country World ex-USA index surged 29.2%, far outpacing the S&P 500, which rose 16.39%. A booming global AI trade lifted markets across Asia, where chipmakers and technology firms benefited from surging demand. South Korea's Kospi soared nearly 76%, its best performance since 1999, while Japan's Nikkei 225 climbed 26%. In Europe, markets rallied as governments boosted defense spending and

HIGHLIGHT

●International stocks outperformed US markets in 2025

●MSCI All Country World ex-USA rose 29.2%, beating the S&P 500's 16.39%

●AI growth, European defense spending, and a weaker US dollar drove gains

●Asian and European indexes posted some of their strongest years in decades

economic prospects improved, pushing

indexes in Spain, Italy, Germany, and Greece to multiyear highs. A declining US dollar, which fell about 9.4% in 2025, further enhanced overseas returns by increasing the value of foreign assets for American investors. Analysts said high US stock valuations also encouraged investors to seek opportunities abroad. "A lot of things went right for international stocks in 2025," said Michael Reynolds of Glenmede, citing stronger earnings growth and fiscal stimulus overseas. While Wall Street remains optimistic about US equities, last year underscored the benefits of diversification beyond American markets.

Pyongyang's New Test

Ballistic launches raise regional alarm

Adrian Smith

North Korea fired multiple ballistic missiles toward its eastern waters on Sunday, a provocative move that came just hours before South Korean President Lee Jae Myung departed for a high-stakes diplomatic trip to China. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the launches were detected around 7:50 a.m. from the Pyongyang area, with the missiles traveling roughly 560 miles. The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said the launches posed no immediate threat to U.S. forces or allies but confirmed close coordination with regional partners. Seoul's Defense Ministry said the tests violated U.N. Security Council resolutions banning North Korea from

conducting ballistic missile activity and urged Pyongyang to halt provocations and return to dialogue. Japan's Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi described the launches as a serious threat to regional and global security. The incident prompted South Korea to convene an emergency National Security Council meeting to assess next steps. The missile tests came as President Lee began a four-day visit to China, where he planned to ask President Xi Jinping to play a constructive role in easing tensions on the Korean Peninsula. Analysts said the timing underscored Kim Jong Un's intent to assert leverage ahead of a long-anticipated ruling party congress and amid stalled nuclear negotiations.