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NEW YORK NEWS

The Voice of People

From New York



Photo: "The ball is in America's court", Iranian minister says

Image Source: BBC/Online

Tehran Says Deal Possible

Deputy foreign minister calls on US to show sincerity

Alexandar Sullivan

Iran has signaled a willingness to consider compromises in its nuclear negotiations with the United States, provided Washington addresses sanctions relief, according to Majid Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister, in an interview with the BBC in Tehran. "The ball is in America's court to prove that they want to do a deal," Takht-Ravanchi said, adding that Iran would move toward an

HIGHLIGHT

●Iran says it is ready to consider compromises

●Second round of talks set for Tuesday in Geneva

●Tehran links progress to lifting US sanctions

agreement if the US demonstrated sincerity. His remarks come ahead of a second round of indirect talks scheduled for Tuesday in Geneva, following

earlier discussions in Oman that both sides described as cautiously positive. Takht-Ravanchi pointed to Tehran's offer to dilute its 60% enriched uranium—a level close to weapons-grade—as evidence of flexibility. However, he rejected demands for zero enrichment, calling the issue "not on the table anymore." He also reiterated that Iran's ballistic missile program would not be part of negotiations. Meanwhile, US

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said reaching a deal remains difficult, and President Donald Trump has threatened military action if diplomacy fails. Iran warned that further escalation could destabilize the region, where US forces have increased their presence. Despite lingering mistrust, particularly after past negotiations collapsed, Iranian officials say they will enter the Geneva talks with cautious hope.

'Trump Is Temporary,' Newsom Says

American leaders seek to calm European concerns at summit

Lily Anderson

At the Munich Security Summit, top American Democrats sought to calm European anxieties about the future of transatlantic relations under President Donald Trump, insisting that US alliances remain durable despite political turbulence in Washington. While US Secretary of State Marco Rubio delivered remarks viewed as broadly reassuring, other American leaders offered a more pointed message. "Donald Trump is temporary.



Photo: Gavin Newsom, Democratic governor of California, told attendees that "Donald Trump is temporary"

Image Source: EPA/BBA He'll be gone in three years," California Governor Gavin Newsom said during a Friday conference event, drawing attention as speculation builds around potential 2028 presidential contenders. Democratic Senator

Jeanne Shaheen emphasized that lawmakers attended the summit to reassure allies of the US commitment to Europe. Republican Senator Thom Tillis echoed that sentiment, cautioning Europeans not to

overreact to "the rhetoric of American politics." Still, concerns linger. Trump's tariffs, comments about Greenland, and a broader push to reshape US foreign policy have unsettled European leaders. Democrats including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Mark Warner also raised domestic issues, warning about democratic norms at home. Arizona Senator Ruben Gallego summed up the effort: "Sometimes you have to remind them that this is not all Trump ... We're still here."

European Nations Blame Moscow for Navalny's Death

New findings cite rare toxin linked to South American frogs

John Paul

Five European nations said Saturday that Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny, who died in prison in 2024, was killed by a lethal toxin found in South American poison dart frogs. In a joint statement issued during the Munich Security Conference, the UK, Sweden, France, Germany and the Netherlands said tests "conclusively confirmed" the presence of epibatidine in samples from Navalny's body.

The countries argued that only the Russian state had the "means, motive and opportunity" to administer the poison while he was held in an Arctic penal colony. Navalny's widow, Yulia Navalnaya, said the findings prove that "Putin killed Alexey with chemical weapon." Russia denied the accusation, with officials calling the claim "propaganda" and a "political pageant." The five nations said they have referred the matter to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

AAPI Leaders Rally for Funding

NYN Desk

More than 100 advocates from the AAPI Equity Budget Coalition rallied at the New York State Capitol's Million Dollar Staircase in Albany on Feb. 10, urging lawmakers to allocate \$54.35 million in the FY27 state budget for Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. The proposed funding would support over 150 nonprofits providing culturally responsive health care, mental health services, food access, domestic violence assistance and anti-hate programs across New York. Queens lawmakers, including State Sen. John Liu and



Photo: Queens officials join AAPI advocates at Albany's Million Dollar Staircase, Feb. 10. Image Source: Office of State Sen. John Liu / QNS.com

Assemblymember Grace Lee, joined the call for Gov. Kathy Hochul and legislative leaders to fully include the request. Catherine Chen of the Asian American Federation said federal funding cuts have left families uncertain about SNAP and health coverage. "The AAPI Equity Budget is how we make an affordability agenda truly equitable," she said. Lawmakers emphasized that sustained investment is essential as AAPI communities continue to grow and face mounting challenges.

Navy Yard Lease Dispute



Photo: Brooklyn Navy Yard at the front entrance, January 23, 2019. Image Source: SHUTTERSTOCK

Staff Reporter

The city-owned Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corp. (BNY) has declined to renew the lease of NYC drone

manufacturer Easy Aerial, a decision revealed last week by NYC Council Member Lincoln Restler. Restler said the public asset "should not be leasing space

to companies producing drones that are being transformed into weapons of war," referencing the company's reported supply of drones to Israel. He noted the decision was made in January 2026 and formalized at a recent board meeting. BNY spokesperson Claire Holmes said the move was based on "business reasons related to operational and campus compliance matters." The decision drew sharp criticism from U.S. Rep. Elise Stefanik, who called it "deeply disturbing," and State Assemblyman Kalman Yeger, who labeled it "foolish." Easy Aerial co-founder Ido Gur described the outcome as "upsetting."

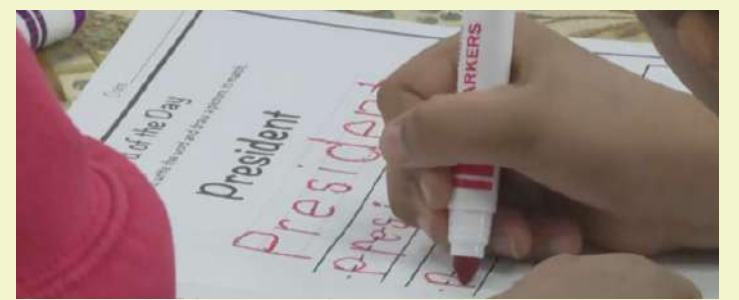


Photo: Bronx book haven Storyland inspires young readers Image Source: PIX11/Online

Bronx book lounge hosts inspiring event

Community Desk

Dozens of students from PS 16 in Wakefield spent a lively weekend morning at Storyland Book Lounge inside the Bronx Terminal Market, where books and imagination took center stage. Founded a year ago by Sulma Arzu-Brown, Storyland aims to inspire a love of reading. "We are not a bookstore, not a library, but every time a child comes, they walk out with a book," she said, underscoring the group's

literacy mission. Author and Brooklyn teacher Malcolm Dill read from his book Marvin's First Pet, explaining he writes stories that reflect his students' experiences. The audience was also inspired by 12-year-old Kayden Hern of Harlem, who shared from his book Who Am I? Parents praised the immersive event, where children sang, moved, and engaged with stories—living out Storyland's motto: "one dope book at a time."



Photo: NYPD cops investigate the fatal shooting inside a 7-Eleven at W. 39th St. and Eighth Ave. in Manhattan on Thursday. Image Source: Barry Williams/ New York Daily News

Fatal Shooting at Hell's Kitchen 7-Eleven

Senior Reporter

A panhandler was fatally shot inside a 7-Eleven at Eighth Ave. and W. 39th St. in Hell's Kitchen at about 10:30 a.m. Thursday, police said, after a dispute reportedly erupted over territory. Officers responding to the scene found the man, believed to be in his 40s, with a gunshot wound to

the neck. He was pronounced dead at the scene. Authorities are working to confirm his identity. Witnesses said the confrontation began as shoppers browsed inside the store. "I heard an argument... and then a bang," one customer said, describing how patrons quickly fled. Neighbors noted that fights among local homeless men

over who opens the store's door for tips are common. A friend identified the victim by the nickname "Beezy," calling him "calm, cool, and collected." Police said the masked gunman, wearing a green puffer coat and carrying a black backpack, fled south on Eighth Avenue and remains at large.

SIUH Data Breach Lawsuit Settled

News Correspondent

Northwell Staten Island University Hospital has agreed to settle a class action lawsuit stemming from a 2024 data breach that exposed the personal information of 35,106 patients. The breach was discovered in May 2024 by vendor The Medibase Group Inc., after an unauthorized party accessed its systems in January 2024. Compromised data included names, Social

Security numbers, dates of birth, medical details, and insurance information. Hospital spokesperson Jillian O'Hara said the hospital's own systems were not affected and that it did not admit wrongdoing in reaching the settlement. Impacted individuals were notified by mail on July 5, 2024. Eligible patients must opt out by March 2 or file claims by March 16, with a final fairness hearing scheduled for March 31.

Prayer Time IN New York

FAJR	DHUHR	ASR	MAGHRIB	ISHA
05:33	12:10	03:06	05:32	06:48
05:31	12:10	03:07	05:33	06:49
05:30	12:10	03:08	05:34	06:50
05:29	12:10	03:09	05:36	06:51
05:27	12:10	03:09	05:37	06:52
05:26	12:09	03:10	05:38	06:53
05:25	12:09	03:11	05:39	06:55

OPINION

An Open Letter to Tarique Rahman

— By Akbar Haider Kiron

Dear Tarique Rahman Bhai, I begin with this hope: that you will not be conventional. After a long exile, you have returned home as a mature and seasoned politician. Your choice of words in every speech is measured and thoughtful. In the political arena, I have never heard an indecent word from you against anyone. Bangladesh has progressed and developed in many areas, but I often miss a sense of patriotism and mutual respect among us. You, however, seem to be an exception. You appear as a beacon of light. You returned to your homeland on a special day, touched the soil of your country, and renewed your vow to serve it. After such a long time away, you delivered a remarkable speech. Many of us listened in amazement—such a speech is truly expected from a mature statesman. I have never met you personally. Nearly three and a half decades ago in Dhaka, I worked as a stringer for the BBC, the diplomatic correspondent for the weekly Bichitra, and the Bangladesh correspondent for the weekly The New York Address (based in New York). After the fall of Ershad, I went to your mother's house in Gulshan to take a special interview. I rode there on photographer Nur Uddin Bhai's motorcycle. Your mother's regal personality and extraordinary warmth still shine brightly in my memory. I also recall the election and those historic moments even after all these

years. At that time, my highly respected and close relative Abbas Bhai (Mirza Abbas) was doing an excellent job as Mayor. I remember Tofayel Ahmed Bhai once saying, "Mirza Abbas is doing very well as Mayor." I used to see him at Abdul Awal Mintu Bhai's office. I never got to meet you—you were a young, energetic lad back then. I knew you were busy with matters concerning the "Hawa Bhaban" (the opposition party office). After that, I spent many years abroad. When I went to Bush House in London to conclude my work with the BBC, the legendary Sirajur Rahman was still alive. As time passed, from my distant exile, I witnessed so much injustice, humiliation, and persecution inflicted upon you. I met your illustrious mother and former Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, right here in New York. I was again amazed to see her extraordinary personality up close. I couldn't believe this extraordinary and gentle person was subjected to such inhuman treatment. Last year, on the historic 25th of December, you returned home to see your mother one last time. The unprecedented outpouring of



— Akbar Haider Kiron
Senior Journalist, New York

final respect for her in Bangladesh and around the world was historic. You are truly fortunate. The day your father was martyred, I was at the Radio Bangladesh studio in Shahbag. I went out onto the streets and witnessed a sea of silent mourning. The historic funeral procession for him on Manik Mia Avenue still shines vividly in my memory. Tarique Rahman, you are the head of a wonderful, small family. You are the father of a highly dignified wife and an adorable daughter. We feel that because of you, Bangladesh was saved from fundamentalists. All of us, both at home and abroad, were deeply anxious and worried about the election. I stayed up all night watching live coverage on various TV channels and was amazed by the courage and progress shown by the media. After many years, I witnessed such an election, filled with people's enthusiasm and energy! After the election results, watching the news, it felt like our Sonar Bangla, our beloved country, was saved from the grip of fundamentalists this time. I went to Jackson Heights in New York, the

pilgrims' destination for expatriates, and had my first sweets at the office of veteran journalist Kazi Montu Bhai. Then, at the office of Sakil Mia, President of the Area Residents Society, we all celebrated by eating sweets from Aladdin's and condemned the fundamentalists. Tarique Rahman, you are a few years younger than me, so I am not addressing you as "Mr." or "Sir," but as a brother. In just a couple of days, you will become the Prime Minister of our country, taking on a crucial responsibility. We have different expectations of you. Please think very carefully, take your time, and double-check every step you take. We do not want to see the "same old, same old" scenes in our journalism world. We don't want to see the same old images on our TV screens. We want you to be different. Your call for Friday prayers instead of processions and slogans after the election was a wonderful idea. Tarique Rahman, the whole world is watching you and Bangladesh. Do something new, be exceptional, set an example. I am a very ordinary journalist and writer. I worked for Voice of America for many years, but the Trump administration closed it down. Nowadays, I am involved with "Coffee with Kiron," living a simple life. I hope to meet you in New York, the capital of the world.
Sincerely,
Akbar Haider Kiron

“

“I begin with this hope: that you will not be conventional.”



“

“Tarique Rahman, the whole world is watching you and Bangladesh. Do something new, be exceptional, set an example.”

Allah Defends His Religion: Lessons from Epstein's Files

— Imam Shamsi Ali

The recent release of Epstein's Files has sent shockwaves around the world, exposing the dark secrets of powerful individuals involved in child sex trafficking. As a Muslim leader, I see this as a clear example of Allah's defense of His religion and truth. The documents reveal the involvement of prominent figures, including politicians, celebrities, and business leaders, in Epstein's crimes. It's a stark reminder that those who

seek to undermine Islam and its followers will ultimately be exposed. The Quran reminds us that Allah will always defend the truth, despite the efforts of those who seek to extinguish it (Surah As-Shoff, 8). The exposure of Epstein's crimes is a testament to this promise. The Hypocrisy of the West The West's outrage



— Imam Shamsi Ali :
Director, Jamaica Muslim Center & President, Nusantara Foundation

over Epstein's crimes is hypocritical, given their history of exploiting and demeaning women and children. Islam, on the other hand, teaches us to respect and protect the vulnerable. The West's attempts to portray Islam as oppressive and misogynistic are now being turned on its head. The Epstein Files show that

it's the West that's guilty of exploiting and degrading women. Islam: The Solution, Not the Problem Islam is not the enemy; it's the solution to the moral decay plaguing the world. Our faith teaches us to respect women, protect children, and uphold justice. To the West, I say: Islam is not a threat; it's a savior. It's time to wake up and recognize the truth.
— Imam Shamsi Ali : Director, Jamaica Muslim Center & President, Nusantara Foundation

PHILANTHROPY

Hope Before Ramadan: Save the People USA Distributes Food in Jamaica

Over 300 families benefit from community-driven initiative

James Anderson

A spirit of generosity and preparation filled the streets of Jamaica, Queens, as Save the People USA (STPUSA) successfully organized a large-scale Pre-Ramadan Food Distribution, serving more than 300 families just days before the start of the blessed month. Held at 87-41, 165 Street, Jamaica, New York, on February 12, 2026, the initiative provided essential groceries and fresh food items to families preparing for Ramadan. The distribution included halal chicken, dates, cooking oil, eggs, dried lentils, flour, rice, apples, potatoes, and onions—staples that will help households observe the month with dignity and nourishment. The food distribution was made possible through the generous support of Met Council,



Despite the winter chill, the atmosphere remained warm with gratitude and unity. Families expressed appreciation for the timely assistance, particularly as Ramadan approaches—a time centered on reflection, compassion, and charity. For many recipients, the distribution eased financial burdens while reinforcing a sense of belonging and communal care. As Ramadan draws near, the success of this initiative reflects the enduring power of partnership and grassroots service. Through collaboration, dedication, and faith-driven action, Save the People USA once again demonstrated how community organizations can make a meaningful difference—one family at a time.

which supplied the food items. Representatives from the organization, including Hannah Lupien, Carla Kay, and Ben Zaiantz, were present at the event, demonstrating strong partnership and collaboration. The gathering was also attended by David Weprin, whose presence underscored the broader

community support for the initiative. Support from the Jamaica Bangladesh Society further strengthened the effort, alongside volunteers who traveled from other boroughs to serve families in need. In a separate highlight of the event, Imam Muhammad Shahidullah, CEO of

SAVE THE PEOPLE
MET COUNCIL
 Feeding the hungry. Serving the poor. Changing lives.
 Save the People USA, and Fatima Niass, Office Manager of STPUSA, were actively present, overseeing operations and personally

participating in the food distribution. Their leadership ensured the smooth coordination of volunteers and beneficiaries throughout the day. Volunteers were formally recognized for their dedication and service, receiving certificates in appreciation of their commitment to community welfare.



PHILANTHROPY

Save the People USA leads large-scale food distribution in Jamaica, NY



PHILANTHROPY

Local leaders and volunteers unite to provide essential groceries



Global Dawah Television



Call of Peace Save Humanity

2026 Ramadan

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DAY	RAMADAN	DATE	STOP EATING	FAJR	SUNRISE	ZUHR	ASR	IFTAAR	ISHA
Rahmat : "Mercy of Allah"									
Thu	1	Feb 18	5:26	5:29	6:45	12:10	3:08	5:35	6:51
Fri	2	Feb 19	5:25	5:28	6:44	12:10	3:09	5:36	6:52
Sat	3	Feb 20	5:24	5:27	6:42	12:10	3:10	5:37	6:53
Sun	4	Feb 21	5:22	5:25	6:41	12:10	3:11	5:38	6:54
Mon	5	Feb 22	5:21	5:24	6:40	12:10	3:12	5:39	6:55
Tue	6	Feb 23	5:20	5:23	6:38	12:10	3:13	5:41	6:56
Wed	7	Feb 24	5:19	5:21	6:37	12:09	3:13	5:42	6:57
Thu	8	Feb 25	5:17	5:20	6:35	12:09	3:14	5:43	6:59
Fri	9	Feb 26	5:15	5:18	6:34	12:09	3:15	5:44	7:00
Sat	10	Feb 27	5:14	5:17	6:32	12:09	3:16	5:45	7:01
Maghfirat : "Forgiveness of Allah"									
Sun	11	Feb 28	5:13	5:16	6:31	12:09	3:17	5:46	7:02
Mon	12	Mar 01	5:11	5:14	6:29	12:08	3:17	5:48	7:03
Tue	13	Mar 02	5:10	5:13	6:28	12:08	3:18	5:49	7:04
Wed	14	Mar 03	5:08	5:11	6:26	12:08	3:19	5:50	7:05
Thu	15	Mar 04	5:06	5:09	6:24	12:08	3:20	5:51	7:06
Fri	16	Mar 05	5:05	5:08	6:23	12:08	3:20	5:52	7:07
Sat	17	Mar 06	5:03	5:06	6:21	12:07	3:21	5:53	7:09
Sun	18	Mar 07	5:02	5:05	6:20	12:07	3:22	5:54	7:10
Mon	19	Mar 08	6:02	6:05	7:20	1:07	4:22	6:54	8:10
Tue	20	Mar 09	5:00	6:03	7:18	1:07	4:22	6:55	8:11
Nijaat : "Salvation"									
Wed	21	Mar 10	5:59	6:02	7:17	1:07	4:23	6:57	8:12
Thu	22	Mar 11	5:57	6:00	7:15	1:06	4:24	6:58	8:13
Fri	23	Mar 12	5:55	5:58	7:13	1:06	4:24	6:59	8:14
Sat	24	Mar 13	5:54	5:57	7:12	1:06	4:25	7:00	8:15
Sun	25	Mar 14	5:52	5:55	7:10	1:06	4:25	7:01	8:16
Mon	26	Mar 15	5:50	5:53	7:08	1:05	4:26	7:02	8:17
Tue	27	Mar 16	5:49	5:52	7:07	1:05	4:27	7:03	8:19
Wed	28	Mar 17	5:47	5:50	7:05	1:05	4:27	7:04	8:20
Thu	29	Mar 18	5:45	5:48	7:03	1:04	4:28	7:05	8:21
Fri	30	Mar 19	5:43	5:46	7:02	1:04	4:28	7:06	8:22

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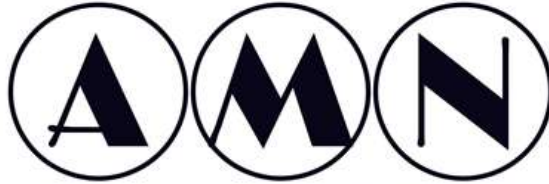
Top 65 Most Influential Muslims in New York State Honored

Final spotlight in our series featuring America's Muslim Network's honorees and their impact

Carlos Stewart

As we conclude this series, we spotlight the final group of individuals recognized in America's Muslim Network's Top 65 Most Influential Muslims in New York State, whose leadership and service continue to shape 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



— AMERICA'S MUSLIM NETWORK —
Courtesy : America's Muslim Network

reflect that diversity in every sense. They 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.



Azra Dhar

Azra Dhar is a Pakistani-American community leader and human rights advocate, serving as a Commissioner on the Nassau County Human Rights Commission and President of PACOLI (Pakistani American Community of Long Island). She made history as the first Muslim woman appointed to the county's Human Rights Commission, advancing dignity, equality, and justice for all residents. She also became the first Muslim woman elected President of PACOLI (2022–2023), strengthening Pakistani-American civic, cultural, and political engagement while building closer ties with local government. Her advocacy includes representing the community at Consulate of Pakistan events and speaking at local initiatives promoting safety and inclusion, inspiring women and immigrant leaders across Long Island.



Shamsul Haque

Shamsul Haque is a retired NYPD Lieutenant Commander, the current Chairman of the New York City School Pupil Transportation Advisory Commission, and a member of Mayor-Elect Zohran Mamdani's Community Safety Transition Team. He previously served on the CUNY Board of Trustees (2002–2003). Mr. Haque holds a BBA from Baruch College and an MPA from Columbia University.



Mufti Mohammad Farhan

Mufti Mohammad Farhan is a New York-raised Islamic scholar and community leader with 20+ years of service focused on faith and youth development. He completed 8+ years of advanced Islamic studies, earning a B.A. in Arabic and Islamic Sciences (Hadith specialization), an M.A. in Islamic Theology, and a PhD in Islamic Jurisprudence and Law from Binoria International University (Pakistan), with specialization in Islamic Economics and Finance. He serves as Executive Director of the Islamic Center of Long Island (ICLI), Spiritual Advisor at Masjid Al-Baqi, and a consultant to Masjid Hamza. He is also Co-Founder and President of Children of Adam, a nonprofit youth organization.



Dr. Malik Nadeem Abid

Dr. Malik Nadeem Abid is a diplomat and human rights defender with 30+ years of work in peacebuilding, community empowerment, legal and immigration advocacy, healthcare education, and advancing women and youth. He serves as Secretary General of the International Human Rights Commission (IHRC), New York, and as a Permanent Observer to the United Nations. He has organized international peace conferences at the United Nations and the U.S. Capitol, and spoken at hundreds of forums worldwide. His 2018 UN speech on the Status of Women reached 485+ million viewers. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award for Volunteer Service from U.S. President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. and holds an Honorary Doctorate in Human Rights and Peacebuilding (2023).



Mohammad Razvi

Mohammad Razvi is the Founder and CEO of the Council of Peoples Organization (COPO) in Brooklyn and a leading advocate for Muslim and South Asian communities since post-9/11. Through COPO, he has built a key bridge between communities and government agencies, raising \$60+ million, serving 300,000+ people annually, and supporting operations with 500 staff and volunteers. COPO provides free services including immigration assistance, healthcare and EBT enrollment, mental health counseling, senior services, women's empowerment, ESL and citizenship classes, and halal food programs like Halal Meals on Wheels and food pantries. He is credited with launching NYC's first Halal Muslim Senior Center and co-founding citywide Iftar initiatives. Internationally recognized and featured in The New Yorker, CNN, and Voice of America, he is known as the "Heart of Coney Island Avenue."



Imam Muhammad Shahidullah

Imam Muhammad Shahidullah is a peace ambassador, first responder, chaplain, and trained imam with academic background including an M.A. in Islamic History and Culture (University of Dhaka) and an MSc in Cybersecurity (VUST, Virginia). He serves in leadership and advisory roles with major civic and faith bodies, including the NYPD Clergy Council, NYC Mayor's Faith-Based Advisory, NYC OPHC Interfaith Council, and the NYC Imams Council. He is the Founder and President of Elhaam Academy (NYS/DOE-approved K–12 school) and Director of Darul Uloom NY. A prolific author and global speaker, he has attended 95+ international conferences, authored 7 books, and published 1,200+ articles. He received the U.S. Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award (2021) and the World Peace Award (2023).



Mohammad Liajul Hassan

Mohammad Liajul Hassan is an administrator of MusCare, a New York-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit and community platform supporting families in need locally and globally. What began as a grassroots Facebook group has grown into a trusted network of 24,000+ members, connecting people to help, guidance, and direct support. In New York, MusCare assists families facing hardship, while internationally it leads humanitarian projects including building a school in Nigeria, installing water wells in Nigeria, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, and distributing Ramadan food packages across multiple countries. Through sustained service, compassion, and community unity, he continues to strengthen relief efforts for the wider ummah.



Hamza Khamisa

Hamza Khamisa is the owner of Legacy Estate, a real estate brokerage, with 11+ years of experience known for integrity and client care. He serves on the Executive Committee of the Hillside Islamic Center, where he has volunteered for nearly a decade, and is the General Secretary of the Memon Association of North America. Focused on community-building, he organizes Ramadan donut distributions to mosques across Long Island on the 27th night and partners with Muslim organizations during Halloween to host safe, family-friendly events like donut-decorating for children. His service extends across communities and faiths, reflecting a consistent commitment to giving back.



Iqra Tanveer

Iqra Tanveer is a nonprofit executive and humanitarian leader, serving as Co-founder of MusCare. She leads international relief and development initiatives focused on disaster response, poverty alleviation, and sustainable community support, while also helping deliver grassroots assistance and crisis response for underserved communities in New York City. Iqra drives public affairs and advocacy, builds partnerships with donors and community organizations, and mobilizes resources to meet urgent local needs. With a background in public health and nonprofit leadership, she combines strategic planning with hands-on engagement, bridging global humanitarian work with local equity-focused action and long-term community empowerment.



Queens Pre Ramadan Conference 2026

FEBRUARY

MONDAY

16
2026

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General Secretary | 917-494-5163

Jamaica Muslim Center
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FOR INFO

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FAITH AND UNITY

Welcoming Ramadan Together at One Police Plaza

NYPD strengthens partnership with Muslim communities ahead of the holy month

Ashley Reed

With the holy month of Ramadan fast approaching, New York City once again demonstrated its commitment to unity and public safety by hosting the Annual Pre-Ramadan Conference 2026 at One Police Plaza. The gathering brought together Muslim community leaders, NYPD officials, chaplains, detectives, and representatives from city government in a shared effort to prepare for a peaceful and spiritually fulfilling month.

The conference, often described as a "Welcome Ramadan" initiative, serves as a bridge between law enforcement and the Muslim communities they proudly serve. Members of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds filled the room, reflecting the multicultural character of New York City itself. Police Commissioner Tisch and Chaplain Imam Tahir Kukaj were



among the featured speakers at the conference, delivering remarks alongside other NYPD officials and community leaders. Their participation reflected the department's continued engagement with



Muslim communities as the city prepares to welcome Ramadan. Among those in attendance were Deputy Inspector Theanthong and Clergy Liaison Imam Abdul Eahea, along with additional NYPD leadership,

chaplains, detectives, and representatives from the Mayor's Office. Their presence reinforced the city's coordinated approach to community engagement during significant religious observances. The annual conference has become an important tradition in New York City, providing a platform for discussing logistical planning, safety coordination, and community outreach before Ramadan begins. More than a procedural meeting, it reflects the city's broader values—where religious freedom, diversity, and civic responsibility intersect. As Ramadan approaches, the collaboration showcased at One Police Plaza stands as a testament to New York's enduring commitment to inclusion. In a city defined by its diversity, the conference affirmed that faith and public service can work hand in hand to ensure a safe and peaceful observance for all.



FAITH AND UNITY

One Police Plaza event reflects New York's commitment to diversity



LEADERSHIP

Donovan Richards Begins Second Term

Borough president pledges to defend diversity

William Henry

Donovan Richards was sworn in for his second four-year term as Queens Borough President during a ceremony at Queens College's Goldstein Theatre in Flushing on Feb. 8.

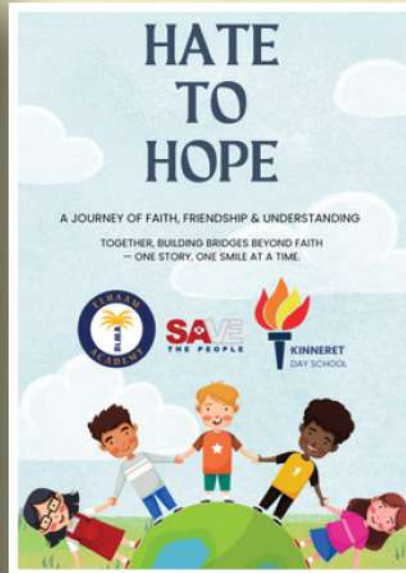
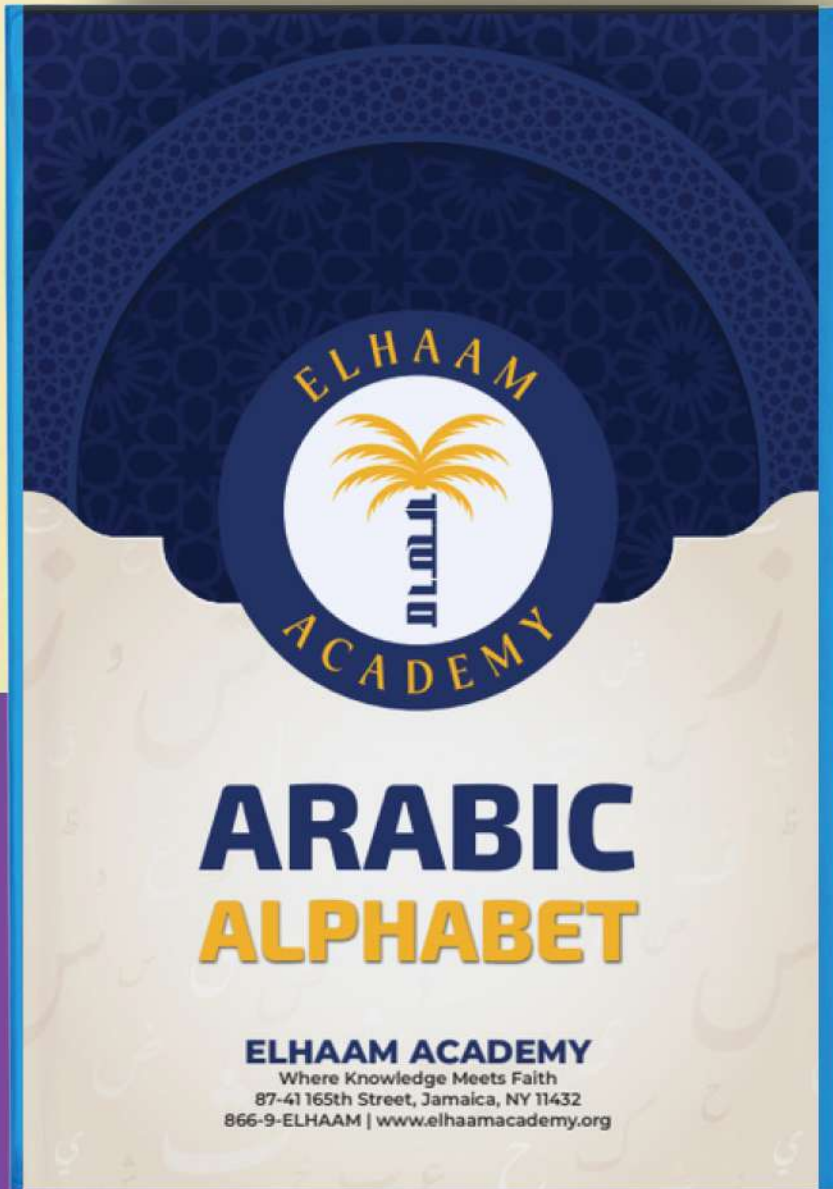
Joined by officials including Letitia James, Chuck Schumer, and Melinda Katz, Richards reflected on reducing unemployment from 25% to 5.4%, securing billions in investments, and expanding affordable housing and education funding.

"Queens chooses not to comply, but to

celebrate" its diversity, Richards said, pledging to defend immigrants and continue investments in jobs, schools and community services. Leaders praised his deep roots in Southeast Queens and commitment to unity during challenging times.



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HATE TO HOPE

Learning Beyond the Classroom: Elhaam Academy Hosts Interfaith Living Museum Experience

Students engage with art, history, and diversity in New York City



Jessica Morgan

In a meaningful step toward fostering cultural awareness and interfaith understanding, Elhaam Academy recently hosted an enriching Interfaith Living Museum program, offering students an immersive

educational experience beyond the classroom walls. The initiative brought participating students into some of New York City's most prominent cultural institutions, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and 92Y, where they

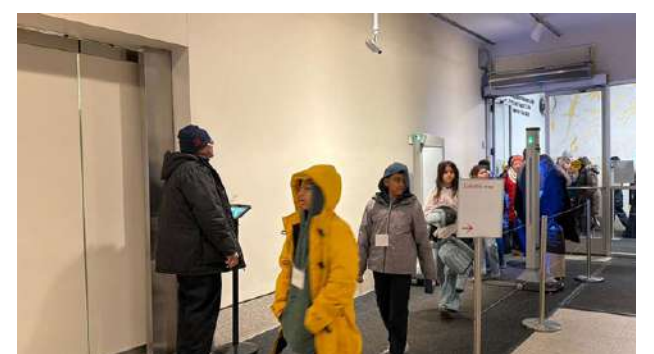


engaged in structured

learning activities designed to broaden their understanding of history, art, and diverse traditions. The program served as a living classroom, encouraging students to connect academic knowledge with real-world experiences. At the Metropolitan Museum of Art, students explored exhibits that reflect the rich tapestry of global civilizations, deepening their appreciation for artistic expression across cultures and faiths. Through guided discussions and reflective observation, they were encouraged to think critically about shared human values and historical narratives. The visit reinforced how art can serve as a bridge between communities and generations.

The program continued with collaborative activities that allowed students to reflect on their learning and exchange perspectives. By participating in conversations centered on respect, identity, and coexistence, students strengthened not only their academic skills but also their emotional intelligence and cultural literacy. Educators noted that experiences like the Interfaith Living Museum program play a vital role in shaping confident, informed young leaders. Exposure to diverse viewpoints and traditions equips students with the tools needed to navigate an increasingly interconnected world. Such initiatives also affirm the academy's commitment to holistic education—one that values intellectual

growth alongside character development. The day's activities underscored the importance of experiential learning in cultivating empathy and understanding. By stepping outside the traditional classroom setting, students gained insights that textbooks alone cannot provide. Programs like this demonstrate how schools can actively nurture curiosity, dialogue, and respect among the next generation. Through thoughtful planning and collaboration, Elhaam Academy once again highlighted its dedication to preparing students not only for academic success but also for meaningful participation in a diverse and dynamic society.



HATE TO HOPE

Students engage with art, history, and diversity in New York City



HATE TO HOPE

An immersive day of interfaith learning and reflection



ENGAGEMENT

Federal Officials Meet Muslim Leaders Ahead of Ramadan

Community engagement session at 26 Federal Plaza focuses on dialogue and partnership

Emily Parker

In an effort to strengthen communication and foster collaboration ahead of the holy month of Ramadan, federal officials convened a community engagement meeting at 26 Federal Plaza in Manhattan on Wednesday, February 11, 2026. The gathering brought together Muslim community leaders and the newly appointed Assistant Director in Charge (ADIC) James Barnacle for an open and timely dialogue. The meeting was organized in response to requests from community members seeking an opportunity to connect with federal leadership before Ramadan. With the sacred month approaching, leaders emphasized the importance of proactive engagement to ensure clarity, cooperation, and mutual understanding.



Held on the 6th floor of 26 Federal Plaza at 10:00 a.m., the session provided attendees with the opportunity to share thoughts, raise questions, and discuss concerns in a structured yet conversational environment. The

event reflected a broader commitment to maintaining open lines of communication between federal authorities and New York City's diverse Muslim communities. Participants described

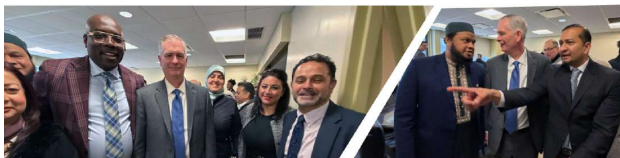
the meeting as constructive and necessary, particularly as Ramadan brings increased mosque attendance, community programming, and public gatherings. One attendee noted that opportunities for

direct engagement "help strengthen trust and ensure that concerns are addressed



respectfully and transparently." The presence of ADIC Barnacle marked an important moment of introduction between federal leadership and community partners. The discussion centered on relationship-building and reaffirming channels for communication during the holy month and beyond. Ramadan, observed by millions of Muslims worldwide, is a time of fasting, reflection,

prayer, and community connection. In New York City, where religious diversity is a defining characteristic, coordination between public agencies and faith leaders plays a critical role in maintaining public safety and community confidence. By hosting the Pre-Ramadan Community Engagement Meeting, federal officials underscored the value of dialogue in fostering understanding. As one participant reflected after the event, meaningful partnership begins with listening. As Ramadan approaches, the meeting served as both a practical preparation step and a symbolic reaffirmation of engagement — highlighting that collaboration and communication remain central to serving New York's diverse communities.



FOOD SECURITY

BHALO Hosts Large-Scale Ramadan Food Distribution in Jamaica

More than 800 families receive essential groceries

Noah Presley

In a powerful demonstration of community solidarity and compassion, BHALO, a nonprofit organization based in Jamaica, Queens, successfully hosted its Ramadan Food Distribution 2026, serving more than 800 families in preparation for the holy month of Ramadan. Held at the BHALO Center in Jamaica, Queens, the large-scale distribution provided essential grocery items to families across the borough. The initiative was made possible through the generous sponsorship of DHCare – Licensed Home Care Agency, whose support helped expand the program's reach to hundreds of households. As Ramadan approaches—a time marked by fasting, reflection, charity, and



community—the need for food assistance often increases. For many families, especially those facing economic challenges, access to staple groceries can ease the burden of preparing daily pre-dawn and evening meals throughout the month. Volunteers worked diligently to organize, package, and distribute



grocery items, ensuring a smooth and efficient process for the hundreds of attendees. Families arrived throughout the day, many expressing



gratitude for the timely assistance. The event reflected weeks of preparation, coordination, and outreach to ensure the distribution met the needs of the community. One volunteer described the atmosphere as uplifting, noting that the turnout demonstrated “how strong and connected our



community truly is.” The scale of participation also highlighted the importance of partnerships between nonprofit organizations and local sponsors in addressing food insecurity. Beyond the groceries themselves, the event carried a deeper meaning. Ramadan is widely recognized as a

month of generosity and spiritual renewal, and initiatives like BHALO's food distribution embody those values in action. By providing practical support, the organization helped ensure that families can focus on worship, togetherness, and reflection during the sacred month. The success of the 2026 Ramadan Food Distribution underscores BHALO's ongoing commitment to service and community empowerment. With more than 800 families benefiting from this initiative, the event stands as a testament to what coordinated effort and shared purpose can achieve. As Ramadan draws near, the spirit of giving and unity displayed at the BHALO Center serves as a reminder that community care remains at the heart of New York's diverse neighborhoods.



PREPARATION

From Learning to Laughter: NYU Students Gather Ahead of Ramadan

Islamic Center hosts Pre-Ramadan lectures and social events

Alex Mason

As anticipation for the holy month of Ramadan builds, the New York University Islamic Center recently hosted a series of Pre-Ramadan programs designed to spiritually prepare students while strengthening community bonds on campus.

The programming ranged from reflective lectures focused on preparing the heart and mind for Ramadan to casual social gatherings that offered students a chance to connect in a relaxed setting. From thoughtful discussions to warm hot chocolate socials, the events created an atmosphere that balanced learning with fellowship.



Organizers expressed gratitude to the many students who attended and participated throughout the series. The Pre-Ramadan lectures encouraged students to reflect on themes of intention, discipline, and personal growth—key pillars of the upcoming month. At the same time, the social events fostered friendship and



belonging, reminding students that Ramadan is not only a personal spiritual journey but also a shared communal experience. One attendee described

the programming as both grounding and uplifting, noting that the combination of faith-centered discussion and informal connection helped ease the transition into the sacred month. “It’s a reminder that we’re not preparing alone,” the student shared. “There’s a whole community here walking into Ramadan together.” Campus faith centers

often play a crucial role in supporting students, particularly those living away from home. For many Muslim students at NYU, the Islamic Center provides a space to pray, learn, and gather—especially during significant religious seasons. The Pre-Ramadan series served as both a spiritual reset and a reminder of shared values and identity

within a diverse university environment. Beyond lectures and refreshments, the true impact of the programming lay in the sense of belonging it cultivated. In a fast-paced academic setting, moments of reflection and community can offer students grounding and support.

As Ramadan approaches, the NYU Islamic Center looks forward to continued programming, including nightly prayers and communal iftars. With faith, fellowship, and preparation already underway, students are entering the blessed month united in purpose and strengthened by community.



CIVIC

Albany Legislative Weekend

A three-day conference brought leaders and communities together

Daniel Matthew

The 55th Annual Legislative Conference brought a major wave of activity to Albany, NY over Feb. 13–15, 2026, drawing public officials, civic leaders, and community advocates for a three-day program built around policy engagement and community connection. With a packed schedule running from daytime programming to

evening gatherings, the conference functioned as a wide umbrella event where multiple conversations and initiatives unfolded side by side. Throughout the weekend, the atmosphere was shaped by constant movement—attendees shifting between formal sessions, community meetups, and networking spaces that kept discussions going beyond the stage. The overall focus remained



on civic participation and the role communities play in shaping government priorities, creating opportunities for people to engage not only with public issues but also with the leaders and institutions working on them. Organizers structured

the conference to support both dialogue and visibility, offering a platform where community concerns could be raised, partnerships could form, and public service could be acknowledged. The result was a gathering that felt less like a

single meeting and more like a concentrated civic moment, bringing together voices that don't always share the same room. The impact of the conference was felt in the connections built and the momentum created across sectors. By convening stakeholders in one place, the event strengthened relationships between communities and decision-makers, encouraged

collaboration, and helped amplify issues that often require sustained attention beyond headlines. As the conference closed in Albany, participants left with expanded networks, clearer lines of communication, and a renewed sense that progress depends on consistent engagement—not just during a conference weekend, but long after it ends.

Mayoral Forum: City Challenges and Shared Solutions Across New York



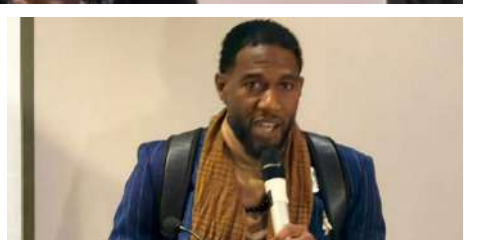
The Mayoral Session brought together mayors from New York City, Albany, and other cities across New York State for a direct conversation about the pressures local governments are facing and the practical steps being considered to address them. The discussion centered on real-world municipal challenges and the tradeoffs leaders confront, while an audience Q&A segment opened the floor for community members to raise questions and respond to the ideas shared, turning the session into an interactive exchange rather than a one-way panel.



Center for Justice Innovation Awards: Honoring Service and Community Leadership



The Award Ceremony, presented by the Center for Justice Innovation, focused on recognizing public officials and community leaders described by organizers as deserving of special acknowledgment for their work and leadership. Award recipients delivered remarks as part of the program, using the moment to reflect on service, responsibility, and the importance of sustained commitment to community well-being. The ceremony served as a reminder that progress is often driven by consistent effort and local leadership that rarely makes headlines.



CIVIC

AAPI Legislators Reception: Representation, Public Service, and Policy Priorities

The AAPI Legislators Reception highlighted political representation and civic engagement, featuring remarks from New York Attorney General Letitia James alongside elected officials and community figures. Committee members and speakers included Senator Jeremy Cooney, Senator John Liu, Assembly Member Grace Lee, Assembly Member Ron Kim, Assembly Member Steven Raga, Assembly Member Jenifer Rajkumar, and Assembly Member Sarahana Shrestha, among others. Their participation underscored the reception's focus on visibility, community priorities, and the role of leadership in translating concerns into policy action.



Immigration Session: Protecting Immigrant Rights and Advancing Action Steps

The Immigration Session centered on immigrant rights, with leaders discussing the challenges immigrant communities face and outlining actions aimed at protecting and maintaining those rights. The conversation emphasized both principle and practice—what must be defended and what can be done—positioning the session as a space for advocacy, coordination, and shared responsibility among those working to support immigrant communities across New York State.



FAITH

Welcoming Ramadan 2026: A Month of Mercy and Meaning

Muslim communities across the U.S. prepare for fasting and prayer

Issac Andrew

As the crescent moon of Ramadan 2026 approaches—expected to begin on the evening of February 18, 2026—Muslim communities across the United States are entering a period of spiritual preparation. While daily routines continue in workplaces, schools, and homes, hearts are quietly turning toward repentance, gratitude, and renewal. Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, is observed through fasting from dawn to sunset and is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. As the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) taught, “Islam is built on five pillars... and fasting Ramadan.” Beyond abstaining from food and drink, the Qur’an reminds believers of its deeper purpose: “O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting... that you may become righteous” (Al-Baqarah: 183). For many Muslims in America, preparation begins with sincere repentance. Religious leaders emphasize that



Ramadan is not merely a change in diet but a transformation of the heart. The month is seen as a gateway to forgiveness, echoing the divine promise: “Despair not of Allah’s mercy, for Allah forgives all sins” (Az-Zumar: 53). Entering Ramadan with humility and a clean slate is considered the first and

most important step. Gratitude is another cornerstone of preparation. Simply reaching Ramadan is viewed as a blessing. Community sermons often remind congregants to reflect on those who longed for another Ramadan but did not live to see it, and on those who are ill or

unable to fast. Gratitude, scholars say, safeguards blessings and multiplies them. Across American mosques—from New York and New Jersey to California and Texas—pre-Ramadan lectures focus on understanding the rulings of fasting, the importance of nightly

Taraweeh prayers, and preparing for the last ten nights, especially Laylat al-Qadr, the Night of Decree. Increased Qur’an recitation is central, as Ramadan is known as the “Month of the Qur’an.” Equally stressed is the need to avoid sins during this sacred time. Scholars remind

believers that fasting is not only from food but from harmful speech, dishonesty, and immoral behavior. As one well-known hadith states, “The fasting person has two joys: one when breaking the fast and another when meeting his Lord.” Charitable giving also rises dramatically in the United States during Ramadan. Muslims calculate Zakat and increase voluntary charity, ensuring families in need have food for iftar and essentials throughout the month. Many organizations report their highest engagement during these weeks of mercy. Ultimately, Ramadan is described as “a few numbered days”—brief, intense, and transformative. As communities prepare, the message is clear: the month will pass quickly, but its rewards endure. For American Muslims in 2026, Ramadan is not just a ritual—it is a renewed opportunity for faith, discipline, generosity, and eternal hope.



HERITAGE

A Tribute to Mother Language Through Young Voices

Bangladesh Society USA brings families together to celebrate culture and history

Marcos Alonso

In a heartfelt celebration of language and cultural identity, Bangladesh Society USA recently hosted a children and teen art competition in observance of International Mother Language Day (February 21). The event brought together young participants from across the community to express their appreciation for their mother tongue through creativity and color. Observed worldwide on February 21, the day commemorates the historic Language Movement of 1952 in Bangladesh and



underscores the importance of preserving

linguistic diversity. The art competition

provided children and teenagers with a

meaningful platform to reflect on that legacy while strengthening their connection to their cultural roots. Participants showcased artwork inspired by themes of language, heritage, and national pride. At the conclusion of the program, winners were recognized and awarded prizes,

engagement with the day's significance. Organizers noted that the event was designed not only to foster creativity but also to instill awareness among younger generations about the historical and emotional importance of their mother language. The gathering served as a reminder that preserving language is essential to preserving identity. Through art and recognition, the celebration reinforced unity within the Bangladeshi-American community while encouraging youth to carry forward the legacy of linguistic pride.



celebrating both artistic talent and thoughtful



SECURITY

Empowering the Diaspora Through Preparedness and Awareness

Consulate reinforces safety measures amid rising concerns in parts of the U.S.

Phillip D'Costa

In an effort to reinforce the safety and well-being of Malaysians living in the United States, the Consulate General of Malaysia in New York recently participated in a comprehensive security briefing focused on active threat preparedness. The session, conducted by a former FBI Special Agent, centered on Active Shooter Attack Prevention and Preparedness (ASAPP) and provided practical tools for navigating high-risk scenarios. The briefing emphasized situational awareness, risk mitigation strategies, and personal safety protocols designed to reduce vulnerability during emergencies. Among the key frameworks discussed was the widely recognized "Run, Hide, Fight" approach, which outlines immediate response options in the



event of an active threat. Attendees were guided through real-world applications of these principles, underscoring the importance of preparation and calm decision-making under pressure. For the Consulate, the engagement was more than a routine security update. With members



of the Malaysian community in parts of the United States

experiencing heightened anxieties—including concerns related to safety and enforcement actions—the session served as a proactive step toward ensuring that the well-being of Malaysians abroad remains a top priority. Officials noted that participation in such briefings is essential

for strengthening institutional readiness and equipping representatives with knowledge that can be translated into meaningful guidance for the diaspora. Rather than symbolic, these engagements are practical investments in preparedness and resilience. A central

takeaway from the session was clear: stay alert to your surroundings, know your exits, trust your instincts, and prioritize personal safety. Preparedness, participants were reminded, can save lives. The Consulate affirmed its ongoing commitment to working closely with relevant partners and authorities to remain informed about emerging security concerns. By staying engaged and proactive, the mission aims to continue advocating for Malaysians abroad while providing timely information and support when needed. As global uncertainties evolve, the Consulate's participation in the ASAPP briefing reflects a broader commitment to safeguarding its community—demonstrating that vigilance, education, and collaboration remain critical pillars of diaspora protection.



News and Photos taken from the Facebook page of Consulate General of Malaysia, New York



Obama Backs Minneapolis Anti-ICE Protests

Former president calls enforcement tactics “unprecedented” in new interview



Photo: Barack Obama speaks at the Obama Foundation Democracy Forum in Chicago on 5 December 2024.

Image Source : Erin Hooley/AP

Amkel Nourush

Former President Barack Obama publicly voiced support for anti-ICE demonstrators in Minneapolis and St. Paul, framing the protests as a

civic response to what he called the “unprecedented nature” of federal immigration enforcement in the region. In a Saturday interview with progressive YouTuber Brian Tyler

Cohen, Obama criticized reported tactics he said included agents

HIGHLIGHT

●Barack Obama voices support for demonstrators in Minneapolis and St. Paul

●He calls the reported ICE operation “unprecedented”

●Protests intensified after the killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti

operating “without any clear guidelines,” pulling people from homes,

and using intimidation against crowds. “Right now, we’re being tested,” Obama said, adding that what he has seen in the Twin Cities and elsewhere reflects Americans “saying no.” The demonstrations have expanded following the killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti during encounters with federal agents, sharpening scrutiny of how operations are conducted. This week, border czar Tom Homan said the administration would draw down its crackdown in Minnesota after the fatalities, a shift many protesters have pointed to as evidence that public pressure is landing.



Photo: A montage of David Rowland, Andrew and Epstein from a press cutting found in the Epstein files

Image Source: US Department of Justice/BBC

Former Prince Faces New Document Leak Claims

Treasury note allegedly forwarded to banking contact

Julian Alvez

Fresh scrutiny surrounds Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor after emails published by the Telegraph suggest he shared a confidential Treasury briefing in 2010 with banking executive Jonathan Rowland while serving as the UK’s trade envoy. The document reportedly detailed the UK’s position in a dispute with Iceland over deposit guarantees following the 2008 financial crisis. Soon after receiving the update, Andrew allegedly forwarded it to Rowland, writing, “Interested in your opinion?” Rowland’s father, David Rowland,

had taken control of part of the failed Icelandic bank Kaupthing, later renamed Banque Havilland. Jonathan Rowland told the BBC he had “no idea” about the email reference, noting the material stems from past legal proceedings. The Cabinet Office has not disputed the authenticity of the emails, while Thames Valley Police are assessing whether a misconduct investigation is warranted. Andrew has strongly denied wrongdoing regarding his associations, including with Jeffrey Epstein, as questions mount over the use of official information for private contacts.

Canada at Center of Olympic Curling Dispute

Double-touch allegations shake Winter Games

Charles Lewis

Controversy has engulfed curling at the Winter Olympics in Cortina, with Canada’s men’s and women’s teams accused of illegally double-touching stones after release. On Friday, Sweden’s Oskar Eriksson alleged that Canadian curler Marc Kennedy violated the rule. Though Kennedy denied wrongdoing, video circulated appearing to show contact. Canada won that match 8-6. A day later, Canadian skip Rachel Homan faced a similar

accusation during a match against Switzerland. An umpire removed her stone from play; Canada ultimately lost 8-7. World Curling clarified that touching the granite during forward motion results in removal of the stone. Kennedy suggested the scrutiny may have been “premeditated,” while Homan said, “We’ve never done that.” The allegations have heightened tensions within a sport known for camaraderie, placing Canada under intense Olympic scrutiny.

Rubio Warns Europe to Shift

Secretary of state links alliance to adopting U.S. priorities and values

Nassr Al Shams

A relieved audience at the Munich Security Conference applauded U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio as he praised Europe as America’s “child” and said their futures would remain “intertwined.” But beneath the friendly tone, Rubio delivered a sharper warning: the United States is prepared to “rebuild” ties only if Europe embraces a sweeping shift in priorities and values. Rubio pressed allies to harden borders, lean into Christianity and shared cultural heritage, and abandon climate-



Photos: Secretary of State Marco Rubio heads to a G7 foreign ministers meeting at the Munich Security Conference, Feb. 14.

Image Source: Alex Brandon/AFP/Getty Images

crisis policies—framing the transatlantic bond as conditional rather than automatic. The message landed amid

heightened European unease after last year’s confrontational speech by Vice President JD Vance, and as leaders

face domestic political pressure and questions about defense spending. The summit’s most urgent backdrop remained Ukraine. President Volodymyr Zelensky highlighted the human cost of Russia’s war and urged Europe to build an independent defense strategy, warning against a peace process that pressures the invaded country more than the aggressor. Together, the speeches reinforced a stark reality for European capitals: the alliance endures, but its terms—and its politics—are shifting fast.

DHS Shutdown Begins

Funding lapse triggers partial government closure

Adrian Smith

A partial government shutdown centered on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) began Saturday after Congress failed to reach a funding agreement, deepening a partisan standoff over federal immigration enforcement. The lapse follows weeks of disagreement between the Trump administration and Senate Democrats, who are demanding reforms to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and

Border Protection (CBP). Proposed changes include requiring body cameras, banning masks for agents, and mandating judicial warrants for arrests on private property. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said Democrats “will be available 24/7” for negotiations but insisted legislative safeguards are necessary. The shutdown affects more than 260,000 DHS employees and extends beyond immigration agencies to the Transportation Security Administration,



Coast Guard, and Federal Emergency Management Agency. Funding had been temporarily extended for two weeks earlier this month but expired Friday. Congress left

Washington without a deal and is not expected back until Feb. 23, leaving negotiations uncertain as President Donald Trump prepares to deliver the State of the Union address.

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