

Food, Love, and Community Spirit at Darul Uloom Event

Page-06



Building Faith and Excellence: Qari Yasser Abdel Basit at Elhaam Academy

page-08



Queens Under Attack, but United: Richards Delivers Defiant State of the Borough

page-10



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NEW YORK NEWS

The Voice of People

From New York

Sugar Land Mayoral Candidate Defends Faith Amid Criticism

• Questions Over Support for Palestine

Farhana Azmi

Naushad Kermally, the first Muslim candidate for mayor of Sugar Land, Texas, is facing mounting scrutiny and criticism over his faith as he nears the final days of the city's mayoral race. The 53-year-old city council member has spent the past few months visiting neighborhoods and religious centers, aiming to convince Sugar Land's diverse population to vote for him in the nonpartisan election. However, recent events have brought his Muslim faith under attack. Tensions reached a peak during a campaign event at the Brand Lane Islamic Center, where a protester was handcuffed by authorities for disrupting the gathering. The protester was critical of Kermally's refusal to call for a ceasefire in the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict. While Kermally was not involved in the detention, the incident sparked heated online debates within the local Muslim community, with some accusing Kermally

Naushad Kermally, a Muslim candidate for mayor of Sugar Land, faces protests and criticism regarding his stance on the Israel-Hamas conflict.

A protester was handcuffed during a Kermally campaign event at a mosque, leading to local tensions.

of complicity. Kermally, who previously made history as the first Muslim to serve on Sugar Land's city council, has consistently defended his record, including his support for the city's measures during crises such as Hurricane Harvey and the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the criticism, he remains committed to serving all residents, regardless of their faith, and advocates for inclusivity and understanding across cultural and religious lines. His stance highlights the challenges he faces as he balances his political beliefs with his identity as a Muslim leader in a city with a large, diverse population.



Image Source: cnn.com

Pope Francis's Legacy of Peace

Jamshed Mozumder

Pope Francis's death on April 21, 2025, has left a profound impact on Indonesia, the largest Muslim-majority country in the world. Prominent Islamic organizations, including Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, have expressed deep sorrow, highlighting the Pope's unwavering commitment to peace, interfaith dialogue, and his vocal opposition to Israel's military actions in Gaza. The Pope's calls for a ceasefire during his last Easter message echoed in the hearts of many Indonesians. Sudarnoto Abdul Hakim, an official from Indonesia's highest council of clerics, praised Francis for

- Indonesian Muslim groups mourn Pope Francis's death, honoring his legacy of peace.
- Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah praise the Pope's opposition to Israel's Gaza actions.
- Indonesians reflect on Francis's message of tolerance and fraternity, despite occasional tensions.

his efforts to uphold the values of human fraternity and peace, noting that his work in fostering Muslim-Christian relations, especially his 2019 collaboration with Grand Imam Ahmed al-Tayeb, remains a significant milestone.

Despite occasional tensions, Francis's message of tolerance and compassion left a lasting mark on Indonesian society. Many Indonesians, including university students, visited religious sites to pay their respects, reflecting on his message of coexistence in a diverse world. The Pope's dedication to Palestinian rights and his advocacy for the oppressed resonated deeply within the Indonesian Muslim community. His death has created a global outpouring of grief, with many expressing hope that his legacy will continue to inspire efforts for global peace, harmony, and understanding.

The SHORT

Bangladesh Society's new board of trustees formed

page-02



New York REHAB Expo to be held on August 22-24

page-02

New York City Continues Battle Against Gun Violence

page-04



Honoring Women in Faith: Brooklyn's Interfaith Celebration Unites Communities

page-09

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Awareness

Open Streets, Open Hearts: Queens Unites for Earth Day 2025

page-05

FBI Arrests Wisconsin Judge in Immigration Dispute

Legal experts call the arrest a rare and controversial move

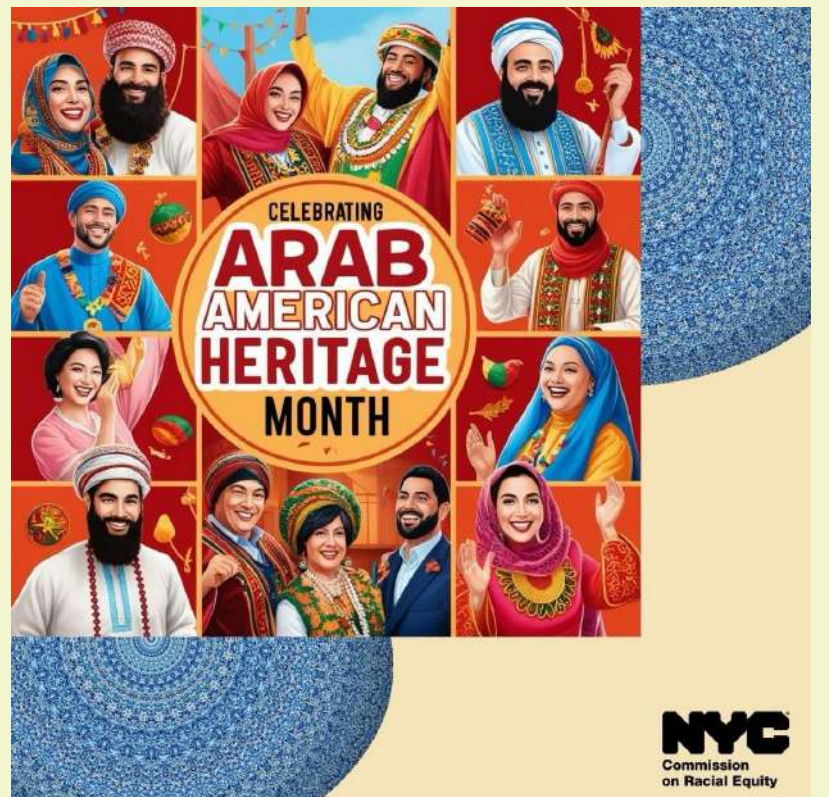


Image Source : aljazeera.com

Hamid Abdullah

U.S. authorities arrested Milwaukee County Circuit Judge Hannah Dugan on Friday, accusing her of obstructing an immigration arrest. This follows the earlier arrest of former New Mexico Judge Joel Cano, who allegedly helped a Venezuelan national with gang

ties avoid law enforcement. Dugan is accused of aiding Eduardo Flores-Ruiz, an undocumented immigrant facing domestic violence charges, by guiding him out of court to evade ICE officers. Attorney General Pam Bondi defended the arrests, asserting, "No one is above the law," while critics, including Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson and Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers, accused the federal government of undermining judicial independence. Bondi emphasized that those who help violent criminals must face justice. Dugan faces charges that could result in up to six years in prison.



NYC
Commission on Racial Equity



Scientific Wonders and Spiritual Wisdom: Abdul Hye Enlightens Darul Uloom Students

Page-12

Community News

today



Court Controversy

FBI Arrests Wisconsin Judge in Immigration Dispute

Page- 01



Unity Gathering

Community Connections Strengthened in Brooklyn

Page-03



Violence Prevention

New York City Continues Battle Against Gun Violence

Page-04



Giving Spirit

Food, Love, and Community Spirit at Darul Uloom Event

Page-06



Heartfelt Fest

Celebrating Generosity: Post-Eid Fest Brings Joy to Students

Page-07



Uplifting Education

Building Faith and Excellence: Qari Yasser Abdel Basit at Elhaam Academy

Page-08



Bangladesh Society's new board of trustees formed

Staff Reporter

A new board of trustees has been formed in the meeting of the executive council of the Bangladesh Society. In the meeting held at the society office on April 20 evening, a new board of 12 people was formed unanimously by secret ballot of the executive council officers. All 19 officers of the society's executive council were present at the meeting. The new members of the board of trustees are- Akhter Hossain, Kazi Azharul Haque Milon, Azimur Rahman Borhan, Atraul Alam, Abdur Rahim Howlader, Shah Newaz, Dr. Enamul Haque, Junaid Chowdhury, Kazi Sakhawat Hossain Azam, Fakhrul Islam Delwar, Ahsan Habib and Naeem Tutul. Most of them are new faces. The meeting held under the

chairmanship of the society's president Aatur Rahman Selim was chaired by General Secretary Mohammad Ali. Other officials of the executive council, including senior vice president Mohiuddin Dewan, vice president Kamruzzaman Bakul, vice general secretary Abul Kalam Bhuiyan, treasurer- Mofizul Islam Bhuiyan (Rumi), organizing secretary Duke Khan, cultural secretary Anik Raj, public relations and publicity secretary Riju Mohammad, social welfare secretary Jamil Ansari, literary secretary Mohammad Akhtar Babul, sports and entertainment secretary Ashrab Ali Khan Liton, school and education secretary Mohammad Hasan (Jilani), executive members Harun and Rashid (chairman), Jahangir Shahid Suhrawardy, Mohammad

Siddique Patwary, Abul Kashem Chowdhury, Munsur Ahmed and Hasan Khan were present in the meeting. According to meeting sources, the meeting was held in a very cordial atmosphere. One of the agenda items of the meeting was the formation of a 12-member trustee board. The meeting activities continued from 6 pm to 11:30 pm. At the beginning of the meeting, the opinions of the officials were sought and an attempt was made to reach a compromise. During this time, 24 names were proposed. When some members proposed the names of their preferred candidates, the president and general secretary emphasized the formation of a board of trustees as per the constitution of the society, sources said.

Special event for Bangladeshis in Queens Borough



Reporter

A gathering celebrating the history and heritage of Bangladesh and Bangladeshi expatriates was held on April 16 at the initiative of Queens Borough President Donovan Richard of New York City. While speaking at the Queens Borough Hall auditorium, Borough President Donovan Richard said, 360 language speakers from 191 countries live in this borough.

One of them is Bangladeshi. Hard-working Bangladeshis are making a unique contribution to diversifying the Queens community of New York City. That is why Queens Borough has surpassed everything as the most multilingual area in America. Under the direction of community activist Sabina Hai Urbi, artists from Bhanishikha Sangeet Niketan performed the

national anthems of Bangladesh and the United States. Then, for their continuous contribution to the development and welfare of the community, Gias Ahmed, President of the America-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Dr. The Borough President presented a special honorary crest to Bholanath Banik and Liji Rahman, leader of the Safe Road Movement.

State Senator Zellnor Mairi delivered a welcome speech at the event, Abdul Mukit Chowdhury on behalf of the freedom fighters, and Gias Ahmed congratulated the Borough President on behalf of the community. The head of the Bohnishikha Sangeet Niketan, Dr. Sabita Das, led by Runa Roy, Shakila Runa, Farzin Ahmed Swarna, and dancers from Nila Dance Academy participated in the rally.

Prayer Time IN New York

FAJR	DHUHR	ASR	MAGHRIB	ISHA
04:34	12:53	04:44	07:49	09:14
04:32	12:53	04:44	07:50	09:15
04:30	12:53	04:44	07:51	09:17
04:29	12:53	04:44	07:52	09:18
04:27	12:53	04:45	07:54	09:19
04:26	12:53	04:45	07:55	09:21
04:24	12:53	04:45	07:56	09:22

Number 25

New York REHAB Expo to be held on August 22-24

NYN DESK

The New York Rehab Expo 2025 will be held at the LaGuardia Marriott Hotel in New York from August 22-24. The organizers hope that this expo will build a bridge between domestic real estate developers and expatriate Bangladeshis. On the occasion of the expo, Rehab Fair Standing Committee Chairman Md. Alim Ullah, Rehab Director and Co-Chairman Imdadul Haque recently visited the venue. They were accompanied by representatives of the organizing company Rahin & Ruhan LLC. In addition to visiting the venue,



they also met with local community figures, the New York Police Department, journalists and leaders of the Bangladeshi Press Club. After the visit, Imdadul Haque said that the main goal of this expo is to involve expatriate Bangladeshis in the domestic property sector so that they can invest and their relationship with Bangladesh deepens. Various renowned real estate companies of Bangladesh will participate in the New York Rehab Expo 2025, who will showcase their projects and investment plans. The expo will also feature seminars, legal advice, financial planning and cultural performances - creating an emotional connection between expatriate life and Bangladesh. A senior member of the community said, 'Many people think of returning home or investing in their country. But they are held back due to the lack of a suitable platform. This expo will fill that gap.' The organizers are hoping to get a huge response from expatriate Bangladeshis through this three-day event in August. It is learnt that the official announcement of participation and registration will be made very soon. New York is getting ready to weave these two worlds - Bangladesh and expatriate - into one thread. And La Guardia Marriott Hotel is going to be one of the stages of that story.

Special event for
Bangladeshis in Queens
Borough
Page-02

Community Affairs

Community Connections Strengthened in Brooklyn

Candid Conversations Shape Campaign Trail Dialogue



Faisal Ahmed

In a show of solidarity and engagement, New York City Public Advocate Jumaane D. Williams met with South Asian community leaders on Friday, April 25, 2025, at Jalsa restaurant on Coney Island Avenue in Brooklyn. The evening gathering, part of Williams' ongoing election campaign, drew a wide range of influential voices from across the South Asian

diaspora eager to discuss the future of the city. As the clock struck 6:30 PM, the event kicked off promptly, a testament to the organizers' emphasis on punctuality. The room buzzed with anticipation as community members, business leaders, faith leaders, and youth advocates settled in for an evening of meaningful dialogue. Williams, known for his grassroots approach and commitment to

progressive policies, expressed his gratitude for the community's support. He highlighted the significant role South Asian Americans play in the economic, social, and cultural fabric of New York City and pledged to continue championing issues that matter to them. Throughout the evening, Williams reiterated his vision of a city that is safer, more equitable, and more inclusive. "We need to work together to ensure

every community has a voice and that all New Yorkers feel seen, heard, and protected," he emphasized during his remarks. The gathering provided an opportunity for Williams to outline his campaign priorities, including affordable housing, public safety reform, immigrant rights, and access to mental health resources. Attendees listened intently, many nodding in agreement as Williams spoke about the urgent need for policies that address the unique challenges faced by immigrant communities. The highlight of the evening was a lively question-and-answer session. Community leaders took the floor to voice their concerns, ask direct questions, and offer suggestions. Topics ranged from small business support and educational opportunities to combating hate crimes

and ensuring fair representation at all levels of government. One attendee mentioned the rising cost of living in immigrant neighborhoods and asked how the Public Advocate's office could help safeguard affordable housing. Williams responded by pointing to the need for stronger tenant protections and the expansion of community land trusts. Another community member raised concerns about the challenges South Asian youth face in navigating higher education and employment opportunities. Williams acknowledged the need for targeted mentorship programs and support networks, promising to advocate for city funding dedicated to youth development initiatives. The event concluded with Williams thanking the South Asian community for its

resilience, contributions, and steadfastness in the face of adversity. "This is your city, too," he affirmed. "And together, we are building a future where everyone's potential can be realized." The meet-and-greet underscored Williams' strategy of direct community engagement as he moves deeper into campaign season. His warm, inclusive approach resonated strongly with attendees, many of whom expressed optimism about working closely with his office in the months ahead. As the evening drew to a close, leaders lingered in conversations with Williams and among themselves, energized by a renewed sense of partnership and purpose. It was a night that reflected the power of community, dialogue, and the enduring importance of civic participation in shaping New York's future.



Captain Waheed Akhtar Makes History in NYPD

Dedication, integrity, and perseverance celebrated



Alauddin Shams

In a proud and historic milestone, Captain Waheed Akhtar has been promoted to the prestigious rank of Deputy Inspector within the New York City Police Department (NYPD), becoming the first Pakistani-American to achieve this honor. Hailing from Mandi Bahauddin in Pakistan, Deputy Inspector Akhtar's promotion has sparked widespread pride among Pakistani-Americans and the broader NYPD community. Known for his professionalism, integrity, and strong relationships with diverse communities, Akhtar's success is viewed as a significant



achievement for representation in law enforcement. Celebrations quickly followed the news, with community members expressing heartfelt congratulations and pride. Messages hailed the accomplishment as an inspiration for younger generations and a reflection of the growing diversity within

the NYPD. "Heartfelt congratulations to my brother, Waheed Akhtar, on his well-deserved promotion to Deputy Inspector! It's incredibly inspiring to see more of our Muslim executives advancing within the NYPD and representing our communities with pride and excellence," one community member shared. Captain Waheed devoted his recognition to the community, calling on youths to remain attached to hard work and integrity. His achievement stands as a shining example of what can be accomplished through dedication, perseverance, and community commitment. Throughout his

distinguished career, Deputy Inspector Akhtar has worked tirelessly to build trust between law enforcement and New York City's multicultural neighborhoods. His promotion is seen as not only a personal milestone but a collective moment of pride for many who see his journey as a symbol of opportunity and inclusivity in public service. As celebrations continue, Deputy Inspector Akhtar's success will remain an enduring source of inspiration for Pakistani-Americans and for aspiring leaders across New York City and beyond.

Peace & Justice

New York City Continues Battle Against Gun Violence

Illegal Firearms Destroyed in Massive Safety Initiative

Mirza Hasib

In a powerful demonstration of New York City's commitment to public safety, Mayor Eric Adams, NYPD Commissioner Jessica S. Tisch, and numerous community leaders gathered on April 24, 2025, to oversee the destruction of 3,575 illegal firearms — including 3,375 handguns and 200 rifles — at Reworld in Westbury, New York. This destruction marks a milestone in the Adams administration's aggressive campaign to eliminate gun violence and protect New Yorkers.

"Today, we say goodbye and good riddance to thousands of illegal guns that no longer threaten the safety of our neighborhoods, our families, or our children," Mayor Adams declared. "These guns will never be used again to endanger another life. New York City continues to be the safest big city in America because we are relentless in our fight against gun violence." Since Mayor Adams took office, more than 21,400 illegal guns have been seized, including over 1,400 ghost guns, which are untraceable firearms often assembled from kits or 3D-printed components. The NYPD's rigorous enforcement and the mayor's proactive



policies have contributed to a 42.2% decline in shootings and a 22.7% drop in homicides over the past three years. Commissioner Tisch emphasized the precision of the NYPD's efforts. "Destroying these 3,575 illegal guns is the final step in a process that starts with identifying the right targets and recovering the right weapons. Each one represents a violent act that was prevented because the NYPD got there first." The seized guns will find a new, symbolic purpose. Students at the School of Cooperative

Technical Education will use the repurposed metal to craft a memorial honoring victims of gun violence — a testament to resilience and a stark reminder of the cost of violence. The city's success in reducing gun violence extends across all five boroughs, with the first quarter of 2025 recording the fewest shootings in New York's history and the second-lowest number of homicides. Remarkably, there were zero murders in the transit system for the first time in seven years. District attorneys across

the city praised the efforts. Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark stated, "It is sad we continue to see so many guns in our city, but we will keep working together to remove them." Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez added, "The destruction of deadly weapons keeps them off our streets and protects all New Yorkers." Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg highlighted the direct impact: "Through our collaboration with the NYPD and mayor, shootings were down 45% and homicides

down 20% in Manhattan between 2021 and 2024." The battle against untraceable ghost guns has also intensified. In 2024 alone, 438 ghost guns were recovered, following steady year-on-year increases. In response to the growing threat, Mayor Adams and city officials have pushed for stricter federal regulations, including submitting an amicus brief to the U.S. Supreme Court in the case *Garland v. VanDerStok*. Mayor Adams' comprehensive approach — detailed

in his "Blueprint to End Gun Violence" and "Blueprint for Community Safety" — combines enforcement with upstream solutions like youth programs, prevention efforts, and economic opportunities in vulnerable communities. The city has invested nearly \$500 million in initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of violence. The Gun Violence Strategies Partnership, a 30+ agency collaboration, continues to drive accountability by reviewing every felony gun violence arrest daily. In 2024, this partnership reviewed over 700 cases, achieving an 85.5% bail or remand rate for those charged. Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr., reflecting the sentiments of many New Yorkers, said, "I know the unimaginable pain of losing a close friend to gun violence, so I join with countless Queens residents in saying good riddance to these awful guns that have just been destroyed." As the city advances its mission to eliminate illegal guns, the destruction of these thousands of weapons stands as a powerful symbol of progress — and a renewed commitment to ensuring that every New Yorker can live safely and without fear.



Environment



Open Streets, Open Hearts: Queens Unites for Earth Day 2025

Sustainability and celebration take center stage in car-free event.

Tasfia Khan

Queens transformed into a vibrant festival of sustainability, culture, and unity during this year's Car-Free Earth Day celebration, where thousands of New Yorkers took to the streets to embrace open, vehicle-free spaces. Organized by the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) in partnership with Save the People USA, the festivities turned Woodside Avenue between 75th and 78th Streets into a colorful hub of music, education,

and environmental action. Held on Saturday, April 26, 2025, the event marked the kickoff of the city's 2025 Open Streets season. Across all five boroughs, 54 streets and plazas were closed to cars, opening room for free bike rides, public art displays, cultural performances, and eco-friendly activities. Queens' Woodside Avenue stood out with a lively nashheed concert featuring celebrated artists Iqbal HJ, Salauddin Rasel, Sadekur Rahman, and Ayesha Tarannum,

drawing large crowds and filling the air with uplifting melodies. "This year's monumental Car-Free Earth Day celebration will feature exciting programming, music, and activities for New Yorkers from all walks of life," said NYC DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez in a statement. The day's programming reflected a larger mission: encouraging sustainable transportation, celebrating cultural diversity, and educating the public about environmental

responsibility. Community organizations like Save the People USA played a crucial role, ensuring that the event not only entertained but also empowered. Booths along the avenue offered resources on recycling, biking, and health initiatives, engaging participants of all ages. Throughout the city, signature events included free bike repairs, Indigenous dance performances, fitness classes, environmental panels, and live art installations.

In Queens, the collaborative energy between city agencies and grassroots organizations showed how public spaces could be transformed into lively, educational environments when freed from traffic. Participants enjoyed interactive activities, while Citi Bike offered free day passes, allowing residents and visitors to explore the city's 1,000-mile bike network sustainably. Public art projects, commissioned by NYC DOT Art, added creative flair to the day, using

installations to highlight themes of climate change and resilience. As the sun set on a day filled with performances, conversations, and community bonding, it was clear that Car-Free Earth Day had succeeded in demonstrating the possibilities of a greener, more connected New York City. The celebration was not just about closing streets to traffic — it was about opening them to people, ideas, and hope for a sustainable future.



Food

Food, Love, and Community Spirit at Darul Uloom Event

Hundreds benefit from partnership between nonprofits to fight food insecurity.



Sakin Auhin

A spirit of generosity filled the air on Thursday, April 24, 2025, as volunteers and families gathered for a large-scale Food Drive at Darul Uloom on Hillside Avenue in Queens. Organized by Save the People USA in collaboration

with MET Council and UMR (United Mission for Relief and Development), the event embodied a powerful message of unity, compassion, and community support. Starting at 4:30 PM, a steady stream of residents arrived at the mosque's premises, eager to participate in

a drive that aimed not only to distribute food but to build a sense of hope among neighbors. Volunteers, many of them young community members, stood ready with smiles and open arms, handing out bags filled with essentials like rice, canned goods, fresh produce, and pantry staples.

"This isn't just about food—it's about showing that no one in our community should feel alone or forgotten," said one volunteer from Save the People USA. "We are here for each other, especially in tough times."

The food drive welcomed everyone, regardless of background or circumstance. Organizers stressed the importance of inclusion, noting that hunger knows no boundaries. Banners at the event proudly displayed the names of partnering organizations, each dedicated to fighting food insecurity across New York City. Throughout the afternoon, Darul Uloom's

parking lot buzzed with activity. Entire families lined up to receive food packages, while volunteers ensured a smooth and respectful distribution process. Parents carried bags while children played nearby, underscoring the event's dual mission of meeting physical needs and uplifting community spirit.

Representatives from MET Council and UMR were also present, working side-by-side

too many households," a representative from UMR explained. "Events like this not only provide immediate relief, but also fosters connection that help us find long-term solutions together." The partnership between Save the People USA, MET Council, and UMR emphasized that addressing food insecurity requires cooperation across religious, cultural, and social lines. It also showcased

with many expressing heartfelt gratitude before heading home with full bags—and even fuller hearts. Some families lingered after receiving their food, chatting with volunteers, and sharing personal stories of resilience and hope. "This is what real community looks like," said one attendee. "When we come together, we can overcome anything." In a time when economic pressures and uncertainties continue to weigh heavily on many families, events like Thursday's food drive offered more than just groceries—they offered a reminder that compassion remains one of the community's greatest strengths. The evening concluded with warm thanks from organizers and a promise that this would not be the last gathering of its kind. Plans are already underway for future drives, ensuring that no one in Queens is left behind. As one volunteer put it simply, "Come with love, leave with hope."



with local volunteers. Their collaboration highlighted the strength that comes when organizations pool their resources and energy for the common good. "Food insecurity continues to impact

how local action can make a significant difference when national challenges feel overwhelming. As the sun began to set, organizers estimated that hundreds of families had been served,



Unity

Celebrating Generosity: Post-Eid Fest Brings Joy to Students

Zakat Foundation of America and Save the People join hands to spread smiles

Tayeb Ali

In a heartfelt extension of Eid celebrations, the Zakat Foundation of America, in collaboration with Save the People, organized a Post-Eid Fest aimed at bringing joy and support to local students. The event, held recently, combined the festive spirit of Eid with community service, reinforcing the message



of compassion and care. Students attending the event were treated to a distribution of delicious meals, allowing them to continue celebrating Eid in a warm, communal



environment. In addition to the food distribution, the organizers also provided flip-flops to the students, ensuring that the spirit of giving was tangible in both thought and action. Representatives from the Zakat Foundation's New York office were present during the event, personally engaging with attendees and helping with the distributions. Their

presence highlighted the organization's commitment not only to global humanitarian efforts but also to local community welfare. Organizers expressed that the Post-Eid Fest was designed to create a space where young students could feel remembered and cherished beyond the formal Eid day festivities. Volunteers from Save

the People played a key role in coordinating the distribution efforts and ensuring that each participant left with a smile. One attendee shared that events like these make a lasting impact, especially for children who may not always have access to special treats or new essentials like footwear. "It's not just the gifts," they said. "It's the feeling that

someone cares." The Post-Eid Fest successfully combined charity with celebration, embodying the values of empathy, kindness, and community spirit that lie at the heart of Eid. The organizers hope that this initiative will inspire similar programs throughout the year, continuing to build bridges of goodwill across communities.



Education

Building Faith and Excellence: Qari Yasser Abdel Basit at Elhaam Academy

A day of inspiration, learning, and heartfelt moments.

Mehedi Hassan

Students and staff at Elhaam Academy were honored to welcome world-renowned Qari Yasser Abdel Basit for a special visit that celebrated learning, faith, and community spirit. Known globally for his exceptional Quranic recitation and commitment to Islamic education, Qari Yasser Abdel Basit spent meaningful time exploring the academy and interacting closely with its young students. During his visit, Qari Yasser Abdel Basit toured the academy building, stopping by various classrooms where students were engaged in a range

of activities. From academic lessons to arts and crafts projects, the students' enthusiasm and focus were on full display. The Qari took his time observing the children's work, offering gentle corrections and encouragement wherever possible. Whether a student was practicing reading, working on writing, or creating a colorful piece of art, his supportive presence uplifted both students and teachers alike. Rather than a formal ceremony, the atmosphere was one of natural engagement and warmth. The young students—many of them in early elementary grades—were thrilled



to have such a distinguished guest take a personal interest in their work. Qari Yasser Abdel Basit provided subtle guidance in some classrooms, helping children with pronunciation, study topics, and offering kind words that boosted their confidence. Following the classroom visits, a small interactive

session was arranged where Qari Yasser Abdel Basit addressed the students in an age-appropriate and friendly manner. Speaking softly and with encouragement, he emphasized the importance of loving the Quran, respecting teachers, and striving for excellence in both Islamic and worldly

knowledge. He made duas (supplications) for their success, asking Allah to bless their learning journeys and nurture them into future leaders grounded in faith. Teachers and staff at Elhaam Academy expressed their gratitude for the visit, noting that it provided an unforgettable experience for the students. "It was a true honor for our young learners to have someone of Qari Yasser Abdel Basit's stature visit and engage with them so personally," said one teacher. "His kindness, humility, and encouragement will leave a lasting impression on their young hearts."

The visit further highlighted Elhaam Academy's mission of blending strong academics with Islamic values, aiming to produce well-rounded individuals rooted in character, spirituality, and excellence. As Qari Yasser Abdel Basit departed, he left behind smiles, motivation, and an enduring sense of inspiration among the students and teachers. His gentle guidance and personal attention reminded everyone present of the profound impact that encouragement and kindness can have on a child's journey of learning and faith.



Women

Honoring Women in Faith: Brooklyn's Interfaith Celebration Unites Communities

An evening of dialogue, diversity,
and inspiration at Prospect Park.



Maimuna Chowdury

The Prospect Park Boathouse was filled with unity, warmth, and inspiration on Wednesday, April 22, 2025, as community members gathered for the "Interfaith Celebration: Women Leaders in Faith Spaces," a vibrant evening honoring outstanding women making change through faith leadership. Organized by the 67th Precinct Clergy Council, Jewish Community Relations Council, and Prospect Park Alliance, the event brought together faith leaders, activists, and residents

across Brooklyn to recognize women whose work bridges religious traditions and fosters social justice. Against the backdrop of Prospect Park's serene setting, guests enjoyed an evening of conversation, recognition, and shared traditions under the theme of breaking barriers through dialogue. The night began with a panel discussion featuring selected honorees—women nominated for their transformative work in houses of worship and nonprofit organizations dedicated to faith communities. Each

panelist shared powerful reflections on the intersection of faith, leadership, and community service. They spoke about challenges faced by women in faith-based spaces, the importance of interfaith solidarity, and the role compassion plays in bridging divides during turbulent times. "Our faith traditions may differ, but the core values of justice, mercy, and community upliftment unite us," one panelist remarked, drawing applause from the audience. Following the panel, attendees came together to "break bread"—a highlight of the evening

that showcased the beauty of shared cultures through food. Dishes from various backgrounds were served, reflecting the diverse roots of the Brooklyn community and symbolizing unity through hospitality. The celebration culminated in the formal recognition of the honorees. Each woman received an award commemorating her commitment to faith leadership and community building. Their stories, filled with resilience, compassion, and determination, inspired a collective sense of hope and pride among those gathered.

"At a time when division seeks to separate us, gatherings like this remind us that there is more that unites us than divides us," said one organizer. "Tonight is not just about celebrating individuals—it's about celebrating the strength of our diverse community and committing to a future where all are uplifted." The evening was a testament to Brooklyn's ongoing efforts to counter hate and division by fostering spaces for learning, collaboration, and shared purpose. Leaders emphasized the importance of continuing to build bridges among

faith communities and nurturing future generations of compassionate leadership. The Interfaith Celebration served as a vibrant example of what is possible when communities come together to honor diversity, elevate women's voices, and renew their collective commitment to justice and unity. As guests departed the boathouse into the crisp spring night, the spirit of solidarity and inspiration lingered—a fitting reminder of the enduring power of faith and community working hand in hand.



Borough of Queens

Queens Under Attack, but United: Richards Delivers Defiant State of the Borough

State of the Borough Focuses on Resilience and Progress

Taslima Haque

Amid the grandeur of Queens Theatre and against a backdrop of musical performances, prayers, and urgent calls for action, Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr. delivered a spirited State of the Borough address on April 25, 2025, striking a delicate balance between optimism and defiance. "We are living proof that the idea of America is alive and well, right here in the World's Borough," Richards proclaimed before a full audience. His hour-long speech framed Queens not only as a beacon of diversity but also as a community under siege from federal attacks — especially those targeting immigrants, education, and the environment — and resolute in its response. Opening with stirring

performances from the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts Choir and dancers from RIOULT, the event set an energetic, inspiring tone. An interfaith invocation, featuring Imam Shamsi Ali, Rev. Eli Wilson III, Rabbi Sharon Ballan, and Bashleen Kaur, symbolized the unity at the heart of Richards' message. Welcomed by Deputy Borough President Ebony Young and Queens Theatre Executive Director Taryn Sacramone, the crowd heard remarks from City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams and Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz before Richards took the stage. Central to Richards' speech was a vigorous defense of Queens' immigrant communities. Citing the Trump administration's actions against immigrants, he emphasized, "When we talk about fighting

back, protecting our immigrant communities from attack is where we must start." His administration, Richards noted, has been proactive, hosting Know Your Rights workshops and supporting organizations like Make The Road New York through investments in community hubs. Turning to the environment, Richards sharply criticized federal rollbacks of climate initiatives, particularly the withdrawal of flood mitigation funding critical to Queens. In response, he touted the borough's \$44 million commitment to local parks and celebrated the forthcoming Champlain Hudson Power Express, a project that will soon deliver clean hydroelectric power into the city's grid. "I can't promise we'll win every fight with the Trump administration

on the environment," he acknowledged, "but I can promise we won't go down without a fight." Education was another focal point. Richards decried what he characterized as federal attacks on public schooling but proudly noted his administration's investment of more than \$78 million in Queens public schools since 2021. This funding has supported the construction of new schools, including a 547-seat elementary school in Long Island City, and the future development of a high school on Hillside Avenue in Jamaica. Nearly 9,000 new school seats have been completed or are underway. "Make no mistake: my administration will stop at nothing to ensure our kids receive the high-quality education they deserve," he vowed.

On transportation, Richards praised transformative projects like the \$5.5 billion Interborough Express, designed to connect underserved neighborhoods, and the soon-to-launch Queens Bus Network Redesign set to improve transit routes starting in June. Calling transportation "the great equalizer," he emphasized the necessity of making every corner of Queens accessible. Housing development was also a major theme. Richards highlighted projects such as the Willets Point redevelopment, creating 2,500 affordable units, and the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan aimed at revitalizing one of the nation's busiest transit hubs. He called for transformative uses of underutilized land, specifically proposing new housing on the 50-acre Creedmoor

Psychiatric Center campus. Throughout the address, Richards maintained a message of shared responsibility and collective resilience. "The problems we face are profound. When haven't they been?" he asked. "But we are the answer. No one else but us." The event, co-sponsored by organizations like JetBlue, the Port Authority, and Ponce Bank, concluded with a reception at the Queens Museum, where attendees continued conversations about the borough's future. As music from DJ Tam Jams played and community leaders mingled, the energy of the day reflected Richards' central theme: that while challenges loom large, Queens remains steadfast, proud, and forward-looking.





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Science & Technology

Scientific Wonders and Spiritual Wisdom: Abdul Hye Enlightens Darul Uloom Students

Space science and Quranic teachings harmonized in special lecture

Humayun Azad

Darul Uloom recently welcomed a distinguished guest, Dr. Abdul Hye, a retired NASA scientist and Islamic scholar, for a special lecture that offered students a unique perspective on the intersection of science and faith. Drawing from his three decades of aerospace experience at NASA's Johnson Space Center, Dr. Hye shared insights that illuminated the remarkable parallels between modern scientific discoveries and the teachings of the Quran. Speaking to an audience composed exclusively of Darul Uloom students, Dr. Hye used examples from his work on the



International Space Station, Space Shuttle, and various space medicine projects to highlight the intricate designs and systems governing the universe. His career, marked by technical achievements and a deep commitment

to Islamic outreach, provided a powerful backdrop for his presentation. Throughout the session, students were introduced to scientific concepts in fields such as astronomy, geology, embryology,

and oceanography, with references to corresponding Quranic verses. The connection between empirical research and divine revelation was presented not as a coincidence, but as a testament to the depth

and timelessness of Islamic knowledge. Dr. Hye's approach underscored the idea that the pursuit of science is not separate from spiritual growth, but rather complements it. The lecture also emphasized the importance of education and intellectual curiosity within the framework of Islamic teachings. Students were encouraged to approach both religious studies and scientific inquiry with the same passion, seeing them as interconnected paths to understanding the world and their role within it. Reactions from the student body reflected a sense of inspiration and renewed enthusiasm. Many expressed that the session broadened

their view of how Islamic faith encourages the acquisition of knowledge and the exploration of the natural world. Faculty members noted the positive impact of the lecture, praising its ability to strengthen the students' academic and spiritual aspirations simultaneously. Dr. Abdul Hye's visit to Darul Uloom left a profound mark, reinforcing the institution's commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals who see no division between faith and reason. His message resonated deeply with the students, offering them a vision of scholarship that embraces both the mysteries of the heavens and the truths of their faith.





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Religion

Jamaica Muslim Center Launches Mega Expansion Project

Leaders and Community Gather to Celebrate Growth and Progress

Tamim Iqbal

In a proud and historic moment for the Queens Muslim community, Jamaica Muslim Center (JMC) officially launched its mega expansion project with a vibrant groundbreaking ceremony on Sunday, April 27, 2025. Held at JMC's headquarters at 85-37 JMC Way, the event drew a large crowd of community members, leaders, and public officials — all gathered to celebrate a vision of growth, unity, and service. The event commenced with a heartfelt Qur'an recitation by Imam Kawkab, setting a spiritually uplifting tone. JMC Secretary Aftab Mannan moderated the program, while JMC President Dr. Mohammad Rahman Tuhin welcomed the attendees with opening remarks. Dr. Imam



"This institution is pivotal to building our community. I couldn't think of a more important time for your center to grow, when our values, diversity, civil rights, and immigration rights are under attack. Today's groundbreaking represents growth and progress and affirms that we belong here."

~ Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.

Shamsi Ali, Imam Abu Jafar Beg, and JMC Board of Trustees President Nazmul Khan also addressed the gathering, reflecting on

JMC's journey and the importance of investing in future generations. The expansion project will add a dedicated youth center, a hifdh (Qur'an memorization) center, a gymnasium, and expanded facilities for women — providing vital spaces for learning, recreation, spiritual development, and community engagement. Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr. delivered an impassioned speech, applauding the center's contributions to the borough's diversity and resilience. "Thank you, Jamaica Muslim Center, for all that you do for our borough," Richards said. "This institution is pivotal to building our community. I couldn't think of a more important time for your center to grow, when our values, diversity, civil rights, and immigration rights are under attack. Today's groundbreaking represents growth and

progress and affirms that we belong here." Richards emphasized the importance of creating spaces for young people and lauded JMC's commitment to nurturing faith, education, and community spirit. He praised Queens' vibrant diversity, declaring, "We don't build walls in Queens — we build bridges." New York State Senator John C. Liu, a longtime supporter of JMC, also spoke warmly at the event. Reflecting on his decades-long connection to the center, Liu called the expansion a "milestone in the history of Jamaica Muslim Center and in the history of New York." He stressed that while the new facilities will provide more physical space, the true achievement lies in the spiritual growth and leadership development for future generations. Prominent community leaders, including



"The expansion of JMC center is a milestone in the history of Jamaica Muslim Center and in the history of New York."

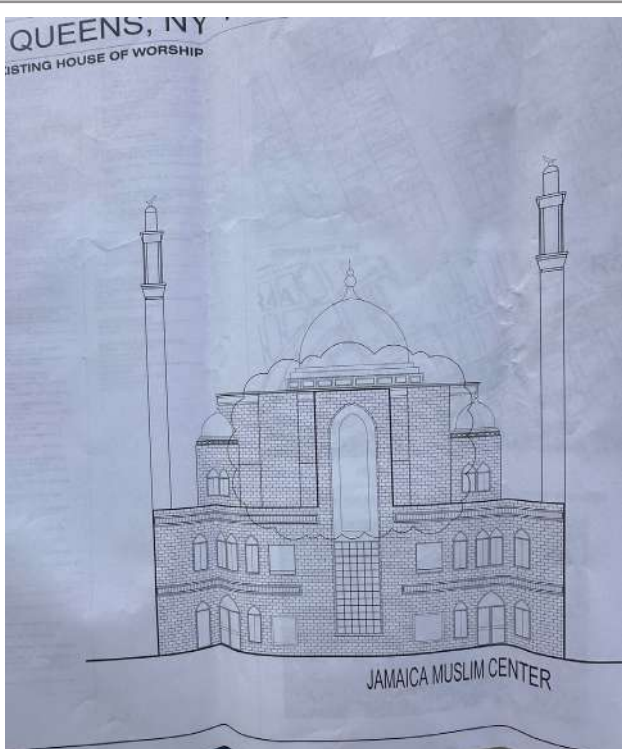
~ New York State Senator John C. Liu

former JMC Presidents Rafique Rahman and Halim Choudhry, along with Dr. Mohammad Billah, were present and shared reflections on the Center's remarkable journey and enduring legacy. All speakers highlighted the crucial role JMC has played in strengthening the broader Jamaica community. The

ceremony was not only about building physical structures but about reinforcing the ideals of faith, service, education, and inclusivity. Speakers repeatedly emphasized that JMC's success is a testament to the hard work, vision, and unity of the local Muslim community. As attendees gathered for photos and shared heartfelt congratulations, there was a clear sense of pride and hope in the air. The groundbreaking marked the beginning of a new chapter — one that promises to build upon JMC's rich legacy and extend its impact for generations to come. The Jamaica Muslim Center's expansion stands as a powerful symbol of resilience, faith, and the endless possibilities that arise when a community dreams boldly and works together.



Religion





END PAGE

MIST NY 2025 Celebrates Student Excellence

Celebrating Talent, Leadership, and Islamic Values

Sourav Hasan

In an inspiring culmination of talent, leadership, and community spirit, the 2025 Muslim Interscholastic Tournament (MIST) New York edition concluded with a vibrant final round and awards ceremony. Drawing high school seniors from across the region, MIST NY celebrated the outstanding achievements of young competitors in a wide range of categories, fostering both personal growth and community engagement. MIST is a nationwide initiative aimed at empowering high school students to develop leadership skills, enhance communication, and inspire creativity, all while nurturing a deeper understanding of Islam and Muslim identity. Since its founding in 2002 by a teenager in Houston, Texas, MIST has grown to reach participants in 18 regions across North America and the UK. This year’s MIST NY was no exception to the

tournament’s tradition of excellence. Students competed in over 30 categories, ranging from arts, sports, debate, writing, and business to STEM fields. Each competition provided a platform for students to express themselves, sharpen their public speaking skills, practice problem-solving, and demonstrate professionalism — all within a supportive and inclusive environment. The atmosphere throughout the final rounds was electric, with participants showcasing months of hard work, creativity, and dedication. Whether through a moving oratory performance, a dazzling art display, or a meticulously researched project, students embraced the opportunity to let their talents shine. Judges, made up of community leaders, educators, and professionals, evaluated entries based on criteria such as originality, execution, and the ability to communicate ideas effectively. Beyond competition, MIST’s greater



mission of building connections was on full display. Students formed friendships with peers from diverse backgrounds, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose. MIST NY remained welcoming to everyone, regardless of religious affiliation, emphasizing critical thinking, mutual respect, and a celebration of talents and ideas. Throughout the

day, workshops and discussion sessions allowed participants to reflect on broader societal issues, tackle stereotypes about Islam, and build strategies for leadership and advocacy. These moments, organizers say, are as important as the competitions themselves — planting seeds of confidence and empowerment that will grow far beyond the

tournament. The awards ceremony recognized outstanding performers in each category, with winners receiving medals and trophies in front of an enthusiastic crowd of peers and supporters. Yet, MIST NY’s true success was evident in every smile, every handshake, and every inspired conversation that took place. The Muslim

Interscholastic Tournament continues to be a beacon of opportunity, proving that with the right encouragement and space to grow, today’s youth can achieve remarkable things. As the final applause echoed through the hall, it was clear that the spirit of MIST — rooted in leadership, learning, and love for community — is alive and thriving.



All Image Source: MIST New York