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NEW YORK NEWS

The Voice of People

From New York



Photo: Prime Ministers of India, USA, & Pakistan respectively

Image Source: indiatoday.in

India-Pakistan Ceasefire Declared

U.S. and international pressure credited with halting cross-border conflict

Jamshed Mozumder

After a week of escalating military conflict and rising fears of a broader war, India and Pakistan agreed to a full and immediate ceasefire on May 10, bringing a brief halt to deadly exchanges across the Line of Control in Kashmir. The agreement, reportedly brokered through international mediation led by the United States, has been welcomed with relief but remains fragile. Just hours after the announcement, explosions echoed across Srinagar, raising alarm and casting doubt over the ceasefire's durability. India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri accused Pakistan of immediate violations,

Explosions were reported in Srinagar shortly after the ceasefire was announced.

Officials on both sides accused each other of violating the agreement within hours of its initiation.

The ceasefire has sparked relief and cautious optimism in Kashmir and surrounding regions.

while Pakistan's Foreign Ministry countered with claims of Indian breaches, urging restraint and communication. "This is still a very delicate and fragile ceasefire," said Sahar Khan, a Washington-based security analyst. "While this is good news, I do expect to see some back and forth." Residents on both sides of the conflict expressed cautious optimism. "We want peace and an end

to all these hostilities," said Rumaisa Jan, a resident of Srinagar, while Zulfikar Ali in Muzaffarabad added, "For us, peace means survival." Though the ceasefire offers hope, past experiences have left communities wary. With talks of broader negotiations and water-sharing issues looming, many agree: peace remains both urgent and uncertain.

Pope Leo XIV Becomes First American Pontiff

Historic election marks a new era for the Catholic Church

Farhana Azmi

For the first time in the Catholic Church's 2,000-year history, an American has been elected pope. Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost of the United States was chosen by the College of Cardinals on Thursday evening, taking the name Pope Leo XIV. His election was signaled by white smoke from the Sistine Chapel at 6:07 PM, sparking jubilation in St. Peter's Square. In his first appearance,

In first address, Pope Leo called for peace, unity, and a missionary Church.



Photo: Robert Francis Prevost becomes Pope Leo XIV
Image Source: malaymail.com

Pope Leo XIV greeted the world with a message of peace. "Peace be with all of you," he told the crowd, emphasizing disarmament, bridge-building, and openness. He thanked Pope Francis, signaling continuity in humility and

social justice. Though American-born, Pope Leo spent over 40 years in Peru, serving in the region of Chiclayo, known for poverty and underdevelopment. He is praised for his close ties to ordinary people and his consistent advocacy for the marginalized. His papal name pays tribute to Pope Leo XIII, remembered for laying the foundations of Catholic social teaching. Pope Leo XIV's election marks a turning point for a globally diverse Church, with many hoping his leadership will combine spiritual integrity with bold engagement on social issues.

U.S. and China Begin 'Total Reset' in Trade Talks

High-level Geneva meeting aims to ease tariff war

No major agreements reached, but both sides expressed optimism.

Hamid Abdullah

In a significant development, President Donald Trump declared a "total reset" in U.S.-China trade relations following high-level talks in Geneva on May 10. Top American officials, including Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, met with Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng in the first direct talks since tariffs between the two countries escalated earlier this year. While no concrete agreements were announced, Trump described the eight-hour meeting as "very

good" and said "great progress" had been made. The talks, held at the residence of Switzerland's ambassador to the UN, were confirmed by visible security and diplomatic activity. Tariffs have crippled nearly \$600 billion in bilateral trade, with U.S. levies reaching 145% on Chinese goods and China imposing 125% retaliatory duties. Both sides signaled willingness to continue dialogue. The Swiss government, through Economy Minister Guy Parmelin, welcomed the talks as a positive step toward easing global economic tensions.



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Memories That Time Cannot Erase

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Queens Candidate

Queens Native Japneet Singh Announces City Council Run for District 28

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Bangladesh Society Board Of Trustees Takes Oath

Staff Reporter

Atwarul Alam, Abdur Rahim

A joint meeting of the Executive Council of Bangladesh Society and the newly elected Board of Trustees was held at Bangladesh Society Bhaban on May 4. The meeting was presided over by Bangladesh Society President Ataur Rahman Selim, and conducted by General Secretary Mohammad Ali. Key figures present included Senior Vice President Mohiuddin Dewan, Vice President Kamruzzaman Kamrul, Treasurer Mofizul Islam Bhuiyan (Rumi), Organizing Secretary Duke Khan, Cultural Secretary Anik Raj, Public Relations and Promotion Secretary Riju Mohammad, and others. The newly elected Board of Trustees members, including Kazi Azharul Haque Milan, Azimur Rahman Borhan, Md.



Photo: Shah M. Newaz, President, Board of Trustees

Howlader, Shah M. Newaz, Dr. Md. Enamul Haque, Junaid Ahmed Chowdhury, Kazi Sakhawat Hossain Azam, Fakhru Islam Delwar, Ahsan Habib, and Naeem Tutul, were sworn in during the meeting. President Ataur Rahman Selim administered the oath, and the officials of the organization welcomed

the new trustees with flowers. In his address, President Selim urged the trustees to fully support the organization's activities, with a special focus on establishing a Bangladesh Center for the Society. The trustees assured their commitment to supporting the Society's goals for its continued welfare. Following the oath-taking, a Board of Trustees meeting was held. In line with organizational rules, Shah M. Newaz was unanimously elected as the chairman. This Board will assume its duties from June 1, 2025, and serve until May 31, 2027. The event marked an important step for the Society, as the new Board of Trustees and Executive Council continue their collaborative efforts for the Society's growth and success.

Bangla NoboBarsho Celebration by Universites Alumni in New York



Reporter

Bangla NoboBarsho 1432 was celebrated in New York by Universities Alumni. Dhaka University Alumni, Chittagong University Alumni, Rajshahi University Alumni, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University Alumni and Shahjalal University of Science

and Technology Alumni participated in the event organized by Jahangirnagar Alumni Association of America. Engineer Mahfuzul Haque was in full support. The event was held on May 3 at the York College Academic Core Atrium in New York. The theme this time was Krishnachura

Flower to introduce Krishnachura Flower as the flower of the month of Baishakh, summer, and to introduce Krishnachura Blossom to the world. The premises of York College Academic Core Building were decorated with

Baisakhi decorations since morning. There was a 100-foot long alpna on a jute, planned and drawn by Jahangirnagar Alumnai Akhtar Ahmed Rasha, which caught the attention of everyone, young and old, and was appreciated.

Prayer Time IN New York

FAJR	DHUHR	ASR	MAGHRIB	ISHA
04:12	12:52	04:47	08:04	09:32
04:11	12:52	04:48	08:05	09:33
04:09	12:52	04:48	08:06	09:35
04:08	12:52	04:48	08:07	09:36
04:06	12:52	04:49	08:08	09:38
04:05	12:52	04:49	08:09	09:39
04:04	12:52	04:49	08:09	09:40

Number 17

Visas of 17 Bangladeshi students at LaGuardia College canceled

NYN DESK

Homeland Security has canceled the visas of 17 Bangladeshi students at LaGuardia Community College in New York City. The number is from April. The letter sent to the college from the Immigration Department said, "The F-1 (student visa) has been canceled due to suspicious movements of the mentioned students." The college authorities have sent emails regarding the visa cancellation to the institutional emails of the concerned students. After the news became known, there is panic among international students at LaGordia Community College and other colleges in the city. Secretary of State Mark Rubio told the media that the visas of 5,000 international students have been canceled in the last 3 months.



A victim student, who did not want to be named, said, 'On April 17, I received an email from the college regarding the visa cancellation. I immediately contacted the college. I even want to go to the college. They advised me not to go to college. They said that since Largodia Community College does not have a Century campus, I would be arrested by law enforcement. A Bangladeshi student said, "I came to this country 3 years ago after spending lakhs of taka. I had aspirations of a beautiful and bright future. I was studying in this country after leaving my wife and children behind. Everything was going well. I was supposed to get a degree in computer science next January. Now I can't leave my house. I live in fear of being arrested. I have spent about 1 crore taka in 3 years. If I return to my country, I will not have a degree. What will I do when I return to my country?'

Visas of 17 Bangladeshi students at LaGuardia College canceled
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UNITY

Muslim Leaders Hold Key Meeting on NYC Elections

Deliberations aim to prioritize candidates for ranked-choice voting



engagement and inclusivity. With ranked-choice voting allowing voters to rank candidates by preference, attendees explored how best to align voting strategies with the community's values, emphasizing issues like public safety, economic opportunity, civil rights, and equitable governance. Rather than endorse a single

candidate, participants aimed to identify a preferred sequence that could inform future voter outreach and mobilization. Discussions were candid and policy-driven, analyzing candidate records, community engagement, and policy commitments. A strong emphasis was placed on supporting leaders with a demonstrated

history of advocating for marginalized communities, including Muslim New Yorkers. Attendees described the meeting as a shift toward grassroots-driven, participatory political engagement. Many noted that this transparent and collective model breaks from traditional gatekeeping and better reflects the diversity and energy of younger Muslim voters. While no formal endorsements were issued, the group left with a clear roadmap to guide community education and engagement efforts. As the city's election season heats up, such gatherings demonstrate a new level of political sophistication and unity within New York's Muslim population—one that is increasingly organized, informed, and ready to help shape the city's future.



Mirza Hasib

With growing stakes in New York City's political landscape, a group of independent Muslim leaders and professionals convened on Sunday, May 4 to deliberate on preferred candidates for the upcoming city

elections. The strategic gathering, attended by over 20 rising Muslim political thinkers, focused on identifying top contenders for the offices of Mayor, Public Advocate, and Comptroller under the city's ranked-choice voting system. This was not an

organizational or institutional event, but a meeting of unaffiliated individuals from across the Muslim community—including civic leaders, young professionals, and political strategists. While many joined in person, others participated virtually, ensuring wide



FAITH

Voices of a Nation: Muslim Hill Day 2025

Hundreds Push for Policy Reform and Human Rights Protections

Faisal Ahmed

Hundreds of Muslim advocates from across the United States converged on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. on April 28–29, 2025, for the 10th Annual National Muslim Advocacy Day, marking a decade of civic engagement and policy advocacy. Led by the U.S. Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO), the two-day event mobilized more than 750 participants, including community leaders, youth, and first-time attendees, all driven by this year’s urgent theme: “Defending Rights, Shaping Policy.” The atmosphere was both energized and purposeful as delegates held over 210 meetings with members of Congress and Senate offices, presenting a united voice on pressing domestic and international concerns. With a focus on issues like the ongoing genocide in Gaza, oppression of Uyghur Muslims in China, violence in Sudan and Burma, and the safeguarding of civil liberties in the U.S., participants demanded legislative action that prioritizes human rights and justice.



Prominent figures such as Rep. Rashida Tlaib, Rep. Ilhan Omar, and Rep. Lateefah Simon addressed the evening reception, affirming their commitment to civil rights, anti-racism, and ending global atrocities. “It starts with you and locally, then you’ll see the impact in Washington D.C.,” emphasized Nihad Awad, urging attendees to transform local engagement into national influence. Among the highlights

was the recognition of the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) as the top participating organization, with nearly 325 registrants from 19 states, including 200 youth from Young Muslims (YM) and active involvement from ICNA Sisters led by Sr. Sumaira. The award was accepted by Br. Ammar Siddiqui, symbolizing the growing role of Muslim youth in national advocacy efforts. CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations) also

received accolades, placing second in overall signups, a milestone they hope to surpass next year. Logistics were seamlessly executed by the ICNA Council for Social Justice (CSJ), who coordinated training webinars, accommodations, transport, and schedules for participants. A special session brought together six senior ICNA Ameer, including Br. Saad Kazmi, Dr. Talat Sultan, and Br. Zahid

Hussain, to share strategy and reflections, fostering unity across generations. This year’s legislative agenda called on Congress to protect nonprofit advocacy and free speech rights, particularly as Muslim and allied organizations face increased scrutiny and legislative targeting. Attendees also advocated for the NO BAN Act, opposing renewed visa restrictions on Muslim-majority countries, and pushed

for bold U.S. action to address mass atrocities abroad. The event reinforced several key takeaways: face time with legislators matters, community strength is vital, and no action—however small—is insignificant. Attendees were encouraged to lobby at the local level if unable to attend in person, with the understanding that real change often begins in one’s own district. Since its inception in 2015, Muslim Advocacy Day has grown into a cornerstone of Muslim American civic participation, providing a platform to challenge injustice, build coalitions, and influence policy. With participation stronger than ever and momentum building, leaders like Br. Saad Kazmi called on attendees to return to their communities empowered and committed to sustained activism. As advocates wrapped up two days of lobbying, reflection, and inspiration, the collective sentiment was clear: the fight for justice continues, rooted in faith, driven by unity, and powered by the unshakable resolve of American Muslims to shape a more equitable future.



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



Where Faith Meets Health

NYC Hosts Wellness Summit to Equip Religious Leaders in Public Health Efforts

Tayeb Ali

In an inspiring display of collaboration between spiritual leadership and public health, faith leaders from across New York City gathered on Wednesday, May 7, 2025, for the "For the Love of Community" Health and Wellness Summit. The event, hosted by NYC Health + Hospitals Faith Based Initiatives, took place at 50 Water Street, 15th Floor Conference Center (Room 1516A) and drew representatives from religious communities committed to strengthening wellness through faith-based outreach. The summit, which ran from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM, was

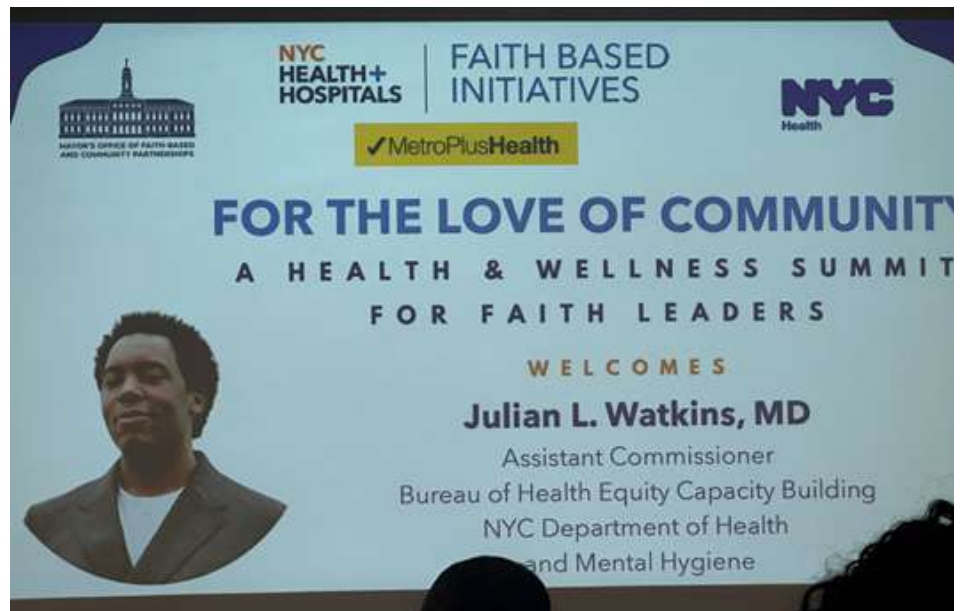
a collaborative effort involving the Mayor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Office of Faith-Based Initiatives, and MetroPlusHealth. Participants were treated to a welcoming atmosphere, complete with breakfast and lunch, setting the stage for a day of insight, strategy, and fellowship. Faith leaders, often described as the "first responders" to community concerns, were recognized throughout the summit as pivotal figures in advancing public health education and access. Several attendees

noted that religious leaders are uniquely positioned to influence health behaviors and help reduce stigma around issues like mental health, chronic illness, and addiction—especially in communities that face historical barriers to healthcare. The event underscored the belief that houses of worship can function as trusted centers for not only spiritual healing but also for health education and preventive care. According to discussions during the summit, equipping pastors, imams, and rabbis with credible health information allows them to better support their congregants,

many of whom seek their guidance before reaching out to medical professionals. There was also a strong focus on mental health, with some suggesting that faith institutions are often the first place individuals turn to when struggling. The message shared was that spiritual care can and should go hand-in-hand with clinical support, and that breaking the silence around emotional wellness is vital to building resilient communities. The day's speakers included representatives from NYC Health + Hospitals, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the Mayor's Office, as well

as community health professionals and leaders in addiction recovery services. The message echoed throughout the sessions was one of unity: that community wellness thrives when public institutions and faith-based organizations work in tandem. Workshops offered practical approaches to addressing public health needs within congregation everything from encouraging routine screenings and vaccinations to organizing local wellness events. Attendees were encouraged to see themselves not just as spiritual guides but as health advocates, bridge-builders, and

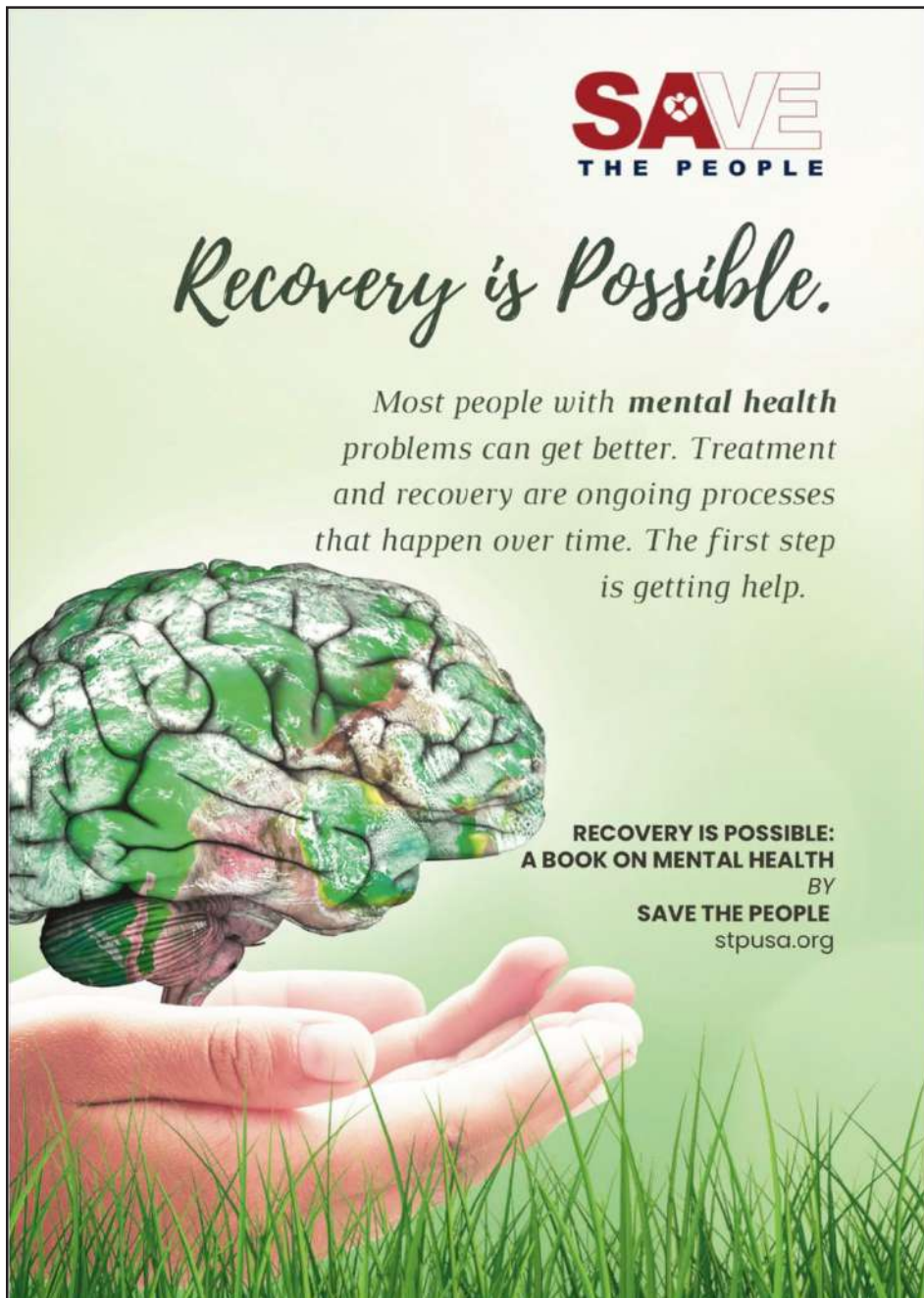
partners in the city's broader effort to reduce health disparities. The summit concluded with a strong sense of momentum, as leaders exchanged contact information and ideas for future partnerships. Many expressed appreciation for the opportunity to be part of a movement that recognizes the integral role of faith in community health. As one faith leader noted in a closing conversation, it was refreshing to be in a room where health and spirituality weren't treated as separate domains, but as parts of a shared mission to care for the whole person—mind, body, and soul.



HEALTH

Breaking the Stigma: Mental Health in Focus

President Trump Proclaims May 2025 as Mental Health Awareness Month



Taslina Haque

In a country still adjusting to the long-term impacts of a global pandemic, rising social isolation, and persistent health disparities, President Donald J. Trump's declaration of May 2025 as National Mental Health Awareness Month comes at a pivotal moment. Mental health has taken center stage in public policy, personal wellness, and national dialogue—no longer a fringe issue, but a defining challenge of our time.

"Mental illnesses can affect anyone, regardless of their background or circumstances. No person should have to face these challenges alone," reads the proclamation. The message resonates across generations, from teens grappling with anxiety to older adults experiencing loneliness and cognitive decline. It serves as both a recognition of the widespread crisis and a call for sustained action. The Pan American

Health Organization (PAHO) reports that mental disorders are now the leading cause of disability worldwide, contributing to about 20% of all lost healthy life days. Conditions like depression, anxiety, PTSD, and substance use disorders often go untreated, with only 10% of those in need receiving proper care. Among the most common and misunderstood conditions is anxiety. Unlike momentary stress, anxiety disorders can lead to chronic symptoms—racing heart, restlessness, nausea, and overwhelming dread—that interfere with daily life. Despite their prevalence, these conditions are still shrouded in stigma and often go unaddressed, especially among vulnerable populations. To tackle the issue head-on, the administration's Make America Healthy Again Commission is leading a coordinated effort to expand access, eliminate systemic barriers, and integrate mental health into the

broader framework of public health. A significant focus is the relationship between nutrition and mental wellness. Poor diet, food insecurity, and stress are all contributors to mental health decline, making lifestyle interventions an important piece of the prevention puzzle. The proclamation also highlights a particularly urgent need: improving care for military veterans, many of whom return from service with deep trauma. "No one who has defended our country should struggle to get support when they need it most," it states. Veterans often face long wait times, a shortage of mental health providers, and a persistent stigma surrounding psychological support. Addressing these barriers is critical in light of elevated suicide and PTSD rates in military communities. Outside of government, community organizations and advocacy groups are working to fill the gaps. Across the country, groups like the National Council for Mental Wellbeing and

Mental Health UK are launching awareness campaigns, conducting educational workshops, and promoting early intervention. These local and national efforts are helping to normalize mental health conversations and reduce the shame often associated with seeking help.

Adding to these initiatives, the nonprofit SAVE The People has published a free online book that offers educational resources, self-help strategies, and insights into systemic challenges. Designed for wide accessibility, the book is available at stpusa.org, and aims to empower individuals, families, and communities to better understand and support mental well-being.

Experts emphasize that real progress will require more than awareness—it demands action. In workplaces, leaders can promote mental health by creating supportive environments, offering flexibility, and investing in employee wellness programs. In schools, the inclusion of mental health curricula and access to counselors are increasingly seen as essential steps in addressing the youth mental health crisis.

At home, individuals are encouraged to initiate open conversations, check in on loved ones,

and listen without judgment. Simple gestures—like asking someone how they're really doing—can be surprisingly powerful. On a broader level, public support for mental health funding, advocacy for policy change, and participation in awareness events can help shift the cultural narrative.

One of the most pressing concerns remains equity. Marginalized communities—especially racial minorities, immigrants, and LGBTQ+ populations—often face compounded obstacles such as language barriers, lack of culturally competent care, and inadequate insurance coverage. Addressing these disparities must be a priority if progress is to be inclusive and effective.

The mental health workforce shortage also looms large. With a limited number of licensed therapists and psychiatrists—especially in rural and underserved areas—many people face months-long waits for care. Proposed solutions include expanding telehealth services, offering tuition incentives to mental health professionals, and investing in community-based mental health centers. As President Trump

stated in his May 5 proclamation, "Together, we will build a stronger, healthier future for all." The message echoes the sentiment that mental health is not an isolated issue—it intersects with economics, education, housing, and healthcare access. It is a public health issue, a human rights issue, and a national priority.

This year's observance of Mental Health Awareness Month reminds Americans that healing is possible, support is available, and no one should suffer in silence. While the challenges are vast, the momentum is growing. Thanks to community-driven initiatives, government action, and growing public awareness, there is hope that mental health will no longer be treated as an afterthought—but as a fundamental aspect of overall well-being. Awareness is the first step. The next is commitment—from individuals, institutions, and leaders alike. Whether it's checking in on a friend, supporting mental health policies, or simply taking a moment to listen—every action matters.

Mental health is everyone's issue. And May 2025 is a powerful reminder that we all have a role to play.

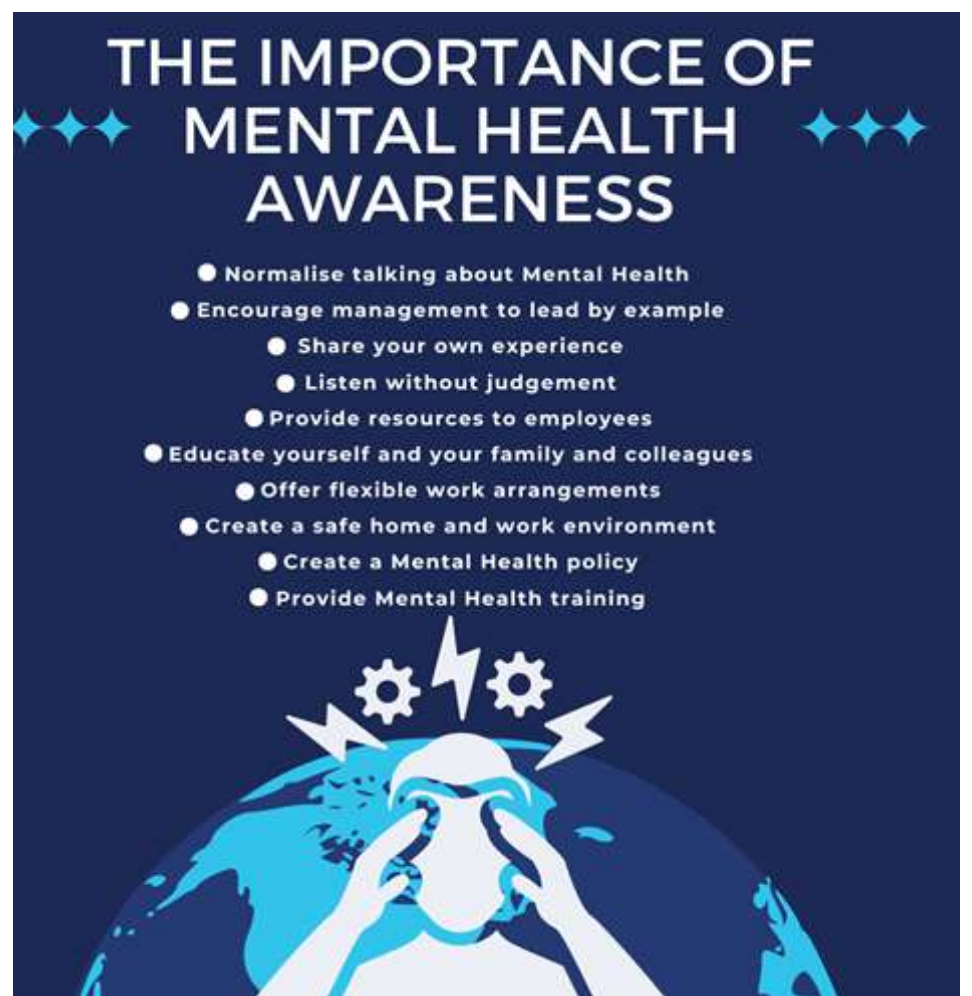


Image Source: hrscsb.org



**AMERICAN
Curry AWARDS
2025**



CURRY COMPETITION

Starter/ Appetizer (Chatpoti/ Fuchka etc.)

Dessert (Sweet/Cake/Pitha etc.)

Main Course (Polao/ Roast/ Korma/ Biryani/ Curry etc.)

QUEENS

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FINANCE

A New Era of Ethical Investing: Islamic Finance in Real Estate

Exploring how faith-based financial principles are reshaping the global property market

By Dr. Syed Ayaz Ahmad Shah
Darul Uloom New York

As the global real estate market becomes increasingly diverse, dynamic, and digitally interconnected, an age-old financial system rooted in religious ethics is gaining renewed attention. Islamic finance, governed by Shariah principles, is rapidly emerging as a viable and attractive framework for real estate investment and development around the world. With its core focus on fairness, transparency, and shared risk, Islamic finance stands in stark contrast to conventional lending models—and in many ways, complements the very nature of real estate, which is inherently tied to tangible assets and long-term commitments. The fundamentals of Islamic finance may appear unfamiliar to many outside the Muslim world, but they are deeply entrenched in centuries of economic practice, dating back to the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The framework prohibits *riba* (interest), *gharar* (excessive uncertainty), and investments in *haram* (forbidden) industries such as gambling, alcohol, and unethical enterprises. Instead, Islamic finance encourages real economic activity, profit-sharing, and ethical conduct. These foundational values make it especially well-suited for the real estate sector, where long-term partnerships and asset-backed financing are critical. As of 2024, the Islamic finance industry has expanded to

are also developing Islamic finance hubs and exploring Shariah-compliant real estate instruments. One of the primary vehicles in this system is the *Murabaha* contract, a cost-plus sale mechanism wherein a financial institution purchases a property and resells it to a client at a profit. While it may appear similar to a conventional mortgage, the difference lies in the absence of interest and the actual transfer of asset ownership. *Murabaha* is especially useful in jurisdictions without Islamic banks, offering devout Muslims a Shariah-compliant way to own homes. Another popular model is *Ijara*, or lease-to-own, where the bank retains ownership of a property while leasing it to a client who will eventually become the owner, either through gradual payments or a final balloon payment. This model is particularly effective for commercial real estate or long-term rental arrangements where both parties wish to build equity gradually while maintaining flexibility. Perhaps the most collaborative of Islamic finance instruments is the *Musharakah*, especially its *Diminishing* variant. Here, the client and the bank jointly purchase a property, and the client incrementally buys out the bank's share over time while paying rent on the bank's ownership portion. This structure promotes equity, mutual benefit, and fairness—hallmarks of Islamic financial ethics. It also mirrors the real-life gradual transition of ownership that most real estate projects experience. For new developments,

Istisna contracts offer a compelling solution. These are forward-sale agreements where an asset is built to order using funds provided by the financier, and later leased back to the client through *Ijara*. In this way, Islamic finance accommodates the complex and



Photo: Dr. Syed Ayaz Ahmad Shah

HIGHLIGHT

● **Islamic finance prohibits interest and promotes ethical, asset-backed, and risk-shared transactions.**

● **Instruments like *Murabaha*, *Ijara*, *Musharakah*, *Istisna*, and *Sukuk* are being actively used in real estate.**

● **The global Islamic finance industry manages over \$3 trillion in assets as of 2024.**

● **It appeals to both faith-based and ethical investors, promoting financial inclusion and stability.**

● **Challenges include regulatory barriers, low awareness, and lack of standardization outside Muslim-majority regions.**

capital-intensive needs of construction and development projects, including custom housing and commercial real estate. On a larger scale, *Sukuk*, often called Islamic bonds, have revolutionized the way large real estate and infrastructure projects are financed. Unlike conventional bonds that are debt instruments, *Sukuk* represent partial ownership in real assets, with returns generated through rental income or project revenue rather than interest payments. This model not only complies with Shariah law but also introduces a more stable and

asset-linked investment mechanism, attracting both institutional and ethical investors globally.

The advantages of Islamic finance in real estate are manifold. First and foremost, it offers ethical alignment with the values of fairness, mutual respect, and social responsibility. These attributes resonate not just with Muslim investors, but also with the growing segment of socially responsible investors (SRI) worldwide. Furthermore, Islamic finance inherently avoids speculative bubbles by requiring all transactions to be backed by tangible assets. In a market prone to volatility, this asset-linked model offers a buffer against instability. Financial products are designed for long-term engagement, making them suitable for real estate ventures that require extended timelines, phased development, and sustained capital flow. Additionally, Islamic finance plays a significant role in financial inclusion, especially for communities that avoid conventional banking for religious reasons. This opens up real estate investment and home ownership to a previously underserved population, thereby supporting both community development and market expansion. Nevertheless, challenges remain. In countries where Islamic finance is not widely practiced, the lack of regulatory infrastructure tailored to Shariah-compliant

products often acts as a barrier to adoption. Legal ambiguities and tax treatment issues can complicate matters for developers and investors seeking to enter this space. Equally significant is the issue of awareness and education. Many stakeholders—whether they are homebuyers, real estate developers, or policy makers—are unfamiliar with Islamic finance's structures and benefits. This leads to misconceptions or hesitations, which could be addressed through targeted educational initiatives and cross-sector collaboration. Standardization is another critical concern. Islamic finance is interpreted through various schools of Islamic jurisprudence, and compliance criteria can vary significantly across institutions and countries. This inconsistency often creates confusion for global investors or multinational developers trying to apply Shariah-compliant models uniformly across jurisdictions. Moreover, the integration of Islamic finance with global capital markets is still evolving. While *Sukuk* issuance is growing, it still lacks the depth and liquidity of traditional bond markets. Bridging this gap will require continued innovation, robust legal frameworks, and broader investor education. Despite these hurdles, the future of Islamic finance in real estate appears promising, particularly in light of emerging trends such as the rise of green *Sukuk* and the integration of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles. These developments align well

with Islamic finance's inherent focus on stewardship, justice, and responsible investing. The advent of Shariah-compliant fintech platforms is also transforming the landscape, enabling crowdfunding models that democratize access to real estate investment. This innovation not only appeals to the younger, tech-savvy generation but also aligns with the Islamic emphasis on inclusive economic participation. In a world increasingly seeking ethical alternatives and resilient financial models, Islamic finance offers more than a religious solution—it provides a holistic framework for achieving sustainable, inclusive, and responsible real estate development. As real estate markets globally grapple with inequality, speculation, and housing crises, Islamic finance stands out not only as a financial tool but as a moral compass—guiding investment toward shared prosperity and community well-being. In the words of many scholars and financial analysts, embracing Islamic finance is not just about accommodating faith—it is about reimagining the purpose and practice of finance itself. With increasing cross-border collaboration, educational outreach, and regulatory evolution, the real estate sector is well-poised to benefit from the values and structures of Islamic finance. And as more developers, investors, and policymakers recognize its potential, the path toward a more equitable and ethical marketplace becomes not only possible but inevitable.

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manage over \$3 trillion in global assets, with a substantial portion allocated to real estate and infrastructure. The expansion is not limited to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) or Southeast Asia—non-Muslim-majority nations like the United Kingdom, South Africa, and Luxembourg

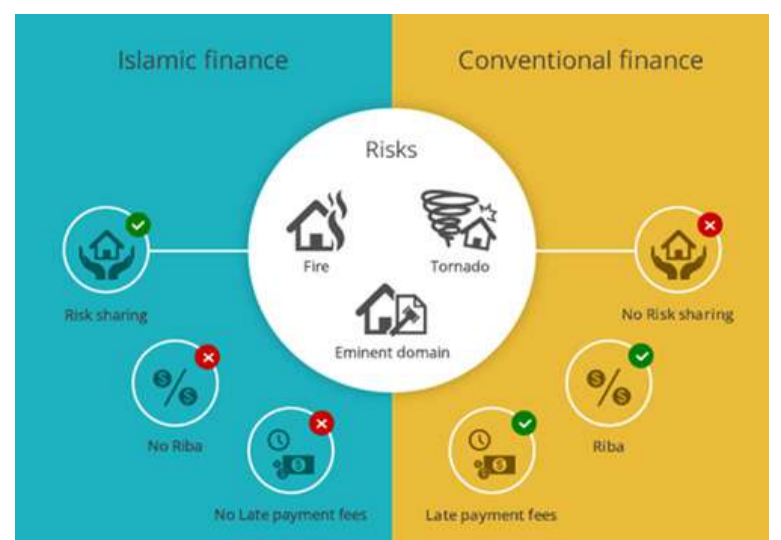


Image Source: LinkedIn

PEACE

Speaking Peace in a Divided World

NYC Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes Hosts Historic Interfaith Council



Sakin Auhin

Sakin Auhin: In a meaningful and timely gathering, the NYC Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes (OPHC) hosted its inaugural Interfaith Council for Symbols and Words of Peace and Hate (OPHC-IFC) at the Grace Gratitude Temple, 48 East Broadway, New York, NY 10002. The event brought together a diverse group of faith and community leaders to engage in vital discussions on how language and imagery shape both conflict and community. The council's creation marks a significant step in the city's broader mission to address the

roots of hate through education, dialogue, and collaboration. Attendees shared perspectives on how certain words and symbols, whether historical or contemporary, can serve as powerful tools—either deepening societal divisions or cultivating peace and solidarity. The OPHC-IFC initiative aims to establish safe spaces where leaders from different traditions can speak openly about the linguistic and symbolic triggers that impact their communities. It also seeks to foster conversations about how these same elements, when reframed, can serve as sources of hope, unity,

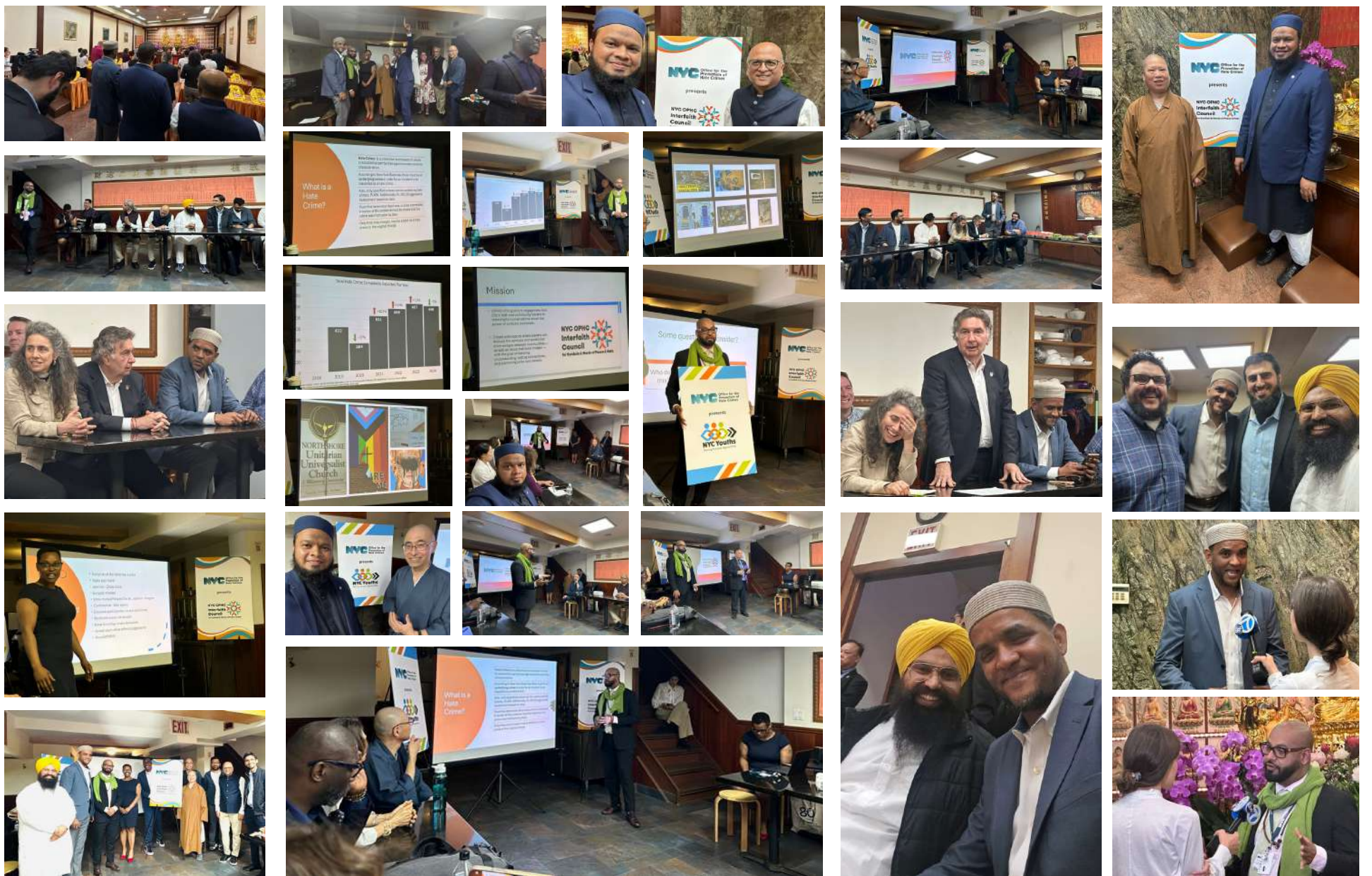


and reconciliation. Though informal in structure, the meeting reflected a deep intentionality. Participants discussed the historical context of various symbols and the ways in which they have been interpreted or misused. The tone was reflective and purposeful, with a shared understanding

that the subtleties of language and symbolism often carry deep emotional and cultural weight. Several attendees emphasized the urgent need for greater awareness about how quickly seemingly neutral expressions can escalate tensions or reinforce bias. The event was part of Project Open Doors, an OPHC initiative committed to preventing hate crimes by building bridges across cultural and spiritual lines. This new council adds an interfaith dimension to the project's mission, recognizing the unique influence that faith leaders have in shaping narratives and guiding public sentiment.

Many who attended spoke of their own communities' experiences with hate incidents, and the importance of using words to heal rather than harm. A common sentiment expressed during the evening was that while symbols and language have the capacity to divide, they also have the power to inspire empathy, affirm identity, and bring people together in meaningful ways. No formal resolutions were passed, but the gathering served as a launching point for future collaboration. Organizers emphasized that the council will continue meeting to build on this initial

momentum, expanding its scope and reach across all boroughs and faith traditions. Following the event, the Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes shared a message online: "Symbols and words should never be weaponized to fuel hate. It's through embracing and tapping into New York's incredible diversity that we can truly advance this vital mission." The OPHC-IFC stands as a promising model for how communities can confront rising hate not through silence or isolation, but by convening, conversing, and choosing peace—one word, one symbol, and one step at a time.



VOICES

Memories That Time Cannot Erase

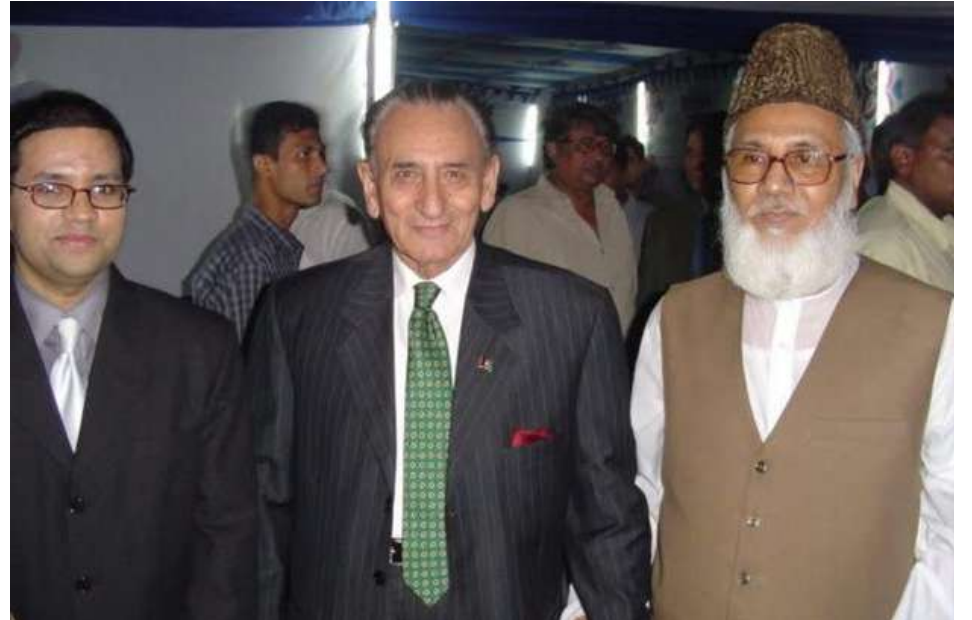
Dr. Nakibur Rahman Shares Intimate Memories on the Anniversary of His Father's Execution

Mehedi Hassan

For Dr. Mohammad Nakibur Rahman, May 11 is not just a date on the calendar—it is a sacred marker of loss, memory, and enduring love. On this day, nine years ago, his father was executed by the state under the administration of Sheikh Hasina, a death he continues to regard as judicial martyrdom. As Dr. Rahman reflects on nearly a decade without his father, his remembrance offers a moving portrait of paternal love, spiritual mentorship, and the unshakeable bond between father and son. Though the years have passed, the memories

remain vivid—some softened by time, others etched in crystalline detail. “I close my eyes, lean back in my chair, walk down memory lane—and tears roll down without asking,” he writes. For Dr. Rahman, these recollections are sanctuaries of joy, pain, and gratitude. His earliest memories date back to 1984, when the family lived in a modest flat on Shah Shaheb Bari Lane in Azimpur. Space was tight, with five siblings crammed into one room, but the joy of rushing to greet their father as he returned home each evening still glows in his memory. “I would always take off his shoes and socks,” he recalls—a small ritual

that, over time, became a cherished window for conversation and connection. Despite the pressures of public life and organizational commitments, his father carved out time to nurture his children. Football games at the Azimpur colony field, outings with family friends, and late-night television during the 1986 World Cup are just a few of the fond recollections that reveal the man behind the public figure. Dr. Rahman, a Dutch supporter at the time, watched the final match in the Daily Sangram office with his father—who cheered for Argentina and the legendary Diego



Maradona. About that night, he says, “Abbu became my hero, for understanding my emotions.” But what truly defined his father was his quiet authority, subtle communication, and spiritual depth. He rarely imposed rules, preferring instead to gently guide. “It would be better if you didn’t,” was his usual way of expressing disapproval. Even when Dr. Rahman began shaving his beard at 17—a choice his father disapproved of—he responded not with anger but with a soft observation: “Your face is losing its innocence.” One of the most painful yet intimate chapters of their life together came in 2000, when Dr.

Rahman accompanied his father to Singapore for urgent eye surgery. In that moment of vulnerability, it was the father who remained strong. “Tears are precious. Don’t waste them. Save your tears—shed them only in front of Allah,” he told his son during a Tahajjud prayer. That advice became a lifelong anchor, even as Dr. Rahman admits that sometimes his heart still gives in. The remembrance is not without its regrets. There are things he wishes he could have done differently—words unsaid, expectations unmet. But beneath the sorrow lies a steady current of reverence, humility, and prayer. Every story, every

vignette is laced with spiritual meaning, drawn from Qur’anic teachings and prophetic tradition. The reflection concludes with a heartfelt supplication from Surah Yasin, invoking the story of the believer who was killed by his people for supporting the messengers. Dr. Rahman prays that Allah grants his father a place in Paradise like that man—one “who was killed simply for believing.” “It was said to him: ‘Enter Paradise.’ He said: ‘If only my people knew—that my Lord has forgiven me and made me one of the honored.’” (Surah Yasin: 26–27) May Allah accept his prayer.

Queens Native Japneet Singh Announces City Council Run for District 28



Tasfia Khan

Japneet Singh, a young Sikh American and lifelong resident of Queens, is emerging as a fresh voice in the race for New York City Council District 28, which includes South Ozone Park, South Richmond Hill, and South Jamaica.

A first-time candidate, Singh brings years of community advocacy to a campaign focused on real representation and local empowerment. Having attended P.S. 100, M.S. 226, and John Adams High School, Singh often cites his Queens upbringing as central to his identity. “It is extremely humbling

and a tremendous honor to run to represent the community I’ve called home for my entire life,” he wrote in his campaign announcement in February 2025. Singh’s message is rooted in frustration with establishment politics. “They come into our homes & our places of worship, collect donations as well as votes... yet when we needed them, they were nowhere to be found,” he said. His platform celebrates the contributions of everyday workers—from taxi drivers to small business owners—as the real foundation of the city. Determined to boost civic engagement, Singh has pointed out that only 14,000 out of 64,000 registered Democrats voted in the last District 28 election. He’s calling for at least 10 public debates

ahead of the June 24 primary, urging local organizations to host forums for candidate transparency. In response to a recent shooting near Baisley Housing, Singh immediately visited the scene and called for the reopening of the area’s long-closed community center to provide safe spaces for youth. “You have to keep young people busy so a day like today does not happen,” he said. Singh’s campaign is powered not by political machines but by community support. “All we have is a dream... All we have is us. Together, we can all rise,” he wrote. With a focus on public safety, civic participation, and grassroots leadership, Singh is running not just as a candidate—but as a voice for lasting change.



Governor Hochul meeting with clergy in the Bronx unpacking nuances of affordability and public safety.



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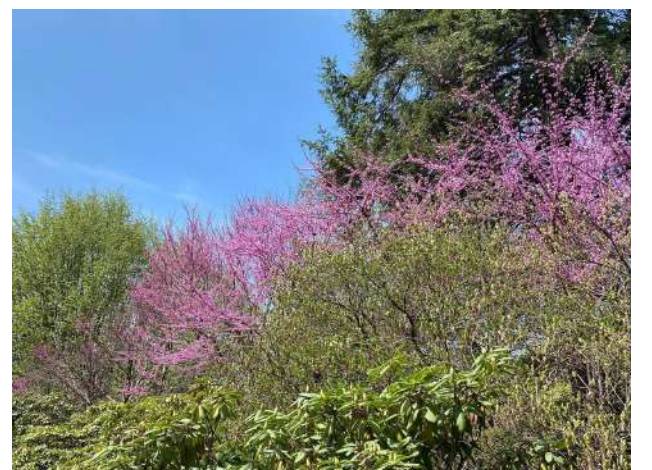
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PHOTO FEATURES

As spring fades, America's vibrant tulip season draws to a close—leaving behind fields of color, memories, and the promise of next year's bloom. Visitors bid farewell to the blossoms, capturing the last glimpses of nature's springtime spectacle.



TOURISM



12th Global Educational Tour to China (May 9–16, 2025)

From May 9 to 16, 2025, Shaheen Education Family embarked on its 12th international educational tour to China. Chairman Masudul Amin Shaheen led a delegation of 62 branch directors on this enriching journey. The tour aimed to foster cross-cultural understanding, explore global educational practices, and strengthen leadership among the institution's branches.

Shaheen Education Family operates numerous branches throughout Bangladesh, offering quality education and coaching services. The organization is dedicated to nurturing students' academic growth and preparing them for various competitive examinations. Under the visionary leadership of Chairman Masudul Amin Shaheen, the institution emphasizes holistic development and global exposure for both students and educators.



EDUCATION

Recognizing Excellence in Education

Elhaam Academy Pays Tribute to Teachers with Certificates and Celebration

Tamzida Mushfiq

In a warm and heartfelt tribute to those who make learning possible every day, Elhaam Academy hosted a celebration to honor its dedicated teachers for the 2024–2025 academic year. The event, filled with smiles, appreciation, and sweet moments, reflected the deep gratitude the school community holds for its educators. Each teacher at Elhaam

Academy received a personalized letter of appreciation, recognizing their unwavering commitment to excellence, their tireless efforts in nurturing young minds, and their profound role in shaping a brighter future. The certificates, signed by the Principal, served as a formal acknowledgment of the invaluable contributions these educators make in and beyond the classroom.



The message in each letter was clear and consistent: with sincere appreciation, Elhaam Academy honors those who dedicate themselves to teaching—not just



as a profession, but as a calling. The gesture, while simple, carried significant emotional weight and was met with smiles, gratitude, and a sense of fulfillment among the faculty. The celebration included a cheerful cake-cutting ceremony, bringing together staff in a moment of unity and joy. Teachers took time to reflect, laugh, and share stories from the school year, underscoring the strong sense of

camaraderie that defines the Elhaam Academy teaching team. Although there were no formal speeches, the tone of the gathering conveyed a clear message: the hard work of educators does not go unnoticed. Faculty members were moved by the school's thoughtful recognition, noting that small gestures of appreciation can go a long way in reinforcing purpose and pride in their work.

For a profession often marked by quiet perseverance, moments like these serve as reminders that behind every lesson plan and every classroom hour is a profound impact on future generations. Elhaam Academy's celebration was more than a ceremony—it was a meaningful thank-you to those who inspire, guide, and shape the minds of tomorrow.



Everyday Is Mother's Day: A Jummah to Remember

Khutbah Focuses on Honoring Mothers Beyond a Single Day



Tamim Iqba

The spirit of reverence and reflection filled the Elhaam Academy Auditorium on Friday, May 9, 2025, as students gathered for a Jummah Special khutbah titled "Everyday is Mother's Day." Delivered by Dr. Hassan Abdul Akbar, President of Nafsin Wahida, the khutbah left a lasting impact on the young audience, urging them to think deeply about the

role of mothers in their lives. Held at 1:00 PM at the school's campus in Jamaica, NY, the event brought Elhaam's student body together for a message that was both spiritually uplifting and practically relevant. With Mother's Day approaching on the calendar, the khutbah offered more than seasonal relevance—it gave students a timeless reminder grounded in Islamic teachings

about the everyday importance of honoring, appreciating, and caring for one's mother. Dr. Abdul Akbar spoke with clarity and compassion, highlighting how the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) elevate the status of mothers within the family and community. Students listened attentively as he described how Islam encourages believers to treat their mothers with kindness, patience, and constant gratitude—not only during special occasions, but as part of their daily character and conduct. The khutbah focused on action as much as reflection. Students were encouraged to apply the values discussed

by making small but meaningful efforts in their own homes—speaking gently, helping out without being asked, showing appreciation through words and behavior. These, Dr. Akbar explained, are



not just good manners, but acts of worship in themselves. What made the event particularly powerful was its setting: a school auditorium filled with students at formative

stages of their lives, hearing a message that bridges spiritual wisdom with real-life responsibility. Faculty members present during the khutbah noted how engaged the students were throughout, with many later sharing reflections on what the message meant to them personally. For Elhaam Academy, hosting such events is part of its ongoing commitment to developing students who are not only academically capable, but spiritually grounded and morally aware. Events like this Jummah Special are designed to help students see how their faith applies beyond the classroom—at home, with family, and in their daily decisions.

The khutbah concluded on a note of quiet contemplation, reminding the students that while a single day may be dedicated to celebrating mothers, the Islamic tradition teaches that every day is an opportunity to show love and respect to them. As the students filed out of the auditorium, many carried with them not just a memory of a school event, but a renewed sense of duty and gratitude. By placing students at the heart of this meaningful message, Elhaam Academy ensured that the next generation is reminded early on that the love and sacrifice of a mother is not something to be taken for granted, but honored—every day.



END PAGE

UCL Final Preview: Inter Milan vs. Paris Saint-Germain

A battle of youth versus experience as the two finalists prepare to meet

Sayed Aslam

The stage is set for a titanic clash in Munich as Paris Saint-Germain and Inter Milan prepare to meet in the UEFA Champions League final on May 31, following two thrilling and contrasting semifinal matchups that highlighted the evolving identities of both European powerhouses. At the Parc des Princes, PSG completed a commanding 3-1 aggregate victory over Arsenal to reach only their second Champions League final in club history. Fabián Ruiz's first-half goal and Achraf Hakimi's second-half strike sealed the Parisians' win on Wednesday night, despite Bukayo Saka's late goal offering Arsenal a glimpse of hope. The Gunners, however, were left to rue missed opportunities — none more glaring than Saka's astonishing miss from six yards out just minutes after scoring. Meanwhile, goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma was immense in the opening stages, making key saves against Gabriel Martinelli and Martin Ødegaard that preserved PSG's slim lead from the first leg. Arsenal, despite dominating stretches of possession, couldn't overcome PSG's speed, pressing, and youthful energy — a hallmark of Luis Enrique's reinvention of the squad following the departure of Kylian Mbappé.



Photo: UCL Final: PSG VS. Inter Milan

Just 24 hours earlier, Inter Milan pulled off one of the most dramatic results of the season by edging past Barcelona 7-6 on aggregate in a tense, high-quality semifinal. A 3-3 draw at Lluís Companys Olympic Stadium in the first leg was followed by a gripping 3-3 draw in regular time at San Siro in the second leg. After 120 minutes, the

HIGHLIGHT

- **PSG now one match away from their first-ever UCL trophy.**
- **Inter's resilient defense and smart counter-attacks outclass Barcelona.**
- **Hansi Flick's first season ends with a bittersweet semifinal exit.**

match ended 4-3 in favor of Inter, securing a 7-6 aggregate victory. Simone Inzaghi's men, led by the experienced Francesco Acerbi and Lautaro Martínez, showed immense resilience throughout the tie, with their seasoned veterans playing a pivotal role in nullifying Barcelona's attacking threats and exploiting their weaknesses on the

counter. Barcelona had shown renewed purpose under new coach Hansi Flick, and moments of brilliance from Lamine Yamal and Pedri kept their hopes alive, but Inter's composure under pressure and their tactical discipline carried them through. Flick's high-pressing system and attacking intent brought joy to the fans, injecting flair into the team's play. However, Inter's defensive organization ultimately prevailed, silencing the vibrant atmosphere and ensuring their passage to the final. The contrasting styles of both finalists now promise one of the most intriguing Champions League finals in recent memory. PSG's journey to the final is particularly remarkable given how it began. Struggling through the group stages and written off by many after the departures of Mbappé, Neymar, and Messi, the French champions rallied under Luis Enrique's guidance. The emergence of players like Ousmane Dembélé, Bradley Barcola, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, and Désiré Doué has transformed PSG into a dynamic, fearless side that thrives on high pressing, fluid movement, and attacking versatility. With a midfield trio of Vitorinha, João Neves, and Ruiz running the show and fullbacks like Hakimi and

Nuno Mendes bombing forward with precision, PSG looks every bit the balanced side they had long tried to build. On the other side, Inter Milan represent structure, stability, and experience. Their squad — the oldest in the tournament — is built around proven winners. Goalkeeper Yann Sommer, defenders Acerbi and Bastoni, midfield generals Barella and Çalhanoglu, and the clinical Lautaro up front give Inter the poise and presence needed on such big nights. They don't overwhelm opponents with flair but grind them down with control, timing, and resilience. It will be a classic battle in Munich: PSG, the fearless young challengers, against Inter, the grizzled veterans who know how to survive on Europe's biggest nights. One club is chasing their first Champions League title; the other is aiming to recapture continental glory nearly 15 years after their 2010 triumph under José Mourinho. From Arsenal's missed chances in Paris to Barcelona's heartbreak at home, the semifinal round reminded fans why the Champions League is football's most unforgiving stage. Now, all eyes turn to Munich, where only one team will rise — and either a new era will begin, or experience will reign supreme once again.

Shah Rukh Khan Makes Stylish Met Gala Debut

Bollywood icon walks the carpet in custom Sabyasachi ensemble



Photo: Shah Rukh Khan wore Sabaysachi to his first Met Gala
Image Source: Michael Luccisano/GA/The Hollywood Reporter/Getty Images/edition.cnn.com

Habiba Sultana

Shah Rukh Khan, one of the world's most recognizable

actors, made his long-anticipated Met Gala debut in New York in understated yet striking fashion. Wearing a floor-

length black wool coat by acclaimed Indian designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee, Khan brought his signature elegance to fashion's most prestigious red carpet on May 6, 2025. Known for avoiding red carpet fanfare, Khan admitted to feeling nervous. "I'm very shy," he told Vogue livestream hosts. "I told Sabya I only wear black and white, but what we designed for me is what I'm most comfortable in." The ensemble included bold accessories: a sparkling "K" pendant and a gem-encrusted tiger head cane, nodding both to personal flair and cultural richness. Designer Mukherjee, who recently celebrated

25 years of his fashion house, said, "We wanted to represent **Shah Rukh Khan as Shah Rukh Khan, and nobody else. Representation is the most important thing." This year's Met Gala honored Black designers and the legacy of Black dandyism, a fitting moment for Khan's debut, given its intersection of fashion, politics, and identity. Mukherjee, aiming to make Sabyasachi India's first global luxury brand, brought heritage and artistry to the spotlight through Khan, uniting two of India's global cultural powerhouses in one unforgettable moment.

American Curry Awards 2025: A Global Culinary Celebration

Top chefs, home cooks, and food personalities come together in NYC



Tamim Iqbal

The inaugural American Curry Awards will take place on Sunday, May 11, 2025, at 4:00 PM at AASHA Party Hall, 89-14 168th Street, Jamaica, Queens, NY. Organized by the Khaili Group of Companies and Asha Group, the event will celebrate excellence in South Asian cuisine and honor chefs, restaurateurs, home cooks, and food influencers from around the world. The ceremony will feature awards in categories like

Best Curry Restaurant, Chef of the Year, and Lifetime Achievement, judged by a global panel of culinary experts. Leading up to the event, local Home Chef Competitions are being held in Queens and the Bronx. Described by organizers as a movement rather than just an awards show, the American Curry Awards aim to spotlight the cultural and entrepreneurial impact of curry cuisine in the U.S. and beyond. With guests expected from across industries and continents, it promises to be a flavorful, high-profile celebration of culinary talent and cultural pride.