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# NEW YORK NEWS

The Voice of People

From New York

## Trump Returns to West Point

Graduation Address Features Military Reform, Political Themes

Alexander Sullivan

President Donald Trump criticized past military interventions and reiterated his administration's elimination of DEI programs and "woke" policies in the military

In a blend of military tribute and political rhetoric, President Donald Trump addressed the graduating class of 1,002 cadets at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point on Saturday, marking his first service academy commencement since returning to office. Speaking from Michie Stadium, Trump lauded the cadets for choosing service over lucrative careers in finance or technology. "You will become officers in the greatest and most



Photo: Trump addresses West Point graduates: 'You are winners'

Image Source: wfin.com

powerful Army the world has ever known," he said, crediting his first administration for "rebuilding" the U.S. military. Wearing his signature "Make America Great Again" hat, the president struck a combative tone at times, vowing to eliminate what he described as distractions from the military's mission. He reiterated his executive

order banning diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs in the armed forces and said his administration would continue focusing the military on "crushing America's adversaries" and "defending our great American flag." His remarks also included sharp critiques of prior administrations for entangling American forces in "nation-building

crusades" and depleting military resources. Trump emphasized the shift away from such engagements, referencing his recent Middle East tour and reiterating his "America First" foreign policy. Beyond the political messages, Trump also highlighted individual achievements, inviting standout cadets to the

stage and recognizing the academy's nationally ranked men's lacrosse team and star quarterback Bryson Daily. A day earlier, Vice President JD Vance addressed graduates at the U.S. Naval Academy, praising efforts to end "open-ended conflicts" and emphasizing a new focus on defined military missions. Saturday's ceremony unfolded under tight security and a mix of applause and protest. Outside the gates, demonstrators waved flags and carried signs both supporting and opposing the administration's policies. For West Point's newest officers, the commencement marked not just the beginning of military service but their entry into a redefined vision of national defense shaped by Trump's evolving priorities.

## Judge Orders Migrant's Return

Court finds deportation violated due process

Hamid Abdullah

In a sharp rebuke to the Trump administration's immigration practices, U.S. District Judge Brian Murphy ordered officials to facilitate the return of O.C.G., a gay Guatemalan asylum seeker wrongly deported despite legal protections. The man, who faced rape and kidnapping in Mexico, was erroneously sent there before being returned to Guatemala, where he now remains in hiding. Murphy found that ICE failed to assess his safety concerns, calling the deportation a violation of constitutional due process. The ruling adds to a series of legal setbacks for the administration over its handling of sensitive asylum and deportation cases.

## Hudson River Barge Blast Kills One

Farhana Azmi

A tragic explosion aboard a sewage transport vessel on the Hudson River claimed the life of a veteran New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) worker and injured two others Saturday morning. The blast occurred on the motor vessel Hunts Point, docked near 138th Street at the North River Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility, just after 10:30 a.m. According to the FDNY, a powerful explosion erupted in one of the hulls of the barge, propelling a 59-year-old DEP employee between the pier and the vessel, resulting in fatal injuries. The

### HIGHLIGHT

● Incident occurred near 138th Street on the Hudson River, at the North River Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility

worker, whose name has not been publicly released, had served the city for 33 years. Another employee was hospitalized with injuries, while a third refused medical treatment. The explosion coincided with the city's Fleet Week celebrations, adding a somber note to an otherwise celebratory atmosphere along the waterfront. The U.S. Coast Guard said the blast was "reportedly linked to hot work aboard a docked boat," suggesting a welding-related ignition of methane gas may have caused the incident. In a statement, Mayor Eric Adams expressed

deep sorrow: "This devoted public servant gave 33 years of service to New York City, and our hearts go out to his family, friends, and colleagues during this painful time." He confirmed that "no criminality" is suspected, and there has been no operational impact on the wastewater facility. FDNY Deputy Assistant Chief David Simms added that due to the presence of raw sewage on the deck, all personnel involved in the emergency response underwent decontamination procedures. Witness David Simon, a state park shuttle bus driver, described hearing a loud boom followed by a strange odor. "Something is not right," he recalled thinking, moments before realizing the extent of the explosion. The incident remains under investigation by the Bureau of Fire, with assistance from the ATF.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

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Sajufta Sahittya Club's  
Monthly Gathering

## NYN DESK

Sajufta Sahittya Club's monthly gathering was held in New York on May 20. The gathering was arranged with poetry, speeches, stories and songs at the office of Titas Multi Services President B. Meher Chowdhury. Sudhanshu Mondal, Nani Mallick, Jalal Uddin Rumi, Abu Taher Chowdhury, Kamrun Nahar Khanam, Meher Chowdhury, Dalilur Rahman, Julie Rahman recited their poems. Sajufta Sahittya Club President Poet Julie Rahman read the poem "The Fugitive Sun" from her English poetry book "The Fugitive Sun".

Organizer Kazi Rabiuzzaman spoke at the meeting. Afzal Hossain, Nabi Mohammad were present. Artists Shakila Runa and Iqbal Ahmed Babla and Kamrun Nahar Khanam performed. The program was hosted by Reza Abdullah. MA Sadek from Queens recited a poem. He recited Meher Chowdhury's Birhini Badhu Katabitati with a sweet heart. Artist Monika Mondal recited Julie Rahman's poem Gedu Majhi written on the Liberation War. Then Artist and literary critic Md. Ilyas Hossain read the poem Kalmal in the memory of Julie Rahman and also discussed it.

Freedom fighter MA Nasir recited the poem Kobar of poet Jasim Uddin. He did not only stay in eloquence, he gave a dramatic form to the poem. Dramatist Liaquat Ali won the hearts of the poets and the audience present by presenting the entire historical and political speech or Bhasan of the Nawab of Bengal Siraj Ud Daula in a memorised dramatic style. The evening tea cycle went on and the night came. There was raw mango stew, Chickpeas, muri, tea. Kohinoor's delicious paan khili. Cow nihari and garlic naan. The next event is on June 20. Sajufta Literary Club is one of the literary organizations in New York. Its founder is poet Julie Rahman. Every month, a discussion is held from this club. Books have already been published from this club.

Family Night for Bangladeshi  
Transit Workers in New York City

## Staff Reporter

Bangladeshi American MTA New York City Transit Workers Family Night 2025 was held in New York. The event was organized on May 16 at Jaya Hall in Rego Park, Queens. The event was divided into two parts. The program began with the playing of the national anthems of the United States and Bangladesh. Then, one of the organizers of the program, Station Agent Rokshana Begum, gave the opening speech. The first part was organized with speeches by the organizers and guests. The host of this part was Station Agent Saifur Rahman. The program was addressed by Samad Mia Zakaria,

Azad Talukder, Tahmidul Haque, Safwan Chowdhury, Zubayer Ahmed, Enamul Haque Johnny, Khokon Pal. In addition, Supervisor Sayem Montakim, General Superintendent Ekhlalur Rahman, Tarek Ahmed and Ahnaf Alam spoke. Guests included TWU Local 100 President John Chiarello, Station Division VP Robert Kelly, and RTO VP Tramell Thompson. Among the dignitaries present were RTO General Superintendent Farhadul Islam, Superintendent Mahmuda Ferdous, retired Superintendent Ali Haider, and Station GSS Mohammad Mansur. Among the event sponsors were Saleh Ahmed (Sal), Affar Baksh, Attorney Moin

Chowdhury, and Gree Mechanical CEO Tofail Liton Chowdhury. Station Agent Pratima Sumi presented the program and Gopal Das conducted the program, while Swapan Adhikari, Kanchan Das, Masiyat Ullah, Asim Chanda, and Gopal Das performed songs. In addition to the solo dance by Priyanti Pal, daughter of Station Agent Bidhan Pal, the dance performance by child artists was captivating. Rajiv Bhattacharya and Krishna Tithi kept the cultural program going until the end. With the arrangement of Bahari food and jampesh adda, everyone was mesmerized by the melody until late at night. Many present enjoyed dancing to the rhythm of the songs.

## Khalil Chinese Restaurant of Bronx has been sold



## Reporter

Khalil Chinese Restaurant of the Khalil Biryani Group in the Bronx has been sold. Hasan Johnny is under new ownership. The restaurant will be operated under new management from June 1. However, there is no change in its name. It will be operated under the name Khalil Chinese Restaurant. It is reported that this restaurant has been sold for about 600,000 dollars. Hasan Johnny, the nephew of Bronx well-known face and

community leader MN Majumdar, has bought it. There are two restaurants of the Khalil Biryani Group in the same building in the Bronx. One is Khalil Chinese and the other is Khalil Biryani Food Court. The Chinese is located adjacent to McGraw Avenue and the Khalil Biryani Food Court is located adjacent to Unionport. After Corona, Khalilur Rahman opened Khalil Chinese Restaurant under the supervision of the Khalil Biryani

Group. It became very popular. A year later, he launched Khalil Pizza, Khalil Grocery and Khalil Food Court. Khalil Pizza and Grocery closed within a year. But along with Chinese, the food court also became very popular. These two establishments are still on the favorite list of foodies. The food court was bustling until midnight. Many were suddenly surprised by the news of Khalil Chinese being sold. What happened was that Khalil was forced to sell such a profitable and popular

establishment. Hasan Joni, the new manager of Khalil Chinese, told the reporter, "We have bought the establishment. It will be operated under new ownership from June 1. We want to provide service with honesty and integrity. Everyone's cooperation is desirable." Khalilur Rahman Khalil of Khalil Group told the reporter, "I have sold it as my franchise. I will also get a share of the profits from this." Since I have multiple establishments, I can't focus on any one.

## Prayer Time IN New York

FAJR	DHUHR	ASR	MAGRIB	ISHA
03:55	12:53	04:51	08:17	09:52
03:54	12:53	04:52	08:17	09:53
03:53	12:53	04:52	08:18	09:54
03:52	12:53	04:52	08:19	09:55
03:51	12:54	04:52	08:20	09:56
03:51	12:54	04:53	08:21	09:57
03:49	12:54	04:53	08:21	09:58

Number  
20Asef Bari and Shah Newaj  
win in New York District  
Lions Club

## NYN DESK

Two expatriate Bangladeshis are leading the New York District Lions. Asef Bari Tutul and Shah Newaj were elected governor and second vice governor in the Lions District 20 and 3 election on May 18. The results were announced after the election held at the Niagara Falls Convention Center.

When the name of the winner Shah Newaj was announced, the Bangladeshi Lions present applauded and congratulated him. Asef Bari's wife, Munmun Hasina Bari, and Shah Newaj's wife, Rano Newaj, went to the stage to congratulate them. One by one, the expatriate Bangladeshi Lions Club members congratulated the two Bangladeshi leaders with flowers. The event became Bangladeshi. On May 16, a 3-day Lions conference was held at the Niagara Falls Convention Center. About 40 members of the New York Bangladeshi American Lions Club participated in it. The Bangladeshi Lions' convention was held in Niagara Falls. The New York District Lions' convention created a festive atmosphere with a large presence of Bangladeshi American Lions. The Sheraton Hotel in Niagara Falls was filled with Bangladeshis.



The convention officially began on Friday, May 16. 48 clubs from Lion Districts 20 and 3 of New York participated in it. Large election posters of Lion Shah Newaj, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Bangladesh Society and editor of the weekly Ajkaler, were displayed throughout the Sheraton Hotel and Convention Center for the past 3 days.

The election atmosphere was created mainly due to Shah Newaj's campaign and campaigning. Although posters of candidates from other zone clubs were displayed, they were only a few. 3 large-sized pictures of Shah Newaj were displayed in the hotel lobby.

# OPINION

## The Exemplary Leadership of Prophet Ibrahim AS in Devotion and Leadership

Imam Shamsi Ali,

As we embark on the sacred journey of Hajj, let us reflect on the significance of this pilgrimage and the values it embodies. The rituals we perform are not merely acts of worship but also a means of spiritual growth and self-refinement. The essence of Hajj lies in its ability to transform us into better individuals, fostering a deeper connection with Allah and a greater sense of compassion for humanity.

The Significance of Tawhid  
The foundation of our faith is built upon the principle of Tawhid, the oneness of Allah. This concept is central to our understanding of the universe and our place within it. By affirming the unity of Allah, we acknowledge His sovereignty over all aspects of life. Tawhid is not merely a theological concept but a lived experience that guides our thoughts, actions, and interactions with others.

The Leadership of Prophet Ibrahim AS  
Prophet Ibrahim AS is an exemplary model of leadership and devotion. His life was marked by unwavering commitment to the worship of Allah and the pursuit of righteousness. Despite facing numerous challenges and hardships, Ibrahim remained steadfast in his faith, demonstrating remarkable resilience and courage.

Key Characteristics of Leadership  
The leadership of Prophet Ibrahim AS can be characterized by three essential qualities (As-Sajadah: 24).

1. Guidance. Ibrahim's leadership was guided by the principles of justice, compassion, and wisdom. He was a beacon of light in a world shrouded in darkness, illuminating the path to righteousness.



**Prophet Ibrahim (AS) exemplified faith, patience, and justice—core values that define true leadership and the spirit of Hajj.**

2. Patience. Ibrahim's patience was tested through various trials and tribulations. He demonstrated extraordinary perseverance, remaining committed to

his faith even in the face of adversity.

3. Certainty. Ibrahim's faith was rooted in certainty, which enabled him to navigate the complexities of life with confidence and conviction. The Importance of Listening  
One notable aspect of Ibrahim's leadership was his willingness to listen. When faced with the command to sacrifice his son, Ibrahim sought to understand his son's perspective, demonstrating a commitment to empathy and compassion. Leadership as a Trust  
Leadership is not a privilege but a trust. It is a sacred responsibility that requires humility, integrity, and a deep sense of accountability. Leaders must prioritize the well-being of their people, striving to create an environment of peace, prosperity, and justice. The Objectives of Leadership  
The objectives of leadership, as exemplified by Prophet

Ibrahim AS, include (Al-Baqarah: 126).

1. Security. Creating an environment of peace and stability, where individuals can live without fear of persecution or harm.
2. Provision. Ensuring the well-being of the people, providing for their material and spiritual needs.
3. Justice. Upholding the principles of justice, fairness, and equality, and protecting the rights of all individuals.

Conclusion  
As we reflect on the exemplary leadership of Prophet Ibrahim AS, let us strive to emulate his qualities in our own lives. By cultivating a deep sense of devotion, compassion, and justice, we can become leaders in our own right, making a positive impact on the world around us.

**Imam Shamsi Ali**  
*Director of Jamaica Muslim Center | President of Nusantara Foundation*

## ICNA at 50: A Legacy of Faith, Service, and Leadership in American Muslim History

Imam Muhammad Shahidullah

In 2025, the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) celebrates 50 years of service, leadership, and impact in shaping the identity of Muslim Americans. What began as a small grassroots movement has grown into a national force for faith, community, and justice. This golden jubilee reflects on ICNA's legacy while looking ahead to a purposeful future.

History: From Humble Beginnings to National Leadership  
Founded officially in 1971 by South Asian Muslim students and professionals, ICNA emerged to preserve Islamic identity while adapting to life in the West. It began with study circles, publications, and dawah efforts, eventually forming a nationwide network of regional chapters. By the 1980s and 1990s, ICNA expanded into full community development, focusing on

education, family services, and youth programs to meet the needs of a growing Muslim population. Impact: Transforming the Muslim Narrative in America  
For five decades, ICNA has worked to present Islam as a faith of peace, compassion, and justice. Post-9/11, it stood as a key voice against Islamophobia and for religious freedom and interfaith cooperation. It has mobilized Muslim civic engagement, supported voter turnout, and addressed pressing societal issues like poverty, racism, and violence—all while remaining anchored in Islamic principles. Achievements: Building Institutions that Serve Humanity  
ICNA's landmark contributions include:

- ICNA Relief – Providing disaster response, food pantries, free clinics, and transitional housing.
- WhyIslam – National dawah efforts through billboards,



**“Whoever builds a mosque for the sake of Allah, Allah will build for him a house in Paradise.” – Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)**  
**ICNA has built more than mosques—it has built a legacy.**

hotlines, and open houses.

- Young Muslims (YM) – Leadership and mentorship for Muslim youth.
- ICNA Sisters Wing – Empowering Muslim women through education and service. The annual ICNA-MAS Convention, drawing 25,000–30,000 attendees, serves as a national hub of education, family bonding, and community empowerment. Sister Concerns and Strategic Partners  
ICNA works through a network of sister organizations:
- ICNA Relief
- WhyIslam
- Young Muslims (YM)
- ICNA Sisters Wing
- GainPeace
- Helping Hand for Relief and Development (HHRD)

Together, they deliver a holistic model of community upliftment rooted in Islamic values. From the Past to the Future: Vision for the Next 50

Years Looking forward, ICNA aims to:

- Expand services to underserved communities
- Build full-time schools and centers
- Launch authentic Islamic media platforms
- Strengthen interfaith and civic ties
- Train future leaders grounded in Quran and Sunnah

A Message of Gratitude and Hope  
ICNA's journey is one of faith in action—serving the needy, educating minds, and uniting hearts. May its next 50 years continue to reflect the values of mercy, justice, and unity.

**Imam Muhammad Shahidullah**  
*Founder, Save the People USA*  
*Director, Elhaam Academy | Peace Center | Interfaith Center of USA*  
*Community Leader and Advocate for Interfaith Understanding*

## Memorial Day: A Reflection on Sacrifice, Service, and Unity

Memorial Day is more than just a long weekend or the unofficial start of summer—it is a solemn day of remembrance dedicated to the brave men and women who gave their lives in service to the United States. The lesson of Memorial Day lies in honoring sacrifice, reflecting on the value of freedom, and recognizing our shared responsibility to uphold the ideals for which these heroes died. At its

core, Memorial Day teaches us the meaning of ultimate sacrifice. The soldiers who never returned home left behind families, dreams, and futures so that the nation could remain secure and free. Their courage compels us to appreciate the liberties we often take for granted—our right to speak freely, to worship, to assemble, and to live in peace. Another vital lesson is the importance of service. Memorial Day is not only about those in uniform

but also about inspiring every citizen to find ways to serve their communities and uphold values like justice, compassion, and unity. Service takes many forms—volunteering, mentoring youth, supporting veterans, or working toward a more just and equitable society. Each act of kindness honors the spirit of those who died defending such ideals. Memorial Day also reminds us of the cost of division and the need for unity. The diversity

of the armed forces reflects the strength of our nation—a blend of races, religions, and backgrounds united under one flag. Remembering our fallen heroes should also renew our commitment to healing divisions, building bridges, and protecting one another with respect and dignity. For younger generations, Memorial Day is a moment to learn history, ask questions, and develop gratitude. Visiting cemeteries, listening to veterans' stories,

or participating in community ceremonies are meaningful ways to connect with the past and carry its lessons into the future. Ultimately, Memorial Day urges us not to forget. It teaches us that remembrance is not passive—it is an active call to live with purpose, serve with integrity, and cherish the freedoms that others paid for with their lives. Let us honor them not just with words, but with lives lived in service to others. **Samira T., Senior from High School**

# HATE TO HOPE

## A City's Grief, A Community's Resolve

Interfaith coalition denounces antisemitic murders in D.C.



### William Harris

In a powerful display of solidarity, Mayor Eric Adams joined religious and civic leaders from across New York City on Friday to condemn the killing of two Israeli Embassy workers in Washington, D.C., in what authorities have labeled an antisemitic attack. The victims, Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Lynn Milgram, were fatally shot outside a Jewish Heritage

Month event hosted by the American Jewish Committee. The attack, which occurred as the couple attended a professional gathering of young Jewish leaders, has sparked deep mourning and renewed calls to confront antisemitism head-on. "We cannot be silent and watch our brothers and sisters under attack in our country," said Mayor Adams, addressing a room filled with interfaith leaders. Flanked by senior members of

his administration and representatives of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian communities, Adams emphasized the need for both symbolic and substantive responses. "This was not activism—it was a depraved act of terrorism." Deputy Mayor Fabien Levy, the city's highest-ranking Jewish official, described the murders as a devastating escalation in a broader trend of antisemitic rhetoric and violence.

"You're either on the side of hate or you're going to stand up against it," Levy said, citing the urgency of mobilizing diverse voices in defense of Jewish communities. Religious leaders echoed the sentiment. Reverend Al Sharpton, who contacted the mayor early that morning, urged all communities to rise above political differences and stand together in moments of tragedy. "You cannot

be a civil rights leader if you're only fighting for your own rights," he said. From the Muslim community, Mohammad Razvi, CEO of the Council of People's Organization, denounced the violence, referencing the Quranic teaching that taking one innocent life is akin to killing all of humanity. "This heinous act has really hurt so much," he said, adding that rhetoric and hate must be confronted at the source—often at home and in conversation. Security across New York City was promptly tightened following the attack. NYPD counterterrorism units were deployed to protect Jewish institutions, with authorities stating that while there is no direct connection to New York, precautions were being taken seriously. Ariella Rada from the Israeli Consulate General in New York called the attack "a result of unprecedented incitement" and emphasized that antisemitism today is a global problem, not confined to one country or conflict. She thanked Mayor Adams and city leaders for their steadfast

support, saying, "This is something we do not take for granted." The gathering also heard from leaders like Reverend A.R. Bernard of the Christian Cultural Center, Rabbi Joseph Potasnik of the New York Board of Rabbis, and Hindy Poupko from the UJA-Federation, all of whom stressed that attacks against Jews are attacks against all of society. "When Jews are slaughtered in a sanctuary, we are not safe," Rabbi Potasnik said. Representing the American Jewish Committee, Josh Kramer provided personal tributes to Sarah and Yaron, underscoring their deep commitment to peacebuilding and diplomacy. Sarah, a participant in Jewish-Muslim and Israeli-Palestinian dialogue efforts, was remembered as warm and devoted. Yaron, described as a quiet, steady presence, had just purchased an engagement ring. As New York grieves alongside Jewish communities worldwide, the message from City Hall was clear: hate, in all its forms, will be met with unity, action, and unflinching resolve.



Imam Muhammad Shahid Ullah and Rabbi Michael Miller shake hands at the Center for Jewish History, after two Israeli embassy staff were shot dead in Washington, D.C. near the Capital Jewish Museum, in New York City, U.S., May 22, 2025. Credit: REUTERS/Adam Gray



# HATE TO HOPE

## Unity in the Wake of Tragedy

### NYC Faith Leaders Denounce Antisemitic Murders and Pledge Solidarity

Tayeb Ali

In the wake of the recent antisemitic murders of two young staff members from the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C., leaders across New York City gathered for a solemn and powerful demonstration of unity. The event, organized by the New York City Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes and the Partners Against The Hate initiative, brought together faith leaders, elected officials, and community advocates to denounce hatred and reaffirm their shared commitment to cross-community protection and peace.

The tragic incident that sparked this gathering occurred when Elias Rodriguez allegedly targeted and murdered 30-year-old Yaron Lischinsky and 26-year-old Sarah Milgram as they exited a Jewish heritage event. Authorities reported that



**“Let me be clear, violence was not the answer, is not the answer, and violence will never be the answer”**  
~ Vijah Ramjattan

Rodriguez continued firing even after the two victims fell, with 21 shell casings found at the scene. He now faces charges including



murder of foreign officials, first-degree murder, and the use of a firearm during a violent crime. At the press

conference, Vijah Ramjattan, Executive Director of the NYC Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes, echoed this resolve in his remarks: “Let me be clear, violence was not the answer, is not the answer, and violence will never be the answer,” he stated. “We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to protecting the safety, dignity, and well-being of our Jewish brothers and sisters.” Imam Shahidullah spoke

passionately about shared values between religious traditions. “We gather today with heavy hearts, mourning the tragic loss of two Jewish lives. We condemn this act of violence in the strongest terms. Such hatred has no place in our communities, our faiths, or our humanity,” he said. Highlighting the Islamic principle of reverence for the Ahl al-Kitab—People of the Book—Imam Shahidullah emphasized that Muslims, Jews, and Christians share sacred roots and should be bound by “divine teachings of peace, justice, and mercy.” He concluded with a message of defiance against hate: “We say ‘Never Again’—not only for the past tragedies of history, but for today and every day forward. Never again must we allow hate to blind us. Never again must we be silent in the face of injustice. Never again should violence speak

louder than peace.”

The Arab American Association also issued a statement condemning the attack and all forms of hateful violence, while warning that such acts must not be used to justify Islamophobia or Arabophobia. Their message was clear: bigotry in response to bigotry only deepens societal divides. Speakers at the event emphasized that combating hate cannot be the responsibility of one community alone. It must be a shared mission, grounded in mutual respect, empathy, and action. This press conference served not only as a memorial for Yaron and Sarah, but as a renewed declaration that New York City stands united against hate in all its forms. As one speaker put it, “This city may mourn today—but tomorrow, we organize, we educate, and we protect.”



# BOOK FAIR

## A Festival of Words

Hundreds gather for the New York International Book Fair

Emily Parker

Despite persistent drizzle across the city, the passion for literature lit up the heart of Queens on a recent Friday as the 34th New York International Book Fair officially opened at the Jamaica Performing Arts Center. With a crowd that defied the weather forecast and filled the venue with warmth and enthusiasm, the opening night was a vibrant celebration of books, culture, and community.

The evening's formal inauguration began at 7 PM with a lively cultural program, filled with music and dance. The ribbon-cutting ceremony featured Rokeya Haider, legendary journalist of Bengali media; Dr. Ziauddin Ahmed, chairman of Muktahdara Foundation; and Sadat Hossain, a popular young author. Their presence underscored the significance of the fair not just as a literary event, but as a celebration of heritage and identity. Organizers described the event as more than just a book fair—emphasizing its role as a bridge between generations, nations, and cultures. The energy in the room



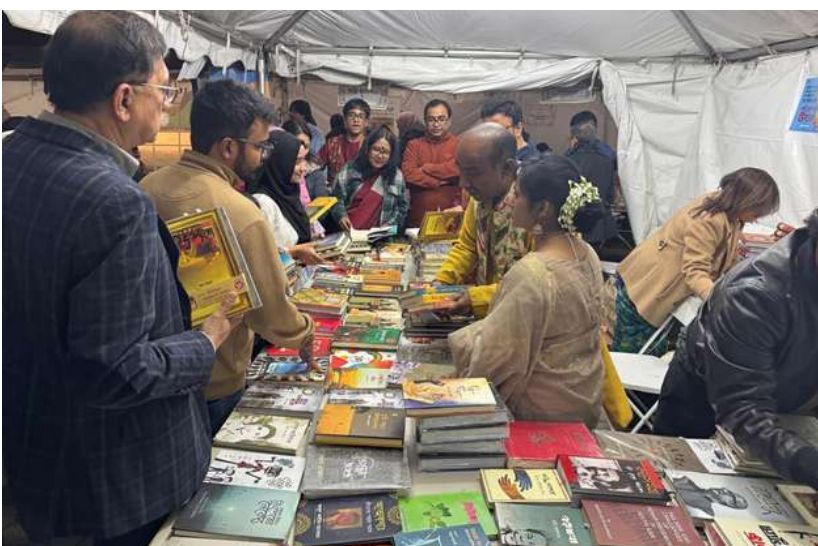
reflected that sentiment, as familiar faces from across the diaspora mingled with authors, publishers, and art lovers. Adding to the evening's prestige were several distinguished guests, including Phyllis Taylor, a lifelong ally of Bangladesh during the Liberation War, and Professor Rehman Sobhan, a globally respected economist and chairman of CPD.

Also present were Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, professor at Columbia University; political analyst Dr. Rounaq Jahan; and Bir Pratik recipient Captain Sitara Begum, whose presence served as a poignant reminder of Bangladesh's resilience and history. The fair, which runs through May 26, has attracted participation from notable publishers in Bangladesh, Canada,

and the United States, transforming the venue into a mini literary bazaar. Renowned publishing houses such as Batighar, Anannya, Akash, Nalanda, Katha Prokash, and Riddhi Prokashon brought a treasure trove of new releases and timeless titles. The organizer Muktahdara's own stall also drew consistent foot traffic throughout the evening. In an age often

lamented for its digital distractions, the turnout painted a different picture. Crowds packed the aisles between the bookstalls, engaging in animated conversations, browsing titles, and collecting signed copies from beloved authors. One participant noted that while people often say books are fading, events like this prove their continuing appeal. The atmosphere buzzed with excitement, and the

fairground felt less like a commercial event and more like a homecoming for many in the Bengali-speaking diaspora. For some, it was a place to discover new voices; for others, it was a nostalgic return to the stories and languages of their childhood. The opening night also featured a rich cultural performance by local artists, weaving together music and dance that reflected both traditional and contemporary Bangladeshi artistry. Audience members applauded enthusiastically, many capturing the moment on their phones to share with friends and family around the world. As the 34th edition of the New York International Book Fair continues, organizers are hopeful that the coming days will draw even more footfall and literary conversation. One attendee described the fair as more than a gathering—calling it a celebration of identity, memory, and future possibility. With its compelling blend of literature, art, and community spirit, this year's fair stands as a testament to the enduring power of books—and the people who love them.



All Photo Credit : Neher Siddiquee

# PUBLICATION

## Bridging Sharia and Social Change: Women's Labor and Wealth in Islam

Inside Dr. Bechari's 2024 Landmark Study on Family Economics

Jessica Morgan

**Dr. Mohammed Bechari's 2024 book examines Muslim women's right to marital wealth through a modern lens.**

A compelling new voice has entered the debate on Islamic law and women's rights with the publication of *The Right to Labor and Contribution: An Introduction to Establishing the Rights of Muslim Women* by Dr. Mohammed Bechari (Nahdet Misr, 2024). This book stands out for its thorough research and principled argument that Sharia should fully recognize women's economic contributions within marriage. Far from being a theoretical treatise, Bechari's work is a call to reimagine justice at the core of the Muslim family. Central to the book is the revival of the al-Kadd wa al-Sa'aya



doctrine—the right to labor and contribution—rooted in the Maliki school of law. Bechari traces the historical evolution of women's financial rights in Islam, highlighting the influential fatwa of Ibn 'Ardhoun. This legal precedent, which recognized women as partners in building family wealth, has shaped Moroccan judicial practice, especially in rural

areas where women's labor has often gone unacknowledged. Bechari's narrative is both scholarly and urgent. He critiques the limitations of traditional jurisprudence and addresses the social injustices still faced by many Muslim women. Through careful textual analysis and legal reasoning, he argues that the right to labor and contribution is not just a legal technicality,

but a comprehensive social system. As Bechari writes, it "encompasses all general and specific cases," allowing women to benefit from their contributions without requiring elaborate contracts. The book's latter sections explore practical legal mechanisms for realizing women's economic rights. Bechari addresses common objections, lays out the

jurisprudential basis for recognizing women's labor, and offers clear guidelines for judicial implementation. He pays particular attention to the realities of rural and agrarian communities, where the al-Kadd wa al-Sa'aya doctrine could help correct longstanding patterns of exclusion. What distinguishes this work is Bechari's commitment to both tradition and reform. He respects Islamic law's foundational principles while advocating for *ijtihad*—the creative reinterpretation of tradition in light of contemporary realities. He argues that ongoing jurisprudential renewal is essential for Islamic law's vitality. The book concludes with practical

recommendations for lawmakers and judges, urging the codification of women's economic rights and the formal integration of al-Kadd wa al-Sa'aya into modern legal systems. Scholars have received the book enthusiastically. In his foreword, Dr. Abdullah Mabrouk Al-Najjar of Al-Azhar calls it "a model of rigorous jurisprudential research" and praises its actionable framework for women's rights. Ultimately, *The Right to Labor and Contribution* is more than a scholarly achievement—it is a blueprint for legal and social reform that honors the dignity and rights of women as equal partners in society.



## Dr. Bechari: Jurist, Thinker, Reformer

Dr. Mohammed Bechari is one of the most prominent contemporary Islamic scholars, recognized for his leadership and vision in the field of Islamic jurisprudence and interfaith dialogue. Currently based in the United Arab Emirates, Dr. Bechari serves as the Secretary-General of the World Muslim Communities Council, a position that places him at the center of global discussions on Muslim

identity, integration, and rights. Holding a PhD in Islamic jurisprudence and its principles, Dr. Bechari's career spans top roles in both Islamic and international institutions. He has been the President of the General Federation of Muslims in France and the Council of European Muslims, and served as Dean of the Ibn Sina Institute for Humanities in France. His influence extends beyond academia into policy and



community engagement, with regular contributions to leading regional and international media.

Dr. Bechari's scholarship is marked by a commitment to bridging tradition and modernity. His previous works, including *The Question of Tolerance: An Introduction to a Human Civilization System*, *The Interplay between Philosophy and Ethics*, and *Trends in the International System in the Post-Covid World* (2023), reflect his wide-ranging interests in Islamic thought, ethics, and contemporary

global challenges. He has received numerous honors, such as the King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein Medal of Excellence and the Order of Arts and Sciences of the Arab Republic of Egypt, in recognition of his contributions to Islamic scholarship and intercultural understanding. A leading voice in research on Muslim integration in Europe and the intellectual

evolution of Islamic movements, Dr. Bechari is widely regarded as a scholar who combines intellectual rigor with a deep sense of social responsibility. His latest book, *The Right to Labor and Contribution*, cements his reputation as a reformer committed to justice, equity, and the advancement of women's rights within the framework of Islamic law.

### News Section: Publication and Reception

*The Right to Labor and Contribution: An Introduction to Establishing the Rights of Muslim Women* was published by Nahdet Misr Publishing House in 2024 and quickly garnered attention in both academic and legal circles across the Arab world. The book's release was marked by a series of launch events and panel discussions, notably in Cairo and the United Arab Emirates, where Dr. Bechari engaged



with scholars, legal experts, and women's rights advocates. Early reviews in regional press and specialized legal forums have highlighted the book's methodological rigor and its timely intervention

in ongoing debates about the economic rights of women in Islam. Scholars from Al-Azhar University and the Moroccan judiciary have praised the work for its clarity, depth, and practical

recommendations, noting its potential to influence both legislative reform and judicial practice. Public reception has also been strong among women's organizations and advocacy groups, who see the book as a vital resource in the struggle for legal recognition of women's labor, particularly in rural and agrarian contexts. The book's arguments have been cited in recent policy discussions in Morocco,

where the al-Kadd wa al-Sa'aya doctrine is increasingly referenced in family law cases. While the book has yet to be widely reviewed in Western media, its impact within the Arabic-speaking world is clear. It is already being used as a reference in workshops and training sessions for judges and legal practitioners, and is expected to inform future reforms in personal status law across several Muslim-majority countries.

# INTERFAITH

## A Lesson in Peace, Drawn Together

### Young Learners Build Bridges Through Religious Expression and Dialogue



#### James Anderson

In a world often marked by religious divisions, a group of Muslim and Jewish elementary school students gathered in Manhattan for a different purpose—to celebrate each other's faiths, traditions, and shared humanity. On a recent school day, the Jewish Heritage Museum in New York City became the backdrop for the fifth collaborative event between students from Kinneret Day

School and Elhaam Academy. The program, which has brought together children from Jewish and Muslim backgrounds across multiple sessions, continued its mission of fostering peace, respect, and mutual understanding through hands-on learning and open dialogue. The latest session focused on artifacts—objects that hold personal and religious significance. Students from both schools not only brought items

from their homes but also shared the stories behind them. Through this, they

illustrated gallery panels, blending art and storytelling. From shofars and Kiddush



explored themes like family, tradition, and interfaith connection. The children created



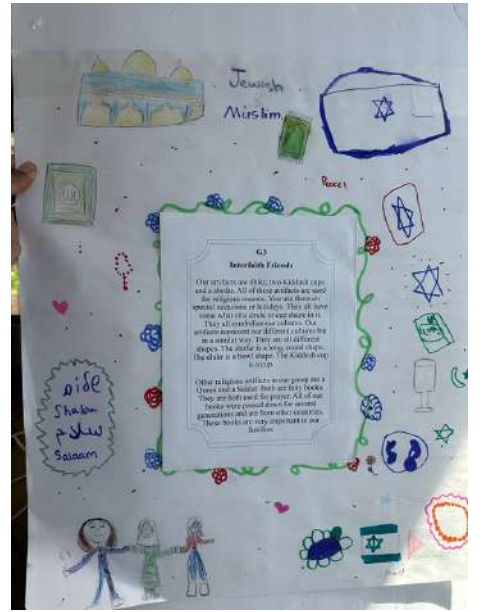
cups to Qurans and dhikr beads, each object was used to explain how cultural and spiritual

values are preserved and passed down through generations. According to one of the group summaries, these artifacts were described as "priceless and extremely important," reflecting traditions that ranged "from cardboard to gold." The children emphasized how such items "help young people learn about their religion" and how others can learn from them as well. Another student group drew connections between the physical forms of their religious items. "The shofar is a long, round shape. The dhikr is a bowl shape. The Kiddush cup is a cup," one group explained in their written reflections, noting that these sacred objects, while diverse, share spiritual symbolism. Throughout the day, students worked together, drawing and decorating their artifacts, learning the meanings behind each other's religious terms, and building friendships. Muslim children explored Jewish prayers, and Jewish students learned about Islamic artifacts, all while collaborating on visual representations of their shared experience.

Organizers praised the students' engagement and curiosity, noting how naturally they communicated and collaborated. Teachers and chaperones described the atmosphere as warm, open, and deeply respectful. While the June 11th session will mark the final installment of the program—with an exhibition, speeches from students, and a shared meal—the impact of the fifth gathering was already clear. It was less about academic achievement and more about emotional intelligence, intercultural empathy, and peace-building. The long tables covered in hand-drawn illustrations, the soft hum of discussion, and the laughter shared among students made the museum feel less like a formal institution and more like a shared space of discovery and friendship. This event, like the entire program, stood as a powerful example of what's possible when education moves beyond the classroom and reaches into the heart—connecting children not just with information, but with one another.



# INTERFAITH



# FOOD

## A Taste of Heritage

### Queens Hosts Inaugural American Curry Awards Honoring Culinary Innovators

#### Ashley Reed

The vibrant spirit of South Asian cuisine was in full display on Saturday evening as the American Curry Awards celebrated its grand event at Terrace on the Park in Queens, New York. Organized by the Khalil Group of Industries and Asha Group, the ceremony recognized outstanding contributions in the curry culinary arts, bringing together chefs, food entrepreneurs, and cultural ambassadors from across the globe. Held in one of Queens' most prestigious venues, the event spotlighted both seasoned professionals and rising culinary stars in a glittering ceremony that underscored the unifying power of



food. From exquisite restaurant dishes to heartfelt home-cooked meals, the awards honored the range and richness of curry cuisine—a beloved staple in South Asian,

Middle Eastern, and global dining. Among the most celebrated categories were Best Restaurant, Best Chef, Best Food Blogger, Chef of the Year, Personality of the

Year, Curry Legend Award, and the coveted Lifetime Achievement Award. The program also included recognition of talented home cooks through the Best Home Chef Award, offering a

platform for passionate non-professional chefs to shine alongside industry veterans. The event marked a significant milestone for the diaspora's culinary scene in the United States, drawing participation from not only New York's diverse food community but also international culinary figures. Guests and attendees shared in a rich cultural experience that included flavorful tastings, cultural performances, and a festive ambiance celebrating shared heritage. The hosts emphasized the importance of preserving culinary traditions while encouraging innovation and cross-cultural appreciation. The awards aimed to go

beyond recognition, serving as a bridge between generations and communities bound by the universal language of food. As the night concluded with applause and celebration, it was clear that the American Curry Awards had not only honored excellence but also fostered connection. For many, it was more than a ceremony—it was a celebration of identity, tradition, and unity through cuisine. The American Curry Awards 2025 has set a strong foundation for what promises to be an annual tradition, spotlighting culinary talents and telling the flavorful stories of communities across the United States and beyond.



# FOOD



All Photo Credit : Neher Siddiquee

# SPORTS

## Hoops Against Hate

NYC Youth Unite at Open Gym Event Promoting Peace and Solidarity



**Patt Cummins**

In a spirited effort to build unity and foster positive engagement

among young men, JMC Youth, Save the People, and the NYC Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes joined

forces to host a community basketball game on May 18, 2025, at the Open Gym in Briarwood, Queens. The



event, which ran from 1 PM to 3 PM, drew dozens of boys and young men between the ages of 8 and 25, creating a lively and inclusive atmosphere that emphasized brotherhood and community strength. Held at 85-05 144th

Street, the gym echoed with the energy of fast-paced games, laughter, and enthusiastic support from peers and organizers alike. Participants played with passion, showing not only athletic talent but also respect and camaraderie, which mirrored the core values behind the initiative. In addition to the friendly competition, the event ensured everyone felt welcomed and nourished — food was served to all who attended, turning the gym into a space not just for sports, but for meaningful connection.

While the basketball served as the medium, the underlying message was one of peace, unity, and the importance of staying engaged in healthy, constructive activities. The collaboration between youth leadership and civic organizations reflects an ongoing commitment to prevent hate by promoting understanding and creating safe, empowering spaces. Events like these remind the community that even simple acts — like a game of basketball — can sow the seeds of lasting change.



**12th Annual Commemoration of the Declaration of World Peace and Peace Walk**

**Building Bridges for Peace and Interreligious Harmony**

**Wednesday, 28 May 2025**  
**UN Church Center Chapel**

**Main Event (Indoors): 13:30**  
**Peace Walk (Outdoors): 14:30**

Community Partner **SAVE THE PEOPLE**

**REV. ORSELLA HUGHES, ST. LUKE A.M.E CHURCH AND THE OUTREACH MINISTRY PRESENT**

**BRAIN HEALTH - PARKINSON'S DISEASE DISCUSSION**

**COME AND JOIN US**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
May 21 May 28	12:00PM- 2:30PM	Fellowship Hall 1872 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10031

**SCHEDULE**

**Activities**

- Parkinson's Disease Early Signs and Symptoms
- Parkinson's Disease Research
- PD Generation Study Introduction and Demonstration
- Community Research Participation Discussion
- Question & Answer

**Lunch will be served at 1:00 PM**

**CAN'T MAKE IT IN PERSON? YOUR PRESENCE WOULD BE WELCOME VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM - LINK:**  
[HTTPS://COLUMBIACUIMC.ZOOM.US/j/94991211710?](https://COLUMBIACUIMC.ZOOM.US/j/94991211710?pwd=PH9ICMHJVV9NEBUXQE80FP2JZQNBTW.1)  
**PWD=PH9ICMHJVV9NEBUXQE80FP2JZQNBTW.1**

**SPEAKERS: DR. REVERSA JOSEPH, DR. HIRAL SHAH, MS. ANITA PARKER, LCSW**

# ORGANIZATION

## Half a Century of ICNA: Strengthening Communities, Uplifting Lives

Islamic Circle of North America celebrates 50 years of activism, outreach, and spiritual guidance



Dr. Saad Kazmi

President, Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA)

**Christopher Scott**

In a milestone that reflects both resilience and relevance, the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) commemorates 50 years since its establishment, a journey that began on September 1, 1968, with a small group of Muslims determined to build a faith-based

support system in the heart of North America. Originally known as Halqa-e-Ahbab-e-Islami (HAI), the organization has grown from intimate gatherings of South Asian immigrants to a robust, inclusive movement representing the voices and aspirations of Muslim Americans across ethnic and generational lines.

The transformation of HAI into ICNA in 1977, following the adoption of a formal constitution, marked a turning point. With the decision to adopt English as its official language, ICNA opened its doors to a more diverse Muslim demographic, affirming its intention to become an American institution guided by Islamic values. As the organization grew, so did its commitment to education, character development, and public engagement. Over the past five decades, ICNA has spearheaded numerous initiatives that touch nearly every facet of Muslim life in America. From its early focus on spiritual development and community education, the organization expanded to meet the practical and social needs of a growing population. The establishment of key branches such as ICNA Relief (1992), which provides disaster response and domestic

aid, and 877-WhyIslam, which offers authentic information about Islam to non-Muslims, showcases ICNA's dual commitment to both its own community and the broader public. Perhaps one of ICNA's most powerful contributions has been its ability to organize from the ground up. Local chapters known as Neighbor Nets create spaces for Muslims to connect regularly, while regional and national conventions have become platforms for dialogue, learning, and solidarity. The annual convention, first formalized in 1976 and now among the largest Muslim gatherings in North America, serves as a hub for education, family activities, and civic awareness. In 1980, the formation of ICNA Sisters underscored the organization's emphasis on inclusivity, creating a parallel space for women to lead, learn, and serve. Youth-focused branches like Young Muslims (YM) and MCNA (for children) have further entrenched ICNA's role in shaping the next generation of American Muslims. By the early 2000s, ICNA had begun extending its public-facing work. Muslim Family Day, launched in 2000 at Six Flags New Jersey, now draws tens of thousands of attendees across various amusement parks nationwide. Events like these allow American Muslims to celebrate their identity in safe, joyful, and communal environments. The launch of the ICNA Council for Social Justice (CSJ) in 2009 highlighted a growing emphasis on policy engagement and civil rights. CSJ has since become a strong Muslim voice on issues ranging from racial justice to immigration reform. As noted by ICNA President Br. Saad Kazmi, "ICNA remains steadfast in its mission to serve humanity, spread the message of Islam, and build a more just and compassionate society."

Throughout its history, ICNA has collaborated with interfaith organizations, civil society groups, and local leaders to amplify messages of peace, justice, and community welfare. The organization's 7-Point Program, which includes goals such as inviting to Islam, opposing oppression, strengthening human bonds, and cooperating with other entities, remains a foundational guidepost. With headquarters in

ahead with purpose. The organization's vision statement commits to being a "truly representative grassroots organization of diverse Muslim Americans, inclusive for all ages, ethnicities, and socioeconomic statuses." It aims to remain agile and credible in a time of rapid change, fostering deeper connections between individuals, faith, and community. The celebration of ICNA's 50th anniversary is not

- ICNA Entities and Projects**
- ICNA Relief
  - 1-877-WHY-ISLAM
  - ICNA Council for Social Justice (CSJ)
  - Islamic Learning Foundation (ILF)
  - Young Muslims (Brothers & Sisters)
  - ICNA Sisters
  - MCNA (Muslim Children of North America)
  - Message International Magazine
  - Helping Hand for Relief and Development (HHRD)
  - GainPeace
  - Embrace
  - ICNA Dawah Department
  - ICNA Media

- ICNA National Presidents (1968–2025)**
- From 1968 to 1994, the president's term was one year (mid-year to mid-year). Two-year terms (calendar year) began January 1, 1995.
- Dr. Talat Sultan – 1968–1975
  - Dr. Anis Ahmad – 1975–1977  
(Took leave during term; Dr. Talat Sultan served as Acting President)
  - Dr. Mohammad Yunus – 1978–1981
  - Br. Zaheer Uddin – 1981–1984
  - Dr. Mohammad Yunus – 1984–1989
  - Br. Aqib Mohammad Saqib – 1989–January 1991
  - Dr. Mohammad Yunus – 1991–1994 (Appointed in Jan 1991, then elected for 3 terms)
  - Br. Abdul Malik Mujahid – 1994–1996 (2.5 years)
  - Dr. Mohammad Yunus – 1997–1998, 1999–2000
  - Dr. Zulfiqar Ali Shah – 2001–2002
  - Dr. Talat Sultan – 2003–2004
  - Dr. Zulfiqar Ali Shah – January–February 2005
  - Dr. Khurshid Khan – February 2005–2006, 2007–2008
  - Dr. Zahid Bukhari – 2009–2010, 2011–2012
  - Br. Naeem Baig – 2013–2014, 2015–2016
  - Br. Javaid Siddiqi – 2017–2018, 2019–2020
  - Dr. Mohsin Ansari – 2021–2022, 2023–2024
  - Br. Saad Kazmi – 2025–2026

Jamaica, Queens since 1984, and branches across the country, ICNA continues to innovate while remaining grounded in its core values. New initiatives such as Embrace, which supports Muslim converts, and ICNA Media, which leverages digital platforms for Islamic messaging,

merely a look back—it is a reaffirmation of a mission born out of faith, sustained by service, and inspired by the belief that Islam's teachings offer not only personal guidance but also a framework for societal good. As the organization steps into its next chapter, it continues to be a vital



**ICNA**  
ISLAMIC CIRCLE  
of NORTH AMERICA

signal a continued evolution in strategy and scope. As ICNA reflects on a half-century of service, it also looks

force in the American religious and civic landscape, bridging divides, nurturing faith, and uplifting lives.

# ORGANIZATION

## Celebrating 50 Years: ICNA-MAS Convention Emphasizes Resilience and Unity

Attendees gather to honor the past and forge a future grounded in Islamic principles

**Fredrick John**

The Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) and the Muslim American Society (MAS) commemorated a significant milestone with their 50th annual convention, held from May 24 to May 26, 2025, at the Baltimore Convention Center. The event, themed "Standing Strong: An Identity Rooted in Faith," attracted over 25,000 Muslims from across North America, reflecting on five decades of faith, community, and growth. Established in 1968, ICNA has been at the forefront of Islamic education, outreach, and community service in North America. This year's convention served not only as a celebration of its golden jubilee but also as a platform to address contemporary challenges facing Muslims, emphasizing the importance of resilience, unity, and adherence to Islamic values in a rapidly



changing world. Attendees engaged in a variety of programs designed to deepen their connection to faith and strengthen their sense of identity. The convention featured inspiring talks, workshops, and discussions led by esteemed scholars and community leaders. Topics ranged from spiritual development and social justice to technology and youth engagement, catering

to diverse interests and age groups. Youth participation was a highlight of the convention. The Young Muslims (YM) Conference provided a space for young adults to explore their faith and build lasting connections. The Muslim Youth Debate Tournament (MYDT) challenged middle and high school students to articulate their perspectives on pressing

issues, fostering critical thinking and public speaking skills. For younger attendees, the Muslim Children of North America (MCNA) and Young Muslims Junior (YMj) programs offered educational and interactive sessions. Activities included Quran competitions, robotics workshops, and discussions on Islamic identity, aiming to instill confidence and a strong sense of belonging

among Muslim children. The convention also addressed the needs of families and individuals with disabilities. Partnerships with organizations like The Malaikah Foundation ensured that children with disabilities received appropriate care, allowing their families to participate fully in the event. In addition to educational programs, the convention featured a bustling bazaar with vendors offering Islamic books, clothing, and art. The Jump and Fun indoor amusement park provided entertainment for families, while the Matrimonial Event facilitated connections for those seeking marriage partners. Reflecting on the organization's journey,

ICNA President Br. Saad Kazmi expressed gratitude for the community's support and emphasized the importance of continued dedication to Islamic principles. "As we navigate the challenges of our time, ICNA remains steadfast in its mission to serve humanity, spread the message of Islam, and build a more just and compassionate society," he stated. The 50th ICNA-MAS Convention not only celebrated past achievements but also set the stage for future endeavors. By fostering a sense of unity and reinforcing Islamic identity, the event underscored the enduring strength of the Muslim community in North America.



# ORGANIZATION





# END PAGE

# Pilgrims Await Crescent Moon to Begin Hajj 2025

Saudi officials call on citizens to sight Dhul Hijjah moon to confirm Hajj and Eid al-Adha dates

## Tawhid Ahmed

As the sacred month of Dhul Hijjah approaches, millions of Muslims across the globe are preparing for Hajj 2025, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, which is expected to take place from June 4 to June 9, pending the official sighting of the crescent moon. Recognized as one of the Five Pillars of Islam, Hajj is a spiritual obligation for all Muslims who are physically and financially capable of undertaking the journey at least once in their lifetime. The Saudi Supreme Court has called upon Muslims within the Kingdom to observe the skies for the moon on Tuesday, May 27, which will determine the exact start of Dhul Hijjah and confirm the dates for both Hajj and Eid al-Adha, the latter of which is projected to fall on June 6. The Day of Arafat, regarded as the pinnacle of the



Image Source: Soul of Saudi

Photo: Hajj

## HIGHLIGHT

- Saudi Arabia urges use of official Nusuk platform to avoid fraudulent packages
- Day of Arafat expected on June 5, Eid al-Adha likely on June 6

pilgrimage, is anticipated on June 5. Each year, pilgrims converge on Mecca to engage in a series of spiritually significant rituals spread across five to six days. The journey begins with entering a state of ihram, marked by wearing simple white garments and embracing inner purity. Pilgrims then perform

tawaf—seven circles around the Kaaba—followed by the sai, a walk between the hills of Safa and Marwa. From there, the journey takes them to Mina, Arafat, Muzdalifah, and back, culminating in rituals such as the stoning of the devil at Jamarat, animal sacrifice, and final tawaf rites before departing. The Saudi

Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has intensified efforts to ensure a secure and organized pilgrimage season. In advance of Hajj 2025, the ministry issued warnings against dealing with unauthorized travel agents and unofficial campaigns. Pilgrims are urged to book only through the Nusuk platform, Saudi Arabia's designated digital gateway for Hajj registration. Violators—whether agents or individuals—may face fines up to \$26,600 (100,000 SAR) and more severe penalties for repeat offenses. Additionally, officials have cautioned the public about misleading advertisements on social media promoting counterfeit Hajj services. The Ministry of Interior has emphasized that aiding or housing pilgrims with invalid visas, such as tourist or visit visas, during Hajj season is a punishable offense.

Authorities continue to encourage vigilance and reporting of suspicious activities to preserve the sanctity and order of the pilgrimage. As anticipation builds, Muslims worldwide are not only arranging logistics but also spiritually preparing for one of the most transformative experiences of their lives. For many, this marks a lifelong dream, an opportunity to stand where the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) delivered his final sermon, and to join in worship with millions in pursuit of divine mercy and forgiveness. While the final confirmation of dates rests with the lunar sighting, the message remains clear: Hajj 2025 is near, and its significance echoes deeply in the hearts of believers ready to answer the call to Mecca.

# Hajj 2025: Beating the Heat

Shade, trees, and mist added



Photo: Pilgrims use umbrellas to shield themselves from the intense heat during Hajj

Image Source: Gulf News/AFP

## Habiba Sultana

With Hajj 2025 set for early June, Saudi Arabia has intensified preparations to protect pilgrims from expected extreme heat. Temperatures may soar to 50°C, prompting the expansion of cooled and rubberized roads across 84,000+ square meters, particularly in Arafat, where the pilgrimage reaches its peak. These heat-reducing surfaces can lower ground temperatures by 12°C,

## HIGHLIGHT

- Over 10,000 trees planted; 2,400 water coolers and cooling poles installed.
- Temperatures could hit 50°C in Mecca during Hajj

easing long barefoot walks. To enhance shade, the government has planted 10,000 trees and installed 241 misting poles, while over 2,400 water coolers

and 15,000 sq. meters of green spaces aim to keep pilgrims hydrated and comfortable. Health authorities strongly advise the use of umbrellas, which can block 64–92% of UV rays and reduce surrounding temperatures by up to 8°C. This will be the last Hajj during peak summer for 16 years, as the Islamic calendar gradually shifts the pilgrimage to cooler seasons beginning 2026.

# PRESS CONFERENCE

THURSDAY, MAY 29TH • 5:30PM

DIVERSITY PLAZA • 73RD STREET AND 37TH ROAD

