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NEW YORK NEWS

The Voice of People

From New York

Spain Rejects NATO Defense Hike

Calls 5% GDP target counterproductive

John Paul

Debate over defense priorities dominated recent NATO talks in The Hague, where members considered a proposal to raise defense spending targets to 5% of GDP—a sharp increase from the current 2% baseline. The expanded metric would include not just traditional military expenditures, but also cybersecurity and infrastructure. The proposal, backed by some NATO members, faced immediate resistance from Spain, whose government labeled the measure as counterproductive and economically unrealistic.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez argued that such a steep hike could undermine national priorities and warned against blurring the lines between defense and broader public spending. The discussions come amid rising global tensions and calls, particularly from former U.S. President Donald Trump, for European allies to shoulder more security costs. While some nations support a broader defense definition, Spain insists that spending alone should not define commitment. The proposal remains under consideration.



Photo: Pedro Sanchez, Prime Minister of Spain

Image Source: Andrew Harnik / Getty Images



Photo: President Donald Trump addressing on the U.S. bombing of Iran

Image Source: CNBC

Trump Confirms Iran Strikes

Global leaders warn of nuclear crisis risk

Alexandar Sullivan

The United States escalated tensions in the Middle East with a direct military strike on Iranian nuclear sites on June 21, targeting Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan with B-2 stealth bombers and bunker-busting munitions. The airstrikes, confirmed by President Donald Trump, represent the first direct U.S. military action in the ongoing Israel-Iran conflict. Trump described

the operation as a "successful mission," declaring that the strikes were aimed at degrading Iran's nuclear capabilities and deterring further aggression. While Republican leaders lauded the attack as a strong show of force and solidarity with Israel, Democratic lawmakers warned it could provoke a broader conflict and complicate diplomatic efforts. The strikes follow a series of escalating confrontations between

Israel and Iran, with missile barrages and cyberattacks intensifying over recent months. Analysts note that the U.S. intervention signals a clear strategic shift, aligning Washington more directly with Israeli military goals. Global reaction was immediate. Russia, Turkey, and Egypt condemned the operation, with the Kremlin warning that the world stood "on the brink of nuclear catastrophe." In Tehran, officials labeled the

attack a violation of national sovereignty and said Iran would not return to talks unless Israeli aggression ceases entirely. As fears of regional war grow, international diplomats urged restraint. Yet with trust eroding and alliances hardening, the window for diplomacy appears increasingly fragile. The conflict now enters uncharted territory, with far-reaching implications for regional and global stability.

The SHORT

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NYPD investigating anti-Muslim voicemails sent to mayoral candidate

Lily Anderson

New York State Assemblyman Zohran Mamdani, a mayoral candidate and one of the city's most visible Muslim elected officials, is at the center of an NYPD investigation after receiving multiple anti-Muslim and racist threats, including voicemails referencing a car bomb. The threats, which surfaced in recent days, have drawn widespread condemnation from political figures and civil rights organizations. Mamdani confirmed



Photo: Mayoral Candidate Zohran Mamdani

Image Source: The Guardian

the threats publicly and stated they were reported immediately to authorities. The NYPD's Hate Crimes Task Force is now investigating the messages, which

included slurs and violent rhetoric targeting Mamdani's religion and ethnicity. According to media reports, the voicemails also referenced his support

for Palestinian rights, a stance that has made him a target of past political attacks. The threats have emerged amid a broader climate of rising anti-Muslim sentiment and Islamophobic rhetoric in political discourse. Mamdani, who represents Queens in the State Assembly, has been a vocal advocate for progressive issues, including affordable housing and police accountability. His campaign for mayor of New York City has gained momentum in recent months.

Several public officials and organizations have expressed support for Mamdani and urged law enforcement to treat the matter with urgency. Security around the candidate has been increased, and community leaders are calling for solidarity in the face of hate-driven intimidation. As the investigation continues, the threats have underscored ongoing concerns about the safety of minority candidates and the real dangers posed by politically motivated hate speech.



COMMUNITY NEWS



Local Muslim And Jewish Closely Watching Iran-Israel Strikes

Staff Reporter

Iranian-American New Yorkers are closely monitoring the deepening conflict between Israel and Iran as the two countries exchange a volley of strikes. Aerial attacks between Israel and Iran continued overnight into Tuesday, marking a fifth day of strikes following Israel's Friday attack. That surprise operation hit at the heart of Iran's nuclear program, striking key facilities and killing several nuclear scientists as well as high-ranking military leaders, Israeli officials say. There were major traffic jams in Tehran after President Trump warned residents to leave. There are an estimated one million Iranian-Americans (often calling themselves Persian-Americans) - among



them, a variety of faiths and opinions on the ongoing conflict. Some worry about an Iran armed with nuclear

capabilities. 'Hopefully, there's peace in the world and they never get the power to build a nuclear

bomb, because they can't be trusted,' Itan Rahmani said. Tanya Namdar's daughter is getting married in two weeks

in Israel. 'Do I think it's right? 100%. Had to be done for the safety of the whole world,' Tanya Namdar said of Israel's strikes. Others are reeling from the recent escalation in the Middle East and the Trump administration's response. Nasim Alikhani is a businesswoman who runs Sofreh Cafe. She was just in Iran and says she can't believe Trump would tell millions in Tehran to leave. 'If you combine the population of New York and London together, that becomes the population of Tehran. Where are these people are going to go?' Nasim Alikhani reacted. 'The Iranian people are beautiful people,' John Moore III said. 'Doesn't matter, Muslim or Jewish. No mother wants to lose their child.'

Man Slashed In face During Early Morning Dispute In Queens



arrived shortly after the incident and transported the victim to NewYork-Presbyterian Queens Hospital, where he was listed in stable condition. Police have not released a motive or whether the individuals knew each other. Investigation ongoing as police seek suspect Authorities are continuing to investigate the incident and are reviewing surveillance footage in the area. It is not yet known what type of sharp object was used in the assault. Anyone with information is urged to contact the NYPD as detectives work to identify the suspect. No further details have been made public. 'The individual then fled on foot, traveling eastbound on 34 Avenue,' the report stated. The violent episode adds to a string of overnight incidents reported in the borough in recent weeks.

Staff Reporter

A 32-year-old man was slashed in the face with a sharp object during an early morning altercation outside a Jackson Heights residence, police said. The attack occurred at approximately 3:53 a.m. Saturday in front of 105-02 34th Avenue, when the victim became involved in a verbal

dispute with an unidentified individual. The confrontation escalated quickly, resulting in the suspect striking the victim multiple times in the face with what authorities described as a sharp object. The suspect fled the scene on foot, heading eastbound along 34th Avenue. No arrests have been made, and the attacker's identity remains unknown. Emergency Medical Services

NYC Board Of Elections Anticipates Heat Emergency On Primary Election Day



NYN DESK

The New York City Board of Elections says it is working with state and local government to prepare for a forecasted heat emergency on Primary Day, Tuesday, June 24, 2025. 'Our top priority is the health and safety of our poll workers, voters and the proper functioning of our poll sites,' said Vincent Ignizio, deputy executive director of the NYC Board of Elections. 'While voters generally spend only a few minutes at a polling place, our poll workers serve on the front lines for up to 17

hours.' Over 35,000 poll workers will be assisting voters at 1,213 poll sites across the five boroughs. The Board says it is responding to the heat advisory by distributing fans, ensuring steady water supply, and coordinating with emergency management and utility providers to ensure continuous power supply, with a special focus on poll sites without air conditioning. Early voting is also encouraged for voters eager to avoid extreme heat conditions.

Man, 26, Fatally Shot In Neck During Bronx Clash

NYN DESK

A 26-year-old man was killed Saturday after he was fatally shot in the neck during a bloody Bronx clash, police said. The victim, Kasiem Johnson, was inside the lobby of the apartment building where he lived on E. 174th St., near West Farms Road in Crotona Park East, around



9:40 a.m. when he became embroiled in a fight, police said. During the scrap, his

opponent pulled a gun and opened fire, striking him in the neck, cops said. Police responding to a report of an assault in progress found the victim in the lobby, bleeding from the neck. EMS rushed Johnson to St. Barnabas Hospital, where he died. The gunman, who was wearing all black, ran out of the building. No arrests have been made.

Prayer Time IN New York

FAJR	DHUHR	ASR	MAGHRIB	ISHA
03:45	12:58	04:59	08:31	10:11
03:46	12:58	04:59	08:31	10:11
03:46	12:59	04:59	08:31	10:11
03:47	12:59	04:59	08:31	10:11
03:47	12:59	04:59	08:31	10:11
03:48	12:59	04:59	08:31	10:11
03:48	12:59	05:00	08:31	10:11

OPINION

Fatherhood in Islam

Imam Shamsi Ali

In Islam, fatherhood is a sacred trust and profound responsibility bestowed by Allah. A father is a shepherd of his household, responsible for guiding and caring for his family, as the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for his flock" (Bukhari & Muslim). A father's role is crucial in shaping his children's character, faith and future,

providing emotional stability and spiritual strength through love, guidance and presence. The Quran exemplifies this through Prophet Ibrahim's (peace be upon him) tender yet leadership-filled interactions with his son Ismail (peace be upon him). Being a father in Islam encompasses not only material provision but also nurturing a love for Allah, connection to the Quran and commitment to justice,



"A father's role is crucial in shaping his children's character, faith and future,

kindness and responsibility. It's a lifelong mission of mercy and mentorship, aiming to leave a legacy of piety and service.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "When a person dies, their deeds cease except for three: ongoing charity, knowledge that benefits others and a righteous child who prays for them" (Muslim). A righteous child's prayers are an ongoing reward for fathers in the

hereafter. May Allah grant fathers strength, wisdom and compassion to fulfill their noble role and raise generations rooted in truth and guided by light. Ameen. Wishing all fathers a blessed day with their loved ones!

Imam Shamsi Ali
Director of Jamaica Muslim Center | President of Nusantara Foundation | a Father of six Children

Why NYC's Mayoral Election Demands Our Voice

Imam Muhammad Shahidullah

As New Yorkers prepare to elect their next mayor, we are called not just to cast a vote, but to fulfill a profound civic and moral responsibility. In a city as vast and vibrant as ours—home to more than eight million people from every walk of life—the decision of who leads us cannot be left to chance or apathy. We must participate because we matter. Our voices matter. And the future of our city depends on whether we choose to engage. From my work as a faith leader and CEO of Save the People USA, I witness firsthand the challenges that many of our communities face—rising housing insecurity, economic inequality, persistent underinvestment in immigrant neighborhoods, and escalating concerns about safety and justice. These are not abstract policy points. They are realities that affect families, children, elders, and the most vulnerable among us every single day. Leadership matters. The mayor of New York City is not just an administrator. They shape the moral tone of the city. They guide policy that determines whether a child has a safe place

to learn, whether a small business survives, whether an undocumented neighbor is protected or pushed out. They appoint commissioners, manage multi-billion-dollar budgets, and represent us not just to Albany or Washington—but to the world. This election is not just about who will be in office next year. It's about what kind of city we want to be for the next generation. One of the core values in our faith traditions—across all communities—is justice. Justice begins with participation. If we do not show up at the ballot box, we are surrendering our right to help shape decisions that will affect our lives and those of our children. Silence, in the context of democracy, is not neutrality. It is surrender. Let us remember that people marched, fought, and even gave their lives so that all of us—regardless of race, religion, or status—could have the right to vote. It dishonors their struggle when we treat voting as optional. Too often, faith-based communities are told that politics is something to be avoided. That spiritual life must be kept far from civic life. I respectfully disagree. Faith and justice are deeply intertwined. As people of faith,



we are instructed to care for our neighbors, to advocate for fairness, and to protect those in need. Voting is one of the most powerful, peaceful tools we have to fulfill those values. In our work at Save the People USA, we engage diverse communities—Muslim, Christian, Jewish, and more—on civic empowerment and social justice. We see the difference it makes when people feel ownership over local government. We also see the damage when leaders are elected without input from the communities most affected by their decisions. This year's mayoral race features several prominent candidates—some seasoned in city government, others rising on the wave of activism and grassroots movements. Regardless of whom one

supports, the key issue is this: we must participate. That means researching the candidates, attending forums, asking questions, and showing up to vote—whether early, by absentee ballot, or on election day. And let us not stop at voting alone. Let this election be a spark that ignites deeper civic engagement. Let it be the beginning of a long-term investment in shaping policies on education, policing, healthcare, economic opportunity, and housing equity. Elected officials must not only be held accountable every four years, but every day. Democracy does not end with a vote—it begins there. I urge all houses of worship, community centers, schools, and nonprofits to encourage civic awareness. Invite candidates to speak. Host nonpartisan voter education sessions. Remind your congregants, your neighbors, your families: your voice matters. Your vote matters. To young people especially: this is your city. Even if you are not yet of voting age, get involved. Ask questions. Learn how government works. Volunteer for a campaign. Speak up on social media. Democracy needs your energy and your voice more

than ever. We are living in a time of polarization, fear, and fatigue. But we are also living in a time of possibility. With courage, faith, and unity, we can meet the challenges of this moment. And that begins with each of us doing our part. The Qur'an says, "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice..." (4:58). That includes our civic trusts—the duty to care for our community and choose leaders with wisdom and integrity. New York City's strength is its diversity—of language, of faith, of experience. Let's ensure that the next mayor reflects that strength, not just in words, but in actions and policies. Let's vote—not just for a name on a ballot, but for a vision of a just, inclusive, and thriving city.

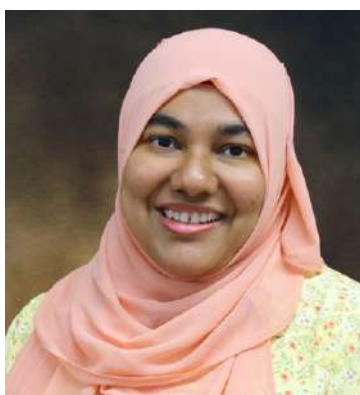
— **Imam Muhammad Shahidullah**
Founder, Save the People USA
Director, Elhaam Academy | Peace Center | Interfaith Center of USA
Community Leader and Advocate for Interfaith Understanding

A Year of Firsts and Foundations at Elhaam Academy

Shahana Olid

Assalamu Alaikum Students, Families, and Staff, This has been a year we will never forget; our very first year as a school community! What an incredible journey it has been. Together, we experienced a year full of firsts: our first day of school, first class projects, first field trips, first school-wide events, and so many joyful memories in between. Opening a new

school is no small task, but because of the dedication, love, and energy from each of you—students, parents, and staff—we built something truly special. We didn't just open a school; we created a community, a place filled with learning, laughter, friendship, and faith. To our students, you are the pioneers of our school's story. Your smiles, your curiosity, and your hard work have set the tone for



what this school stands for. Thank you for making history with us. To our families, thank you for trusting us, supporting us, and being our partners every step of the way. Your belief in our mission gave this school its foundation. To our incredible staff, your commitment, creativity, and heart made this first year unforgettable. You poured yourselves into every lesson, event, and moment—and it

shows. As you turn through the pages of this yearbook, I hope you smile at all the memories we created together. This is only the beginning—and InshAllah, we look forward to many more beautiful years ahead.

Shahana Olid Principal,
Elhaam Academy Message from the Yearbook 2025

All Eyes on Queens at Annual Business Expo

Thousands Gather for Largest Local Networking Event of the Year

Ashley Reed

A vibrant mix of business energy and borough pride filled Citi Field as the Queens Chamber of Commerce hosted the Queens Business Expo 2025. The event brought together more than 2,000 entrepreneurs, business leaders, and local officials for what has become one of the city's most influential economic showcases. With over 140 exhibitors and an impressive lineup of panelists representing major players in sports and entertainment, the event underscored Queens' growing stature as both a commercial and cultural powerhouse in New York City. Held within the iconic stadium that's home to the New York Mets, the expo served as a full-day celebration of local enterprise, featuring dynamic vendor booths, networking opportunities, and live



discussions from some of the borough's top thought leaders. From food service startups to tech innovators, the event offered a cross-section of Queens' business ecosystem—one that continues to thrive on diversity, resilience, and innovation. A highlight of the day was the all-star panel

featuring representatives from the New York Mets, United States Tennis Association (USTA), New York City Football Club (NYCFC), and Hard Rock. Their discussions touched on Queens' pivotal role in the evolution of New York's sports and entertainment industries, and how these sectors are contributing to job

growth and economic momentum across the borough. "This expo is a reflection of the spirit of Queens," one attendee remarked. "It's collaborative, entrepreneurial, and forward-looking. There's no better place right now to be building a business." Local vendors offered attendees a taste of

Queens' renowned culinary landscape while also promoting homegrown products and services. Exhibitors spanned sectors such as finance, real estate, hospitality, health care, and technology, making the event a one-stop platform for networking and deal-making. Behind the scenes, it was the Queens Chamber of Commerce team that powered the event's success. Their months of planning and coordination were evident in every detail—from the layout of exhibition booths

Chamber's ongoing mission to elevate the borough's economic profile was on full display throughout the day. The expo not only strengthened relationships among existing businesses but also opened doors for new collaborations. Attendees praised the opportunity to meet face-to-face with potential partners, clients, and mentors—all under one roof in one of New York's most iconic venues. As Queens continues to experience unprecedented growth, events like the Queens Business Expo are playing a vital role in connecting people, ideas, and opportunities. With the 2025 edition setting a new benchmark in scale and impact, it's clear that the borough's business future is as expansive and dynamic as the stadium that hosted it.



to the seamless flow of programming. The



All Photo Credit : Dominick Totino

BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN

GodSquad Gala Honors Legacy of Peace and Partnership

67th Precinct Clergy Council Celebrates 15 Years of Impact



James Anderson

Under the soft glow of a summer evening and the vibrant canopy of the Brooklyn Children's Museum rooftop, the 67th Precinct Clergy Council – known widely as The GodSquad – celebrated a remarkable milestone: 15 years of dedicated service in Brooklyn as a faith-based, anti-gun violence organization. The 15th Annual Anniversary

Gala, held on June 18, 2025, brought together clergy, community leaders, public safety advocates, and supporters to reflect on progress made and honor those helping shape a safer, more unified borough. What began as a grassroots effort to interrupt cycles of violence in Flatbush has evolved into one of New York City's leading models for faith-based

civic engagement. The gala not only marked the organization's accomplishments but also paid tribute to a diverse group of honorees whose work aligns closely with the GodSquad's mission of prevention, healing, and hope. This year's honorees included: Rev. Phillip T. Falayi, Roy Holder, Starr Maharaj, Kayla Mattis, Stephon Prass-David, Bishop Dr.

Cecil G. Riley, Captain Derby St. Fort, the Jewish Community Relations Council, and Sun River Health. Each was recognized for their commitment to justice, health, safety, and community transformation. Their contributions—whether through ministry, public service, healthcare, or bridge-building across communities—represented the multidimensional strength of Brooklyn's

African dance routines set the tone for a celebration that honored both heritage and resilience. Attendees were reminded of the deep cultural and spiritual roots that fuel the GodSquad's mission and make gatherings like this more than just ceremonial—they are acts of communal affirmation. Against the backdrop of Juneteenth and amid rising calls for localized solutions to violence, the GodSquad's 15th anniversary served as a powerful reminder of the role faith-based organizations play in frontline prevention. From mediating conflicts to supporting grieving families, the Clergy Council has stood as a vital thread in the social fabric of Central Brooklyn. With a packed rooftop, the event was a testament to the widespread

respect and gratitude the organization has earned over the years. "Thank you to all those who have sponsored, submitted ads, purchased tickets and tables," read a statement from the GodSquad, reflecting the deep sense of community ownership over its mission. As the evening concluded, many attendees noted the significance of the honorees and the symbolism of the location—a children's museum—underscoring a future they are all working to protect. The event was more than a gala; it was a call to action, a celebration of progress, and a solemn vow to continue the work. For 15 years, the GodSquad has stood at the intersection of faith and justice. On this night, Brooklyn stood with them.



fight against gun violence. The evening began with a high-energy cultural performance by Ballet Fè Sa, whose dynamic



PEACE

“We Are One Humanity”: Faith Vigil for Haiti Held at CCC Brooklyn

Imams, Pastors, and Leaders Lift Prayers for a Nation in Crisis

Christopher Scott

As voices rose in prayer inside the Christian Cultural Center in Brooklyn, a powerful message of unity, remembrance, and purpose echoed through the gathering: freedom must be defended beyond borders. The sanctuary became the site of a moving prayer vigil and rally for Haiti, organized by the National Action Network (NAN), where faith leaders, elected officials, and community members came together to stand in solidarity with the Haitian people amid ongoing political and humanitarian crisis. Held in honor of Juneteenth, the event highlighted the connection between the historical emancipation of African Americans and Haiti’s legacy as the first free Black republic. The gathering sought not



only to commemorate freedom but to mobilize awareness and compassion for a nation in turmoil. Rev. Al Sharpton, President and Founder of NAN, addressed the audience with a call for moral clarity and collective responsibility. He emphasized that Haiti’s current struggle must not be ignored

and urged attendees to recognize the parallels between past and present fights for justice. His presence underscored NAN’s commitment to international human rights as part of its broader mission. Also present was New York State Attorney General Letitia James, who spoke passionately

about the need for solidarity and sustained support for Haiti. She reminded attendees that the fight for liberation and dignity is not confined to any one country or moment in time. The event featured powerful interfaith participation. Among those offering prayers was Imam Muhammad

Shahidullah, CEO of Save The People USA & a faith leader, who delivered a solemn and heartfelt du’a in support of the Haitian people. In his prayer, he invoked mercy, healing, and global unity: “O Allah, replace fear with safety, replace despair with hope. Unite us as one humanity, so we may stand with Haiti not just in prayer, but in action, generosity, and love.” The vigil also included contributions from pastors and clergy

with those suffering—especially during a time that commemorates hard-won freedom. For many, the night served as both a memorial and a moral checkpoint, reminding all in attendance of the ongoing work that freedom demands. The program closed with a shared moment of silence and joined hands, a gesture that symbolized the evening’s message: that faith, when united across traditions, can become a powerful force for justice and change. This Brooklyn gathering was more than a symbolic event—it was a solemn call to action rooted in history, faith, and shared humanity. By linking the legacy of Juneteenth with the present crisis in Haiti, the event reminded all present that the pursuit of justice must always extend beyond borders.



from across the city, all of whom spoke to the moral and spiritual imperative of standing



FAITH

Rebuilding Communities Through Faith-Based Housing

Summit brings together clergy, advocates, and developers



Jessica Morgan

Religious leaders, housing advocates, and development professionals from across New York State gathered on June 18, 2025, for the Faith-Based Affordable Housing Summit at The Riverside Church in New York City. Organized under the

theme “Rebuilding the Sacred Hearts of Our Community,” the one-day summit aimed to equip faith-based organizations with the knowledge and tools to turn underutilized land into affordable housing. The event, hosted by the New York State Council of Churches in partnership with the Interfaith Assembly

on Homelessness and Housing and the Interfaith Affordable Housing Collaborative, drew a broad audience, including clergy, parishioners, architects, title companies, legislators, and Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) officers. Participants attended both in person and online, with

registration options offered on a sliding scale or complimentary basis for faith leaders. From 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., the summit featured panel discussions, Q&A sessions, and networking opportunities. Attendees explored case studies of completed faith-based housing developments, reviewed financing options, and learned about legal frameworks necessary for pre-development planning. Sessions also covered strategies for engaging



financial institutions and navigating public-private partnerships. Organizers noted that houses of worship

across New York possess significant real estate assets—often underused—which could be leveraged to address the growing demand for affordable housing. One summit participant remarked during a session that congregations are beginning to see their land as an extension of their ministry to serve the broader community. The conference also addressed policy developments and government programs that support faith-based development efforts. Attendees were introduced to funding sources aligned with the Community Reinvestment Act, and speakers outlined practical steps congregations can take to begin evaluating the feasibility of housing projects on their property. A representative from one of the organizing groups emphasized

the summit’s role in connecting spiritual vision with practical expertise, noting that cross-sector collaboration is essential for sustainable development outcomes. The summit concluded with a networking reception, giving participants the opportunity to connect with peers, potential development partners, and funders. As the affordable housing crisis deepens across the state, events like the Faith-Based Affordable Housing Summit highlight the growing interest among religious institutions in using their land not only for worship, but also to build stronger, more stable communities. The momentum generated at the summit suggests that more congregations may soon be taking the first steps toward turning sacred space into much-needed homes.



Smiles and Success Fill Elhaam Academy's Stage

Annual promotions and graduations held with pride

Patt Cummins

Elhaam Academy opened its doors with warmth and celebration as families gathered for a day of promotion and graduation ceremonies that marked both academic milestones and character development in the lives of its students. Held throughout the morning on the school's campus, the event welcomed parents and guardians in stages, providing an intimate and organized setting to honor students from kindergarten through sixth grade, including a special focus on the 5th grade graduation.

The day's events began early, with faculty and staff preparing the venue and welcoming excited students and families. By 8:30 AM, the first wave of proud parents arrived to cheer on their children from 1st and 2nd grades, as they were formally recognized for their successful academic year. Under the leadership of Principal



Shahana Olid, the school's staff guided each portion of the program with structure and sincerity, ensuring a smooth and uplifting experience for all. Each ceremony began with a welcome and address by Principal Olid, followed by individual student recognitions. Faculty members took turns presenting students, shaking hands, and assembling

them on stage for commemorative group photos. Teachers such as Ayesha, Anum, Anisa, Mathew, and Afrin played key roles in facilitating the flow of each session, bringing a personal touch to each student's recognition. Following the early grade promotions, the event transitioned to highlight students from 3rd, 4th, and 6th grades, continuing the theme

of advancement and growth. Families arrived in designated time slots, allowing each group to enjoy the spotlight without crowding or distraction. The day's format reflected not only logistical care but also a deep respect for each student's individual journey. The highlight of the morning included two dedicated graduation ceremonies, beginning with the Kindergarten

Graduation. Beginning at 10:45 AM, the youngest students were welcomed with applause and warmth. The program featured a recitation by Mahnisa, a short nasheed, and the awarding of certificates by Ayesha and Saffiyah, followed by heartfelt congratulations from Shahana Olid herself. Shortly after, the 5th grade graduation commenced with a similar structure, beginning with a recitation by Fatema, a reflective poem presentation, and the

school's commitment to academic excellence, character development, and faith-based education. Throughout the day, the atmosphere was filled with pride and emotion. Students stood tall in front of their peers and families, smiling as they received their certificates and took their place in class photos. Parents, in turn, captured the moments on phones and cameras, their pride evident in every clap and cheer. As the ceremonies concluded, the celebration served as a powerful reminder of the role schools like Elhaam Academy play in nurturing not only knowledge but also identity, compassion, and a sense of purpose. Guided by a dedicated faculty and leadership, and grounded in values of faith and community, the students of Elhaam stepped forward into the next stage of their academic journey with confidence and joy.



ceremonial distribution of certificates by Ayesha and Afrin. The program concluded with closing remarks by Principal Olid, affirming the



EDUCATION

Smiles and Success Fill Elhaam Academy's Stage



EDUCATION

Smiles and Success Fill Elhaam Academy's Stage

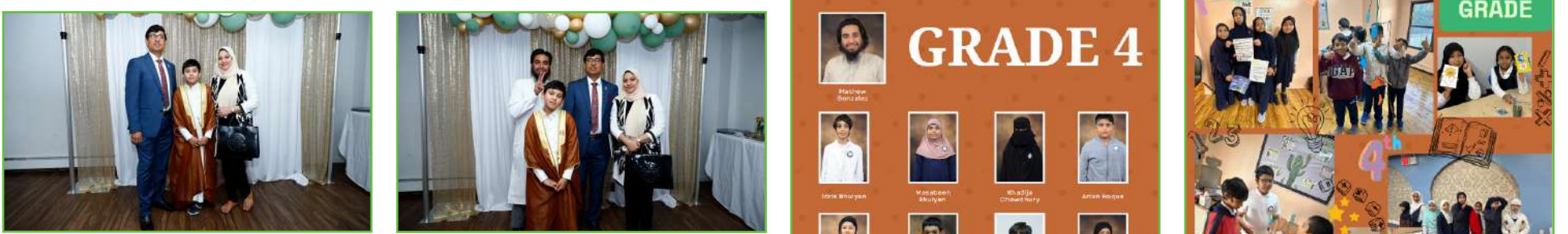


EDUCATION











Smiles and Success Fill Elhaam Academy's Stage



Smiles and Success Fill Elhaam Academy's Stage



GRADE 4

 Mubarek Shariq	 Ibrahim Shukri	 Khadija Chaudhury	 Arfan Hussain
 Sarah Hogue	 Shama Naveed	 Usman Mahan	 Rayeesa Baha
 Fatima Raza	 Muhammad Hussain		

FOURTH GRADE



EDUCATION

Smiles and Success Fill Elhaam Academy's Stage



EDUCATION

Smiles and Success Fill Elhaam Academy's Stage



EDUCATION

Smiles and Success Fill Elhaam Academy's Stage



NYC ELECTION

Ensuring Every Voice Counts in Every Language

Language Assistance Program Supports NYC's Multilingual Democracy



Fredrick Lahm

As New Yorkers engage in early voting ahead of the June 24 primary elections, the New York City Civic Engagement Commission (CEC) has continued its efforts to ensure no voter is left behind due to language barriers. Through its Voter Language Assistance Program, the Commission has

provided in-person interpretation in 13 languages across select polling sites, supporting a more inclusive democratic process for voters with limited English proficiency. From June 20 through June 22, early voters across the city received guidance and support in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), French,

Haitian Creole, Italian, Korean, Polish, Russian, Urdu, Yiddish, and other key languages. These services are set to continue on Election Day, June 24, helping ensure equitable access to voting information and procedures. In Parkchester, a Bronx neighborhood home to a significant immigrant population, the value of such services is

particularly evident. Although no official polling sites in the area have been publicly confirmed as designated interpretation hubs for this cycle, community advocates and leaders have called on city agencies to maintain and expand language services in future elections. Among those championing this cause is Save the People USA, a Bronx-based civic and advocacy organization. With a track record of collaboration with the CEC, the group

Fatima Niass, Office Manager at Save the People USA, actively engaged residents, supported voter education efforts, and helped gather feedback on local language needs. Community members in Parkchester have expressed growing concern about ensuring continued access to these services in upcoming election cycles. Local advocacy has focused on preserving interpreter funding, increasing multilingual outreach, and recruiting volunteers who reflect the neighborhood's linguistic diversity. Calls to "save the people working with the Civic Engagement Commission at Parkchester" have emerged not just as a slogan but as a community directive—an effort to safeguard vital infrastructure that supports civic inclusion

in one of New York's most linguistically diverse districts. Organizations and individuals are also encouraging residents to contact the CEC and the NYC Board of Elections to advocate for sustained support at local polling stations. Emphasis has been placed on community-based partnerships to help the city better identify and respond to voter language needs. With Election Day just ahead, these efforts serve as a crucial reminder: in a multilingual city, language access is not optional—it is essential for a functioning democracy. The collaboration between civic agencies and grassroots partners like Save the People USA illustrates how voter support can be expanded not just at the ballot box, but long before a vote is cast.



has helped bridge communication gaps for many first-time and non-English-speaking voters. During early voting,



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Breaking Stigma: Mental Health in Focus at Darul Uloom NY

Community Workshops Address Stress, Trauma, and Healing in Muslim Youth

Emily Parker

In a bold and timely step toward addressing mental health in faith-based and immigrant communities, Darul Uloom New York recently hosted a series of workshops designed to empower and educate youth on emotional well-being. Held in partnership with Save the People USA, Human Concern International USA, and the New York City Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes (OPHC), the initiative reached over 100 young participants, offering a supportive space for dialogue, learning, and healing. Spearheaded by Dr. Phillip Falayi, a respected mental health advocate and practitioner, the sessions tackled some of the most pressing yet under-discussed challenges facing Muslim youth today. From managing anxiety and stress to understanding trauma and the impacts of hate crimes, the workshops provided essential tools for resilience—delivered through a culturally sensitive, faith-informed lens.



The atmosphere was both open and engaging, with Dr. Falayi using real-life scenarios and interactive discussions to connect with students. He emphasized the importance of early intervention and building emotional intelligence while encouraging attendees to seek professional support without shame. His approach resonated deeply, particularly as he spoke about how systemic racism,

Islamophobia, and bullying affect the mental health of young Muslims and youth of color. Organizers noted that this kind of programming is long overdue. Representatives from Save the People USA and Human Concern USA highlighted the urgent need for mental health resources that reflect the lived experiences of underserved communities.

the conversation, the workshops aimed to reduce stigma—still a significant barrier in many households—and to normalize seeking help. The Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes, which co-supported the initiative, reinforced its commitment to fostering safe, inclusive environments where all New Yorkers, especially youth, can access pathways to healing. The office's involvement also signaled a growing recognition among city agencies that hate-fueled violence and bias have long-term psychological effects

immigrant and religious minority communities. Participants left the sessions not only with knowledge but with a renewed sense of confidence in their ability to care for their mental and emotional health. Many attendees expressed appreciation for the opportunity to speak openly and be heard in a setting that respected both their identity and struggles. The event concluded with a unified message from all partnering organizations: mental health is a right, not a privilege, and addressing it requires collective effort—from families, schools, religious institutions, and local governments alike. With the success of this initiative, organizers are already planning follow-up programs and outreach efforts across other Muslim-majority neighborhoods in New York City. As they look to expand, they are calling for greater investment, broader partnerships, and community-based strategies to ensure that no youth feels alone in their journey toward wellness.



By incorporating religious and cultural understanding into

on young people, particularly those in



HEALTH

“Hope Never Dies” Premieres in Jackson Heights

COVID-19 Documentary Honors Resilience and Shared Humanity



Mitchell John

An evening of deep reflection and artistic tribute unfolded in Jackson Heights, New York, on Friday, June 20, as the much-anticipated documentary “Hope Never Dies” made its official premiere. Directed, written, and researched by Shamim Al Amin, a veteran journalist and filmmaker,

the 42-minute film revisited the emotional, physical, and societal upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, while honoring the extraordinary human spirit that endured it. Hosted in a packed auditorium, the premiere drew a wide spectrum of guests—from community members to cultural icons and media personalities.

The evening began with a powerful rendition of “We Shall Overcome” by rising young performer Alvan Chowdhury, setting a tone of resilience and remembrance that would carry through the night. The event was formally inaugurated by Asma Ahmad Masood, the legendary Canadian news anchor and media figure, who underscored

the importance of preserving collective memory through storytelling. A welcome address was delivered by Mahbub Siddiqui, Founder and CEO of Meta Info Tech (MIT), one of the film’s primary sponsors, who praised the documentary’s mission to highlight unspoken personal and communal stories from one of the most challenging periods in recent history. Prior to the screening, the official poster for the documentary was unveiled, offering a symbolic prelude to the journey that was to follow. As the lights dimmed and the screen lit up, the audience was drawn into a narrative both intimate and vast—filled with the small triumphs, immense losses, and quiet resilience of everyday New Yorkers during the pandemic’s darkest hours. Following the screening, a panel of distinguished

guests reflected on the film’s impact. Among them were Bir Muktiyoddha Tazul Imam, a renowned multidisciplinary artist; Professor Abdus Selim, President of the Bangladesh Federation of Film Societies; acclaimed playwright Masum Reza; Dr. Babul Biswas, a theater scholar; and Dr. Shamim Reza, a professor from the University of Dhaka. Their insights added cultural and academic depth to the evening, reminding the audience that art can serve as both documentation and healing. The discussion was moderated by cultural figure Gopan Saha and featured commentary from Akash Rahman (CEO of Asha Group), Milton Ahmed, Mia Zakir, Nasir Ali Khan Pol, Rubaiya Rahman, and Tofail Chowdhury Liton (CEO of Gree Mechanical Yonkers), among others. A Q&A session allowed

attendees to engage directly with the filmmaker and panelists, making the event not only a screening but also a forum for communal dialogue. The program closed with a soulful performance of Rabindranath Tagore’s “Anandaloke, Mangalaloke...”, leaving many in the audience visibly moved. The song, imbued with themes of hope and spiritual light, provided a fitting conclusion to a night that was as much about collective healing as it was about art. As guests exited into the streets of Queens, they carried with them not only memories of the pandemic but also a renewed appreciation for the strength that communities found—and continue to find—amid adversity. “Hope Never Dies” offered more than just a look back; it became a quiet yet powerful call to move forward, together.



HEALTH

Healthfirst Hosts Vibrant Eid al-Adha Celebration in Jamaica, Queens



Queens. The free event, held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., drew hundreds of families from the diverse South Asian and Muslim communities of New York City. Families enjoyed a variety of activities including Nasheed music, balloon artistry, toy giveaways, and health insurance information provided by Healthfirst representatives. The event was made possible through the leadership of Stephanie Wu, VP of Sales, and Miguel Centeno, VP of Community

Engagement, who emphasized the importance of cultural inclusion and community wellness. South Asian community leadership was strongly represented, with active participation from Uzair Sheikh, South Asian Director, and South Asian Managers MD Khan, Mahmudul Haque, Shifat Bakth, and Fatima Mehwash, who greeted attendees and helped facilitate services. Atif Ur Rehman, Community Engagement Manager at Healthfirst, coordinated the

event and expressed deep gratitude to all volunteers, families, and community organizations who helped make the event a success. Partnering community organizers included Save the People, Young Muslims, ICNA NY, BHALO, Jamaica Muslim Center, and Smile of Life USA. This celebration showcased not only the beauty of Eid traditions but also the power of community collaboration in supporting health, culture, and unity.

NYN DESK

Jamaica, NY – June 22, 2025 — The

spirit of Eid came alive as Healthfirst, in partnership with local organizations, hosted a

joyful and family-friendly Eid al-Adha Celebration at Thomas A. Edison High School in Jamaica,





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Legacy of Leonard Lauder Celebrated

Former Estée Lauder chairman honored at NYC service

Adrian Smith

Family, friends, and cultural luminaries gathered at Central Synagogue in New York City to honor the life of Leonard A. Lauder, the former Estée Lauder chairman, who passed away earlier this month at the age of 91. The memorial service paid tribute to Lauder's

HIGHLIGHT

- **Leonard A. Lauder, former Estée Lauder chairman, passed away at 91**
- **A memorial service was held at Central Synagogue, New York City**

extraordinary impact on business, philanthropy, and the arts.

Lauder, heir to the iconic beauty brand founded by his mother, transformed the Estée Lauder Companies into a global powerhouse. Beyond business, he was deeply devoted to cultural and charitable causes, donating more than \$1 billion in Cubist art to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and supporting medical research, Jewish causes, and education. The service featured reflections from family members and colleagues who described Lauder as a visionary leader, generous benefactor, and dedicated family man. His contributions to public institutions and the arts, attendees noted, leave a lasting mark on New York City and beyond. Mourners remembered not only his accomplishments but also his warmth and wit, honoring a man whose influence extended far beyond the corporate world. As one of the most prominent cultural philanthropists of his generation, Leonard Lauder's legacy continues to resonate in museums, foundations, and lives across the globe.



Photo: Remembering Leonard A. Lauder (1933-2025)

Image Source: www.thebeautyinfluencers.com

Brad Lander Briefly Detained by ICE

NYC mayoral candidate released after governor's intervention

Amkel Norush

New York City Comptroller Brad Lander, a Democratic mayoral candidate, was briefly detained by ICE agents on June 17 inside the federal immigration court at 26 Federal Plaza, igniting political backlash and raising concerns about federal overreach. According to Lander's team, the incident occurred as he was escorting an immigrant named Edgardo out of a hearing. Masked ICE agents reportedly linked arms with Lander and handcuffed him, demanding a judicial warrant to justify the immigrant's arrest.



Photo: Brad Lander Is Detained By ICE Agents at Immigration Courthouse
Image Source: Olga Fedorova/Associated Press

ICE and the Department of Homeland Security later claimed Lander obstructed and assaulted a federal

officer—he strongly denied. "I certainly did not assault an officer," Lander said in a public statement.

He was held for several hours before Governor Kathy Hochul intervened and secured his release. All charges were

dropped. The detention drew swift condemnation from across New York City's political leadership. Council Member Pierina Sanchez, Council Speaker Adrienne Adams, Zohran Mamdani, and former Governor Andrew Cuomo criticized the action as an abuse of federal authority and an attempt to intimidate advocates for immigrant rights. Lander's brief arrest has intensified scrutiny over ICE's presence in New York courthouses and fueled ongoing debates about immigration enforcement and civil liberties in sanctuary cities.

Yankees Reactivate Luke Weaver

Bullpen bolstered as Aaron Judge powers offense



Photo: New York Yankees relief pitcher Luke Weaver
Image Source: AP Photo/David Zalubowski

Nassr Al Shams

Luke Weaver made his return to the New York Yankees bullpen this week after a stint on the injured list due to a hamstring strain, rejoining a team eager for pitching depth amid a tight division race. The right-hander had been a surprise standout early in the season, posting a 1.05 ERA across 25.2 innings before the injury setback. Activated on June 20, Weaver faced a tough assignment in his first game back, allowing four runs in a rough outing against the Baltimore Orioles. Despite the rocky return, the Yankees remain optimistic about Weaver's role moving forward, especially with bullpen questions looming and closer duties in flux.

HIGHLIGHT

- **Luke Weaver returned to action for the Yankees bullpen**
- **He had been sidelined with a hamstring injury**
- **Weaver had a 1.05 ERA prior to his IL stint**

Meanwhile, Aaron Judge continues to provide much-needed offense, launching a home run in the team's 7-3 win earlier this week. With Weaver healthy again and Judge heating up, the Yankees are hoping to build consistency as the mid-season grind intensifies.



Photo: The National Weather Service issued an extreme heat watch for Sunday through Tuesday for Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Staten Island, and Northern and Southern Queens.
Image Source: FOX Weather

NYC Braces for Dangerous Heat

Temperatures to feel above 100°F all week

Julian Alvez

New York City is facing a stretch of extreme heat and severe storms as forecasters warn of dangerously high temperatures and unstable weather throughout the coming week. An Extreme Heat Watch has been issued, with "feels-like" temperatures expected to exceed 100°F by midday on several days. According to the National Weather Service, the combination of high humidity and soaring temperatures will

HIGHLIGHT

- **"Feels-like" temperatures expected to exceed 100°F**
- **NYC under Extreme Heat Watch through the week**

create hazardous conditions, especially for vulnerable populations. Afternoon thunderstorms, some of them severe, are also predicted, increasing the risk of flash flooding and power outages. City officials have

opened cooling centers across all five boroughs and deployed emergency response teams to manage potential storm impacts. Residents are urged to stay hydrated, limit outdoor activity, and check on neighbors, especially seniors. The New York City Office of Emergency Management emphasized that staying indoors during peak heat hours will be critical for public safety as the city braces for what could be one of the hottest weeks of the summer.