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NEW YORK NEWS

The Voice of People

From New York

Suffolk County to Pay \$225K in Hijab Case

Settlement prompts new religious rights policy for police

Lily Anderson

A federal civil rights lawsuit brought on behalf of Marowa Fahmy, a practicing Muslim woman, has ended in a \$225,000 settlement and sweeping policy changes for the Suffolk County Police

HIGHLIGHT

- Marowa Fahmy coerced to remove hijab during 2022 arrest by Suffolk County Police

- \$225,000 settlement reached in civil rights lawsuit filed by CAIR NY and ECBAWM

- New policy permits religious head coverings during booking

Department (SCPD). The case stemmed from a 2022 incident in which Fahmy was allegedly forced to remove her hijab, strip-searched in the presence of a male officer, and repeatedly denied her right to religious covering during and after her arrest. The lawsuit, filed by the Council on American-Islamic Relations, New York (CAIR NY) and civil rights law firm Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward & Maazel

(ECBAWM), sparked national attention. As part of the settlement, Suffolk County has revised its official policy to explicitly allow religious head coverings—such as “yarmulkes, hijabs, or turbans”—in booking photos, provided the individual’s face remains visible.

“This settlement reaffirms that police must respect the hijab... What Ms. Fahmy went through should never happen again,” said Burhan Carroll, Staff Attorney at CAIR NY. In addition to monetary compensation, the agreement requires mandatory training for SCPD officers to ensure adherence to the new policy, marking a shift toward greater cultural and religious sensitivity in law enforcement practices. Civil rights advocates have hailed the outcome as a pivotal moment for religious freedom and police accountability, with implications reaching far beyond this individual case. The reforms not only safeguard Muslim women’s rights but affirm that constitutional protections for all faiths must be respected—even under the most vulnerable circumstances.



Photo: A federal judge will decide, with victim privacy protections potentially delaying release for weeks or months. Image Source: AP

President Demands Epstein Files

Pushes DOJ to release grand jury testimony amid backlash

Alexandar Sullivan

In a highly unusual move that has stirred political and legal circles, President Donald Trump has ordered the Department of Justice to seek the release of grand jury testimony connected to Jeffrey Epstein, the late financier accused of sex trafficking minors. The order, confirmed late Thursday, follows growing bipartisan pressure and backlash from Trump’s own supporters over the administration’s handling of Epstein-related disclosures. “Based on the ridiculous amount of publicity given to Jeffrey Epstein, I have asked Attorney General Pam Bondi to

HIGHLIGHT

- Donald Trump directed the DOJ to seek release of Jeffrey Epstein grand jury transcripts.

- Attorney General Pam Bondi filed a motion in the Southern District of New York.

produce any and all pertinent Grand Jury testimony, subject to Court approval,” Trump announced on Truth Social. Bondi followed up on X, stating that the DOJ would move the court the following day. By Friday, a formal motion had been filed in the Southern District of New York, requesting the unsealing of

transcripts “subject to appropriate redactions.” The move is unprecedented, legal experts say. “I’ve never heard of this before,” said Mitchell Epner, a former federal prosecutor. He cautioned that grand jury materials are typically protected by strict confidentiality and that disclosure would require judicial consent. CNN’s Elie Honig noted that such transcripts may represent only a “minuscule fraction” of the overall Epstein file, excluding surveillance footage, financial records, and wiretap evidence. The demand also coincides with Trump’s fiery denial of a Wall Street Journal report

alleging he sent Epstein a sexually suggestive birthday card in 2003, which he called “FAKE.” Trump has since filed a \$10 billion defamation lawsuit against the Journal and its parent company, NewsCorp, along with its executives and reporters. Critics across the aisle have echoed calls for transparency. Rep. Thomas Massie (R-KY) introduced a House petition to release all Epstein files, while Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA) said it “goes to the heart of trust in government.” Despite the dramatic order, the timeline for release remains uncertain. As Epner noted, “weeks would be moving very quickly—months is likely.”

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Markets Soar to Record Highs

U.S. stocks surge on upbeat economic data and earnings

John Paul

Wall Street surged on July 17, with the S&P 500 and Nasdaq Composite closing at record highs as strong economic data and upbeat corporate earnings lifted investor confidence. The rally came despite ongoing concerns over inflation, interest rates, and trade tensions. A key driver was June’s 0.6% rise in retail sales,

HIGHLIGHT

- June retail sales rose 0.6%, exceeding expectations

- Weekly jobless claims dropped to 221,000, a three-month low

- S&P 500 and Nasdaq closed at record highs on July 17

- 71–81% of S&P-500 companies beat earnings forecasts

signaling renewed consumer strength. Meanwhile, weekly jobless claims dropped to 221,000, the lowest in several weeks, underscoring a resilient labor market. These indicators helped ease fears of an economic slowdown and added fuel to the market’s upward momentum. Corporate earnings further bolstered the rally. So far, over 81% of S&P 500

companies have reported better-than-expected results, with standout performances from PepsiCo, United Airlines, and Charles Schwab. Despite some mixed reactions—such as a post-earnings dip in Netflix shares—the overall outlook remains strong. By market close, the Nasdaq had achieved six record finishes in seven sessions, while the S&P 500 marked

its sixth new high since June 27. With solid data and earnings driving optimism, investors now turn to upcoming housing figures and Q2 bank results for further direction.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Girl Injured In Harlem Shooting Reunites Officers Who Treated Her

Staff Reporter

An innocent young girl who was injured after gunfire erupted between reputed gang members in Harlem last year has reunited with the police officers who treated her. At the NYPD 32nd Precinct's Medal Day ceremony on Saturday, 7-year-old Fatou Keita reunited with the two officers who saved her life. She also received her very first bike, courtesy from the city's police department. 'Fatou Keita is a hero to all of us,' said the NYPD in a post on X. 'An innocent bystander, she survived a shooting last November and made a full recovery.' The shooting happened near West 145th



Street and Bradhurst Avenue in November 2024.

The 7-year-old was struck in the abdomen after gang

members opened fire in broad daylight. Surveillance

video captures Keita's father scooping her up when the shots rang out and ducking them both under the entrance of a store. Officers quickly responded to the scene that day and took Keita to the hospital in a patrol car. Daniel Idowu, 19, and an unidentified 17-year-old were both charged with attempted murder in connection to the shooting. Idowu was also charged with criminal possession of a weapon. Police said nine rounds were fired between the two reputed gang members firing on two rivals at the opposite end of the block. Those bullets didn't hit the intended target, but rather shattered glass and wounded the young girl.

Driver Charged In Hit-And-Run That Killed 2 Men In Brooklyn



NYN DESK

The hit-and-run driver accused of fatally striking two men near a food pantry in Brooklyn was arraigned in court over the weekend. Juventino Anastacio Florentino, 23, appeared before a judge on Saturday in connection to the deadly hit-and-run in Sunset Park. The fatal collision happened around 4:30 a.m. on Friday at Third Avenue and 52nd Street. Upon arrival, officers found the men on the road, and both were pronounced dead at the scene. The

victims were later identified as 59-year-old Faqiu Lin and 80-year-old Kex Un Chen. Surveillance video captured the BMW speeding southbound on Third Avenue before it hit the men, who appeared to not see the vehicle coming. One of the victims could be seen pulling a grocery cart and the other walked with a cane before they were struck. The car does not appear to brake before hitting the victims and speeding off. Florentino was arrested later Friday morning at his Staten Island home on a

slew of charges, including manslaughter recklessly causing death, criminally negligent homicide, leaving the scene of an accident resulting in death, reckless driving and reckless endangerment. Police managed to track down the BMW near the suspect's home using video and pieces of the car left at the scene. City Harvest released the following statement in response to the incident: We are deeply saddened by the tragic deaths of two individuals in Sunset Park this morning. Our thoughts are with their families and loved ones. We understand they may have been on their way to our Mobile Market simply trying to access food like so many New Yorkers in need. Security video from Friday morning showed a line stretching for blocks outside the food pantry. "I pass through here almost every morning," said Sunset Park resident Mike Gonzalez. "I pass through there and I see them all lined up and on the other side of the street too.

Woman, 2-Year-Old Girl Fatally Stabbed In Queens



Staff Reporter

One person was found stabbed to death in a Queens home in what appears to be a murder-suicide, Saturday evening, sources said. Officers received a 911 call at 7:09 p.m. for a home located at 65-35 Forest Avenue. A man and woman were found with stab wounds to various parts of their body, authorities said. A 2-year-old girl was also found to have injuries. Her injuries remain unclear at this time. A 54-year-old man was found to have stab wounds to his chest, and a 41-year-old woman had stab wounds to her neck and chest,

police said. Numerous ambulances were called to assist, sources say. Emergency Medical Services transported all three to a local hospital. The 41-year-old woman was pronounced dead by hospital staff. The 2-year-old girl was also taken to a local hospital. She was later pronounced deceased, police said. The man from the Queens home remains in critical condition, authorities said. It remains unclear what the relationship between the three is. Other details were not immediately available. Authorities said a full investigation remains ongoing.

Fire Damages Historic Bronx Church In West Farms

NYN DESK

Firefighters responded to a fire at a historic church in the Bronx on Monday afternoon. The two-alarm fire happened just after 4 p.m. at the vacant Beck Memorial Presbyterian Church in West Farms. Over 100 firefighters responded, and no injuries were reported. The church has historic landmark status. "Upon arrival, units found



heavy fire in the rear of the church. Our units moved in very aggressively with hose lines in an attempt to extinguish the fire from the inside. We encountered many

hazards, like holes in floors, and also some ceilings started to collapse as they were moving in with lines. At this point the Incident Commander advised everyone to evacuate the building and we used exterior streams to complete the final phases of extinguishment," said Deputy Assistant Chief Mike Woods. Fire Marshals are working to determine the cause of the fire.

Prayer Time IN New York

FAJR	DHUHR	ASR	MAGHRIB	ISHA
04:10	01:02	05:00	08:22	09:55
04:11	01:02	05:00	08:21	09:53
04:12	01:02	04:59	08:20	09:52
04:13	01:02	04:59	08:19	09:51
04:15	01:02	04:59	08:18	09:50
04:16	01:02	04:59	08:17	09:48
04:17	01:02	04:58	08:16	09:47

OPINION

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The Ummah Just Lost a Giant: A Tribute to Dr. Ja'far Idris

Dr. Yasir Qadhi

The Ummah just lost a giant. Dr. Ja'far Idris رحمة الله عليه was truly one of a kind. A man who seamlessly blended the depth of classical Islamic scholarship with the rigor of modern philosophy, he was a pioneer in every sense of the word.

Dr. Ja'far wasn't just a scholar; he was a visionary. At a time when few were speaking about the intersection of revelation and reason, science and religion, evolution and Islamic theology, he stood up and presented Islam not just as a faith, but as an intellectual framework grounded in tradition and confident in confronting modernity. For many of us, he was the first to prove that "intellectual Islam" was not only possible, but essential.

I will never forget hearing him speak in Houston in the early 1990s. As a teenager unfamiliar with the works of Ibn Taymiyyah, it was Dr. Ja'far who first introduced me to Dar' Ta'aruḍ al-'Aql wa al-Naql, and explained how reason and revelation can be reconciled. That one lecture planted a seed that would grow over the next three decades and ultimately lead to my PhD on that very topic. His words changed the trajectory of my life.

He was one of those who inspired me to pursue Islamic



— Dr. Yasir Qadhi
Prominent Islamic Scholar, Dean of The Islamic Seminary of America, USA

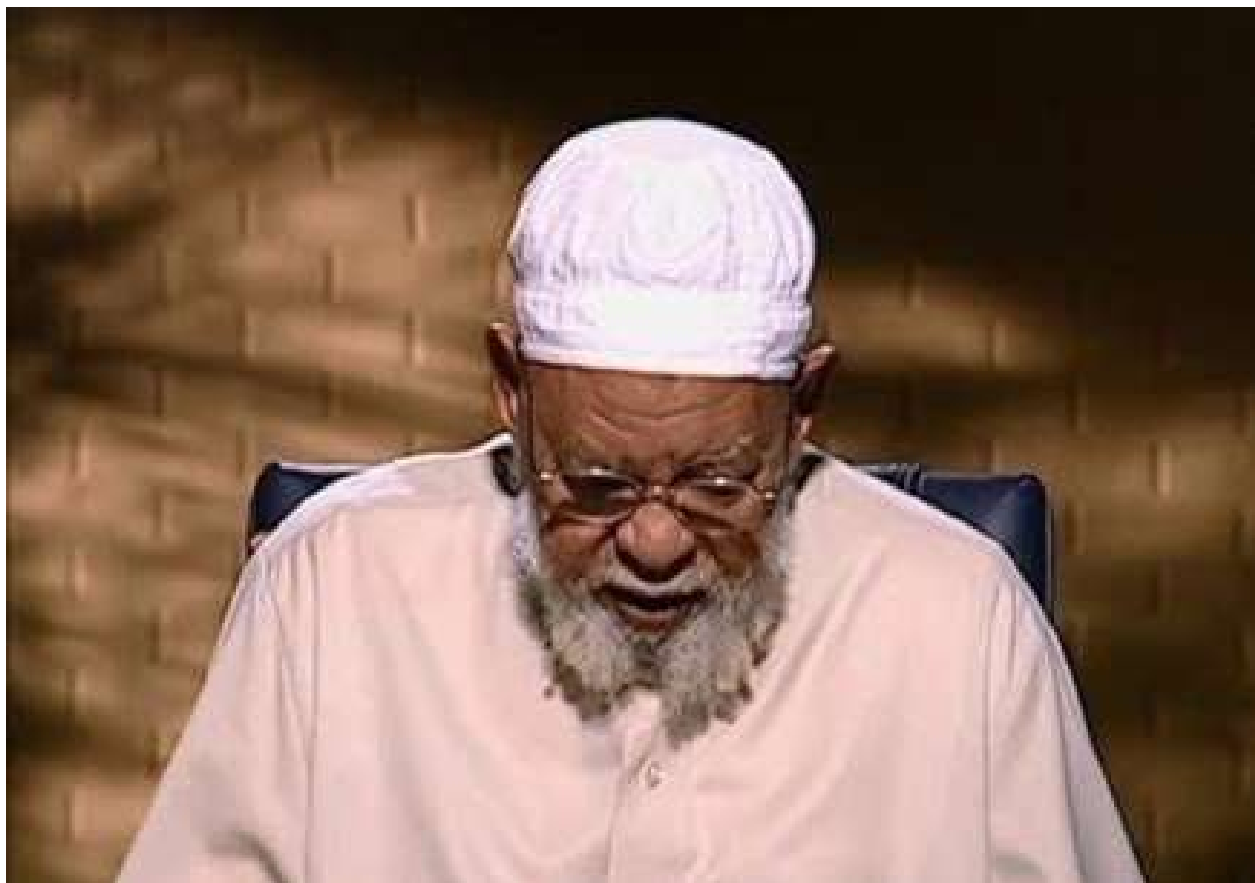
studies and even wrote a letter of recommendation for my application to the Islamic University of Madinah. And he didn't just inspire me. He influenced a generation—often indirectly—through the students and scholars he shaped. Many today don't realize that some of their teachers' teachers were deeply impacted by Dr. Ja'far.

One of the most profound lessons I learned from him was his personal commitment to intellectual balance. As a student in Khartoum in the 1950s, he once told us that he made

a promise to himself: for every book he read in Western philosophy or the humanities, he would read one in the Islamic sciences. That commitment is what allowed him to move fluidly between academic conferences in London and scholarly councils in Saudi Arabia. He could sit at the table with Shaykh Ibn Baz and also with philosophers and academics around the world—with full confidence and clarity.

He lived a life of immense purpose, and his legacy is one that will outlive all of us. We ask Allah to grant him Jannat al-Firdaws al-'Ala, to shower patience and strength upon his family, and to allow us to carry forward the legacy of intellectual integrity and religious devotion that he embodied.

“He stood up and presented Islam not just as a faith, but as an intellectual framework grounded in tradition and confident in confronting modernity.”



“He didn't just teach ideas—he lived them, bridging worlds with integrity, intellect, and unwavering faith.”

Ending Poverty Begins with Us

Imam Muhammad Shahidullah



Poverty is not just a global statistic—it is a daily reality for over 700 million people who struggle to meet the most basic needs of life. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG 1) calls on the international community to "end poverty in all its forms everywhere." This goal is not just aspirational—it is essential. It reflects a global recognition that no individual should be denied the right to live in dignity, and no society can truly prosper when large segments of its population are left behind. Despite notable progress

over the past two decades, recent crises—including the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and violent conflicts—have reversed many gains. Vulnerable communities across the world, from underserved neighborhoods in New York to drought-stricken regions of Africa, are experiencing increasing economic pressure. Eradicating poverty is not just an issue of aid, but of equity. It demands structural changes that prioritize human development, social justice, and inclusive economic opportunities.

To achieve SDG 1, we must go beyond charity. While humanitarian assistance remains vital, we need policies and systems that empower people to lift themselves out of poverty. This includes investing in education, healthcare, housing, food security, and fair wages. Governments



— Imam Muhammad Shahidullah
Vice President, United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA), Queens Chapter

must work in partnership with civil society, faith-based institutions, and the private sector to ensure that growth is inclusive and opportunities are accessible to all—especially women, children, and marginalized communities.

As a faith leader and community organizer, I believe that religious and interfaith communities have a special responsibility. Across all traditions, we are taught to care for the poor, uplift the oppressed, and promote justice. These are not just spiritual ideals—they are calls to action. In the United States and beyond, faith-based organizations are uniquely positioned to mobilize compassion into concrete programs—whether through food banks, shelters, job training, or advocacy efforts.

We also need to raise awareness. Poverty is

often hidden, especially in developed nations. But it exists—sometimes just beyond the walls of our institutions. As global citizens and neighbors, we must challenge ourselves to see, understand, and act. Eradicating poverty requires empathy, strategic thinking, and moral leadership.

Let us remember: every child who goes to bed hungry, every family who cannot afford healthcare, every student who drops out due to financial hardship—is a failure not just of policy, but of humanity.

The path toward ending poverty will not be easy, but it is necessary—and it is possible. Let us move forward with urgency, unity, and unwavering resolve to build a world where every human being has the chance to live with dignity, hope, and opportunity.

CONFERENCE

Building Stronger Networks Together

Met Council's Annual Conference Unites Agencies for Strategic Action



James Anderson

The Annual Agency Conference hosted by Met Council brought together dozens of partner agencies and service providers on Thursday, July 17, 2025, at The Brooklyn Hub in Brooklyn, NY, for an afternoon of collaborative planning, critical updates, and shared vision for community impact. Running from 12 PM to 4 PM, the event provided a vital space for leaders and professionals across the city to align on priorities and innovations in food assistance and social services.

This year's conference tackled a wide range of topics, beginning with updates on the Agency Rapid Response Fund, made possible by the Einstein-Astrof Foundation. The fund offers a grant opportunity for one-time equipment purchases that support food pantry operations for Fiscal Year 2026. In order to qualify, proposed equipment must align with specific goals such as launching a new funding stream, opening additional off-site satellite locations, increasing client reach, adopting new distribution models, or avoiding service



MET COUNCIL

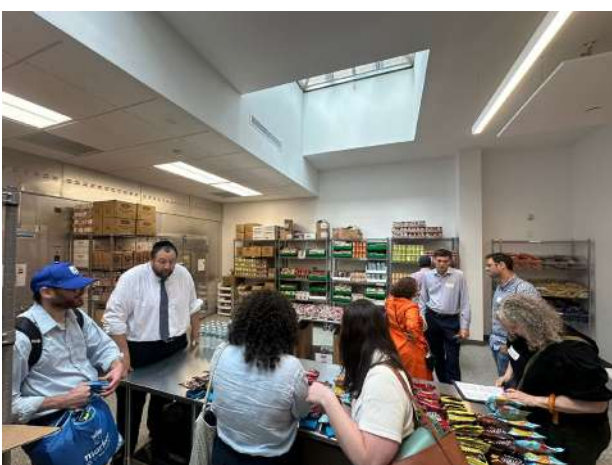
Feeding the hungry. Serving the poor. Changing lives.

reductions. A key focus of the day was the Mobile Pantry Program, which continues to be one of Met Council's most impactful services. Currently operating at 10 sites monthly, the program serves approximately 150–200 clients per site, reaching nearly 18,000 families each month. The program's projected output for the year is over 300,000 pounds of food, reinforcing its importance as a mobile

lifeline for food-insecure households. Attendees were encouraged to share information about underserved areas in need of mobile services. In light of new USDA regulations, strict guidance on data submission was emphasized. Agencies were reminded that all service statistics must now be submitted by the 1st of each month for the prior month in order to maintain eligibility for funding. The Met

Council warned that those failing to meet these deadlines could face delays or holds on deliveries—an important message underscoring the necessity of timely and accurate data reporting. The session also offered insight into Met Council's evolving communications strategy, with a presentation on the newly launched Monthly Agency Newsletter, which began circulation in May 2025. Agencies were invited to contribute updates and feedback to help shape the content and stay informed on upcoming initiatives, community events, and pantry highlights. A particularly forward-looking segment of the event centered on Met Council's 2026–2030 Five-Year Plan, with agency partners invited to provide input on key questions such as mission clarity, values, and program adaptability. The food program's Bucket 1: Food Banking strategy highlighted efforts to expand network partnerships, enhance food sourcing, improve warehouse and distribution operations, and leverage data-driven decision-making. Other agenda items included information about the Social Care Network, a New York State Medicaid (1115 Waiver) initiative designed to reimburse community-based organizations (CBOs) for providing services that address clients' health-related social needs. Services covered include housing, employment, transportation, and food

assistance. With 162 organizations already active across Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan, and 22,000+ Medicaid members screened, the network reflects the growing demand for integrated care. In addition, volunteer engagement was spotlighted through efforts at the Spitzer Fulfillment Center in Midtown and The Brooklyn Hub, with over 20,000 essential kits distributed in FY24. Attendees were encouraged to connect via Bloomerang, Met Council's volunteer management platform, and to stay updated through the monthly volunteer newsletter. The Annual Agency Conference reaffirmed Met Council's commitment to serving New Yorkers with dignity, efficiency, and collaboration. As the city continues to face economic uncertainty and rising food insecurity, the event provided a much-needed platform for coordination, strategy, and collective action among those working on the frontlines of hunger relief and social care.



CONFERENCE

Building Stronger Networks Together



SUMMER CAMP

Exploring Nature's Wonders

Elhaam Academy Students Visit American Museum of Natural History

Jessica Morgan

In a summer outing that blended discovery with inspiration, students from Elhaam Academy Summer Camp visited the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York City, exploring a world of scientific wonder and cultural richness. Accompanied by nine dedicated teachers, approximately 40 students spent the day immersed in the fascinating exhibits that have captivated millions of visitors over the years. The visit began in the morning and continued till afternoon, providing the young explorers with ample time to tour the museum's expansive collection. Located near Central Park, AMNH spans 21 interconnected buildings and houses 45 permanent exhibition halls, each dedicated to a unique aspect of the natural world. The students journeyed through rooms featuring models of animals, birds, Earth's geological layers, scientific



phenomena, and even the vast mystery of black holes—all part of the museum's renowned displays. From prehistoric remains to cultural treasures, the museum gave students a broad lens through which to view natural history. One of the most striking moments for many students was encountering the skeletons of dinosaurs and other extinct creatures. These towering, fossilized remnants of Earth's ancient past sparked awe and curiosity as students examined how life has evolved over millions of years.

Exhibits on evolution, mammals, and early human development offered insight into the dynamic story of our planet, told through an impressive array of preserved specimens and models. With guidance from their teachers, the students were introduced to fundamental concepts in geography, life science, astronomy, and environmental studies. The museum's detailed and realistic representations provided a hands-on learning experience that made abstract subjects tangible and engaging. Teachers used these

exhibits to provide contextual explanations and spark thoughtful discussions, helping the children connect what they saw with broader scientific ideas. A highlight of the visit was the stop at a live exhibit area, where students observed ants and butterflies in real time. Unlike the preserved models in other parts of the museum, these living creatures offered a dynamic look at natural behavior, eliciting genuine wonder and excitement from the children. Their reactions—ranging from wide-eyed fascination

to insightful questions—reflected the power of experiential learning in igniting curiosity. Alongside their academic enrichment, the students enjoyed time to socialize and relax. A lunch break offered space to recharge, followed by a group photo session where moments of joy and discovery were captured. These shared experiences fostered

American Museum of Natural History



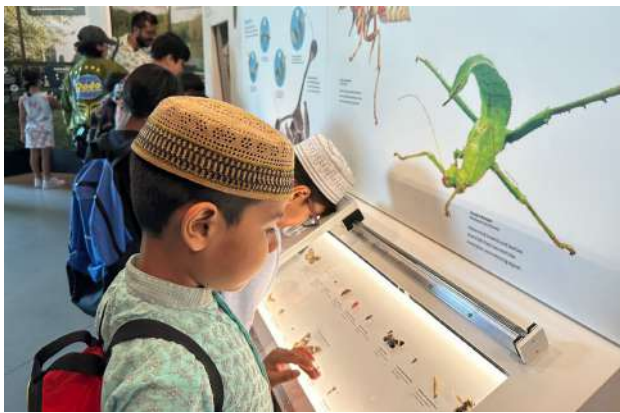
camaraderie and gave students a chance to reflect on the exciting new knowledge they had gained. The trip not only offered a valuable supplement to classroom learning but also served as a reminder of the importance of

experiential education. Field trips like this give students the chance to explore, question, and discover in ways that traditional instruction often cannot. At a young age, being exposed to such a wide range of scientific and cultural knowledge can leave a lasting impact—sparking new interests and even planting the seeds for future passions. As one of the city's most iconic educational institutions, AMNH attracts nearly five million visitors annually and houses more than 32 million specimens. It remains a destination where history, science, and imagination converge—making it a fitting place for students eager to learn about the world beyond their textbooks. For the students of Elhaam Academy, this visit was not just a field trip—it was a journey into the heart of natural history, and another meaningful step in the academy's mission to inspire, educate, and empower the next generation of thinkers.



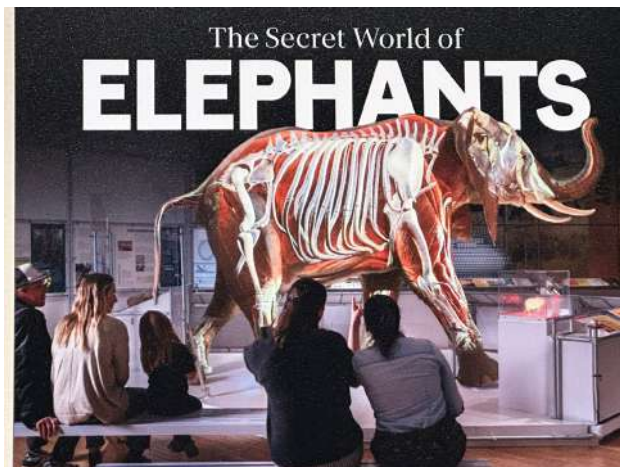
SUMMER CAMP

Exploring Nature's Wonders



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MENTAL HEALTH

Faith Meets Mental Health

Leaders and Teachers Attend Mental Wellness Seminar in New York



Patt Cummins

In a community-focused initiative to foster mental wellness and emotional resilience, Darul Uloom NY hosted the Community Mental Wellness and Resilience Workshop on July 16, 2025, bringing together approximately 120 participants from across the borough. Organized by Save The People USA, Human Concern USA, and NYC Health, the event offered a vital space for learning, sharing, and understanding mental health challenges within

local communities. Held from 10 AM to 1 PM, the workshop was led by Mamun Rahman, Community Engagement Training Manager at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). Over the course of three hours, Rahman guided attendees—including faith leaders, teachers, students, and other community stakeholders—through a comprehensive and engaging presentation on mental health, depression, anxiety, and the role of resilience in

navigating personal and societal challenges. Participants were encouraged to engage from the outset through an interactive ice-breaker activity, which prompted reflection on their neighborhoods—highlighting local strengths, challenges, and even favorite foods. This light but thoughtful introduction laid the foundation for more complex discussions that followed. Key sections of the workshop delved into mental health conditions such as depression and

anxiety, with statistics specific to New York City offering sobering context. According to data presented during the session, as of August 2021, nearly 25% of adults in NYC reported symptoms of anxiety, 18% showed signs of depression, and 28% of children were reported to be emotionally impacted by the pandemic—underscoring the urgent

thoughtful questions such as “What is mental health?” and “How does depression affect people?”—reflecting a strong interest in understanding issues that are often under-discussed in community spaces. Rahman responded with clarity, emphasizing the importance of reducing stigma and recognizing mental health as a fundamental component

faith-based obligations. The format allowed for real-time interaction via Zoom, with the presentation also broadcast live at the event venue, making the experience accessible and immersive. By the end of the workshop, participants left not only with enhanced knowledge but with a sense of empowerment to support themselves and those around them. The event served as a reminder that mental wellness is a shared responsibility—and that understanding, compassion, and education are key pillars of a resilient community. As part of the New American Civic Engagement & Youth Leadership Program, this initiative reflects a growing recognition that meaningful civic leadership begins with personal well-being. Through practical tools and inclusive dialogue, the workshop exemplified how partnerships between city agencies and grassroots organizations can make a tangible difference in communities across New York City.



HUMAN CONCERN USA

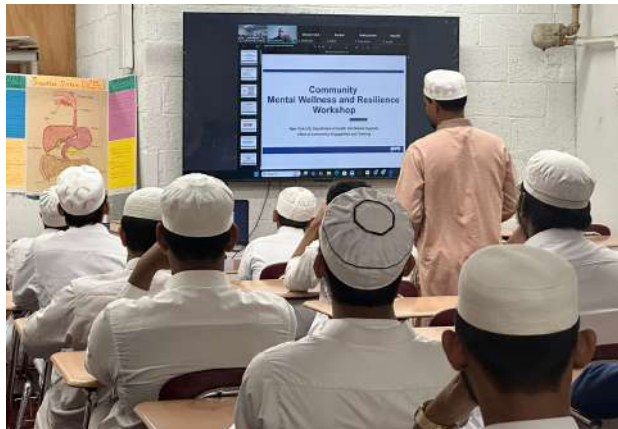
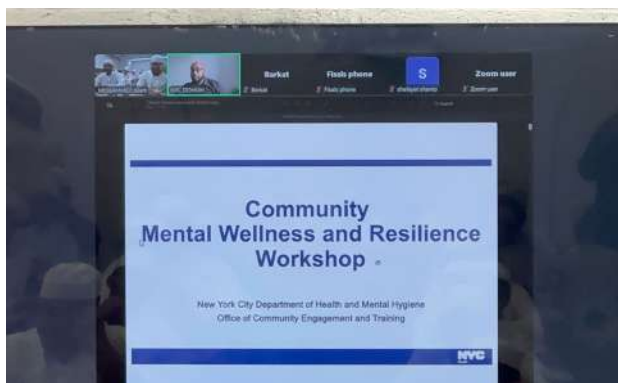


DARUL ULOOM
Institute of Islamic Studies



need for awareness and accessible resources. Using slides and real-world scenarios, Rahman explained symptoms of anxiety, which may include panic attacks, sleep disruptions, persistent worry, and irritability. Attendees posed

of overall well-being. Throughout the session, the tone remained collaborative and inclusive, encouraging attendees to draw connections between emotional health and daily life—whether through stress at work, family responsibilities, or



ENVIRONMENT

Young Explorers Connect with Nature

A Park Trip Inspires Environmental Curiosity and Kindness

Ashley Reed

In a refreshing blend of education, exploration, and empathy, Elhaam Academy students took part in a park field trip on July 17, 2025, that turned the natural world into their classroom for the day. With bright eyes and curious minds, children from all programs—including the summer camp, Hizf, and Maqtab—set off in staggered groups, guided by their teachers toward a meaningful outdoor learning experience. As students walked toward the park, teachers transformed the short journey into a vibrant learning session. Using the surroundings as a teaching tool, they encouraged children to observe the birds in flight, turtles near the water, the unique textures of tree bark,



and much more. These mini-lessons were infused with rich vocabulary such as “habitat,” “feathers,” and “migrate,” fostering early scientific thinking and wonder about the natural world. Upon arrival, the students gathered under a shaded tent where they shared ice cream and posed for a group photo—capturing the excitement of the day. The outing was not only recreational

but rooted deeply in discovery, as children were challenged to ask meaningful questions like “Why do turtles stay close to water?” and “What would happen if everyone picked flowers from the park?” These questions, paired with imaginative ones such as “If this tree could talk, what would it say?”, offered a holistic approach to learning that balanced facts with creativity. The heart of the experience lay

in how the trip helped students develop a sense of empathy toward nature. Teachers led conversations about how to treat animals respectfully, why it’s important not to disturb habitats, and the consequences of human interference. These discussions aimed to instill a mindset of responsibility and care—values that align with Elhaam Academy’s mission to raise not only educated

but also conscientious individuals. Later, the students made their way to the playground for physical activity and joy-filled moments of play. From there, the group returned to school, bringing with them new

questions, observations, and stories about the trees, birds, and animals they had encountered. The park trip was more than a break from routine—it was a reminder that learning doesn’t have to stay within four walls. By placing children in direct contact with the environment and encouraging curiosity, Elhaam Academy offered its students a rare opportunity to connect with nature, reflect on its beauty, and consider their role in preserving it. In a world increasingly distanced from the natural environment, experiences like these are critical. They sow the seeds of environmental stewardship early in life, helping young people grow into adults who understand and value the ecosystems that sustain us all.



FAITH AND UNITY

Inspiring the Next Generation

Muslim Youth Summer Festival Brings Unity to the Bronx

Emily Parker

The Bronx came alive with youthful energy and community spirit as IFM NY hosted the Muslim Youth Summer Festival 2025 on Sunday, July 13, under the inspiring theme “Talent Is the Blessing.” Held at 1888 Westchester Ave, Bronx, NY 10472, the all-day event from 1 PM to 10 PM drew families, faith leaders, educators, and over 100 enthusiastic youth participants for a day of celebration, learning, and connection. The festival provided a vibrant platform for young Muslim voices to shine through Quran recitation, Islamic quiz competitions, nasheed (Islamic singing), and speeches on religious and historical topics. The aim was not just to showcase talent, but to reinforce a sense of identity, community, and pride in Islamic values among the younger generation. The event featured a diverse lineup of respected scholars and community leaders,



including Muhammad Manuil Islam (Imam and Khatib, BICC Masjid; Academic Secretary, Darul Hadith Latifia Madrasah USA), Maulana Abul Kashem (Elhaam Academy; Imam & Khatib, Bangla Bazar Masjid), Imam Jubayer Rashid (Khatib, Parkchester Jame Masjid), Maulana Obaidul Haque (Imam, Parkchester Islamic Center), and

Maulana Azir Uddin (Imam, Baitul Aman Islamic Center). Other prominent speakers included Maulana Hamidur Rahman Abid, Maulana Rashid Jamil, Hafiz Maulana Abdul Matin, Hafiz Maulana Kawser Ahmed, and Maulana Muhammad Shahidullah, (President, Islamic Television, iTV USA). Community organizations played a

Jalal Chowdhury (Joint Convener), Jahangir Alom (Chief Coordinator), and Rukon Ahmed (Member Secretary). A robust team of coordinators—including Shakawat Ali, Risha Islam, Ihan Ali, Md Syed Junael, Sufian Chowdhury, Mostaque Elahi Chonom, Jewel Khan, Ahmed Khan, and Shahed Ali—ensured smooth execution. The event also honored the guidance and advisory support of respected individuals such as Fakrul Islam, Mohamed Mujumder, Md Mujibur Rahman, Abdul Gaffar, Akbor Ali Sir, Siraj Uddin Sohag, Lutfur Rahman

competitions received 20 grand prizes, adding joy and recognition to the day’s accomplishments. The event emphasized spiritual lectures, presentations on the childhood of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Ashura, and reinforced messages of resilience, morality, and unity. Generous sponsors played a critical role in making the festival possible, including NYDOCS, Starling Diagnostics, Tofel Chowdhury, Panna II, Jewel & Calecs, All Care, EXIT Realty, H. Bruce Fischer PC, ICNA Relief, ADH & Co CPA, Ahab Grocery, and others. The success of the Muslim Youth Summer Festival 2025 demonstrated the strength and vibrancy of New York’s Muslim community. By fostering religious knowledge, artistic expression, and cultural pride, the event stood as a powerful testament to the enduring role of faith-based organizations in nurturing the next generation.



key role in supporting the festival. Elhaam Academy, Save the People USA, Islamic Talent, and iTV were among the community partners helping to bring the program to life. The festival’s planning and coordination were led by Bashir Khan (Convener),

Chowdhury, Md Alom Ziku, and Miha M Altaf Hossain. In addition to performances and contests, attendees explored a vibrant Meena Bazaar, and winners of various



FAITH AND UNITY

Inspiring the Next Generation



NEW YORK CITY

Summer Streets Honor Legacy

DOT Launches Summer Streets with Nasdaq Celebration



William Henry

In a symbolic fusion of civic engagement and corporate energy, the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) rang the Nasdaq Closing Bell on Friday, July 18, 2025, at the MarketSite in Times Square, marking the official kickoff of Summer

Streets 2025. The event, hosted at 151 W 42nd Street, brought together DOT officials, program partners, and invited guests to celebrate the return of one of the city's most vibrant seasonal initiatives. Designed to reclaim public spaces for recreation, Summer Streets opens over 22 miles of New York City's

roads to pedestrians, cyclists, and families on select Saturdays in July and August, transforming urban infrastructure into a platform for fitness, fun, and community. Leading the ceremony was Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner of NYC DOT, who rang the ceremonial bell just before 4:00

PM. Surrounded by supporters and media personnel, Rodriguez's appearance symbolized the department's commitment to promoting healthier, more livable cities through programs that prioritize people over vehicles. The moment was broadcast live, capturing the spirit of collaboration between city leadership and public service organizations. The event also highlighted the



significance of the Summer Streets program, which has become a staple of New York's summer calendar. It invites residents and visitors alike to explore the city in new

ways—without the interference of cars—encouraging walking, biking, outdoor classes, cultural activities, and community interaction. It is one of the largest open streets programs in the country and serves as a model for urban engagement. A carefully timed agenda ensured that the afternoon flowed seamlessly, beginning with guest arrivals at 3:00 PM, followed by coordinated photo opportunities behind the podium. Attendees, including up to 75 invited guests, were given a behind-the-scenes experience of Nasdaq's iconic venue, with strict adherence to identification and scheduling protocols. The participation of the DOT in such a high-profile setting underscores the growing relevance of public space initiatives in the

broader discourse of city planning and civic health. It also provided an opportunity to elevate awareness of Summer Streets beyond the five boroughs, using the visibility of Nasdaq to reinforce the program's impact. This year's Summer Streets not only offers New Yorkers the chance to engage with their city in more dynamic ways but also reflects a broader movement toward sustainable and inclusive urban design. The Nasdaq event, with its blend of pageantry and purpose, served as a high-visibility endorsement of that mission. As the bell rang and cheers echoed through the space, the message was clear: New York City is ready for a summer of connection, activity, and shared public joy—powered by open streets and community spirit.



NEW YORK CITY

NYC Opens 400 Streets in Celebration of Legacy



SCIENCE

Voices to the Stars

Queens Students Connect with NASA Astronaut in Historic Live Call



Max Joseph

In a rare and awe-inspiring moment, dozens of Queens students reached across the cosmos to speak directly with NASA Astronaut Dr. Jonny Kim, who is currently aboard the International Space Station (ISS). Organized by U.S. Representative Grace Meng (D-Queens), the live Earth-to-space video call took place on Friday, July 18, 2025, at the New York Hall of Science in Flushing Meadows Corona Park. Gathered in the museum's auditorium, students from first through twelfth grade, including

participants from schools like Elhaam Academy, engaged in a conversation with Dr. Kim, asking questions about space exploration, scientific research, and life aboard the ISS. The event drew community leaders, educators, and families—making it not only a scientific experience but a community celebration of learning and aspiration. Dr. Jonny Kim, a former U.S. Navy SEAL, Harvard-trained physician, and child of South Korean immigrants, inspired the room with his answers. Currently on his first space mission, Dr. Kim launched to the ISS in April for an eight-month

assignment involving critical scientific studies. As he described life in microgravity and the research taking place on board, students listened intently—many visibly moved by the chance to speak with someone living among the stars. Congresswoman Grace Meng, who serves as the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Subcommittee that funds NASA, spearheaded the initiative to bring this educational opportunity to her district. Her efforts ensured that young minds in Queens—one of the most diverse communities in the country—could engage directly with space science at its most

human level. The program provided more than just a glimpse into outer space; it offered inspiration rooted in real-life achievement. Dr. Kim's journey—from public school to the Navy, to Harvard Medical School, and then to NASA—resonated deeply with the young audience,



many of whom come from immigrant families and underserved communities. For the students, the experience was described as “unforgettable,” with children of all ages preparing thoughtful questions in the days leading up to the event. Topics ranged from how astronauts sleep in space to the challenges of conducting experiments in zero gravity. The excitement in the room was palpable as each answer came through the screen, carried from hundreds of miles above Earth. The New York Hall of Science (NYSCI) served as the perfect

host for the event. As one of the city's premier science institutions, its mission to spark curiosity and deepen scientific understanding was in full display. By the time the video link ended, students didn't just walk away with facts about space—they carried with them the hope and confidence that, with perseverance, their own futures could reach far beyond Earth's atmosphere. Through a simple call from orbit, the next generation of astronauts, engineers, and explorers may well have been born right there in that auditorium.



FAITH

A Day of Spiritual Learning

Quran Recitation and Reflection at Elhaam Summer Program



Christopher Scott

In an atmosphere filled with reverence and inspiration, Elhaam Academy hosted a special Quran recitation class and training session for its summer school students, offering them a rare and

meaningful opportunity to connect with the sacred text under the guidance of an internationally respected teacher. The event was led by Qari Zahirul Islam, a distinguished Quranic reciter whose mastery of tajweed and melodic delivery

has earned him global recognition. Held at Elhaam Academy, the session provided a platform for young learners to deepen their understanding of Quranic recitation in both practice and spirit. With the

presence of Arshad Hossain as a guest, the program carried an added significance, drawing attention to the importance of nurturing a strong spiritual foundation in youth education. Throughout the session, Qari Zahirul Islam worked closely with students, introducing them to proper pronunciation, rhythm, and tone in their recitation. His engaging and encouraging approach created an environment in which students felt both respected and motivated to improve. Each child had the chance to listen, repeat, and recite, building not only technical skills but also a heartfelt connection with the Quran. This opportunity was particularly meaningful for students in the summer school program, many of whom are in the formative

stages of their religious and educational journeys. With personalized guidance from such a renowned teacher, the class left a lasting impression—instilling confidence and love for the Quran among the participants. For many, this was the first time experiencing Quranic training from a figure of Qari Zahirul Islam's stature. His presence not only elevated the event but also underscored the academy's commitment to providing quality Islamic education. Teachers and organizers alike emphasized the importance of such engagements, which complement formal instruction with spiritual enrichment. "Events like this are instrumental in shaping the character and faith of our students," one teacher noted. "To learn from someone of Qari Zahirul Islam's caliber

is a gift, and it leaves a powerful impact on how students relate to the Quran." The visit of Arshad Hossain also signaled strong support for Elhaam Academy's mission and growing presence in the community. His attendance added to the sense of occasion and highlighted the value of investing in young learners' spiritual development. By the end of the session, students left not only with improved recitation skills but also with renewed excitement for their religious studies. Moments like these serve as a reminder that education is not just about information—but transformation. Through the voice and guidance of Qari Zahirul Islam, Elhaam Academy reaffirmed its role as a nurturing ground for both knowledge and faith.



LEADERSHIP

Faith, Fellowship, and Forward Thinking

A weekend of growth and connection at the Imam Retreat 2025

Benjamin Lee

In a meaningful display of unity, scholarship, and brotherhood, Darul Uloom New York, in collaboration with Save The People USA, hosted a transformative Imam Retreat from July 18–20, 2025, at the serene Schiff Scout Reservation in Wading River, NY. Organized under the banner “Reunite, Reconnect, Rejoice,” the weekend brought together imams, scholars, and alumni from multiple states for three days of reflection, peer learning, and spiritual renewal. Led by the institution’s leadership—President Sardar Barkatullah, Resident Scholar Professor Ibad Wali, and Professor Jafar—the retreat focused on building networks and strengthening the vision of Islamic leadership in the 21st century. The event provided



a rare opportunity for attendees to take a break from their day-to-day responsibilities and reengage with their foundational calling as leaders and guides in the community. A central feature of the retreat was the workshop titled “The Alim in the 21st Century,” which addressed the evolving

role of imams in a time of rapid societal change. Discussions explored

how faith leaders can remain rooted in Islamic tradition while becoming

more accessible and impactful within modern American life. In small group mentorship pods, participants shared personal experiences, exchanged advice, and offered one another valuable support in a collegial setting. The session “Beyond the Mihrab and Minbar” further highlighted the versatility of sacred knowledge. Alumni who have transitioned into fields like medicine, counseling, education, and technology reflected on how their Islamic education continues to guide and empower their work in secular sectors. This conversation served as a powerful reminder that the influence of Islamic scholarship reaches far beyond the mosque. While intellectual enrichment formed the backbone of the retreat, the schedule also

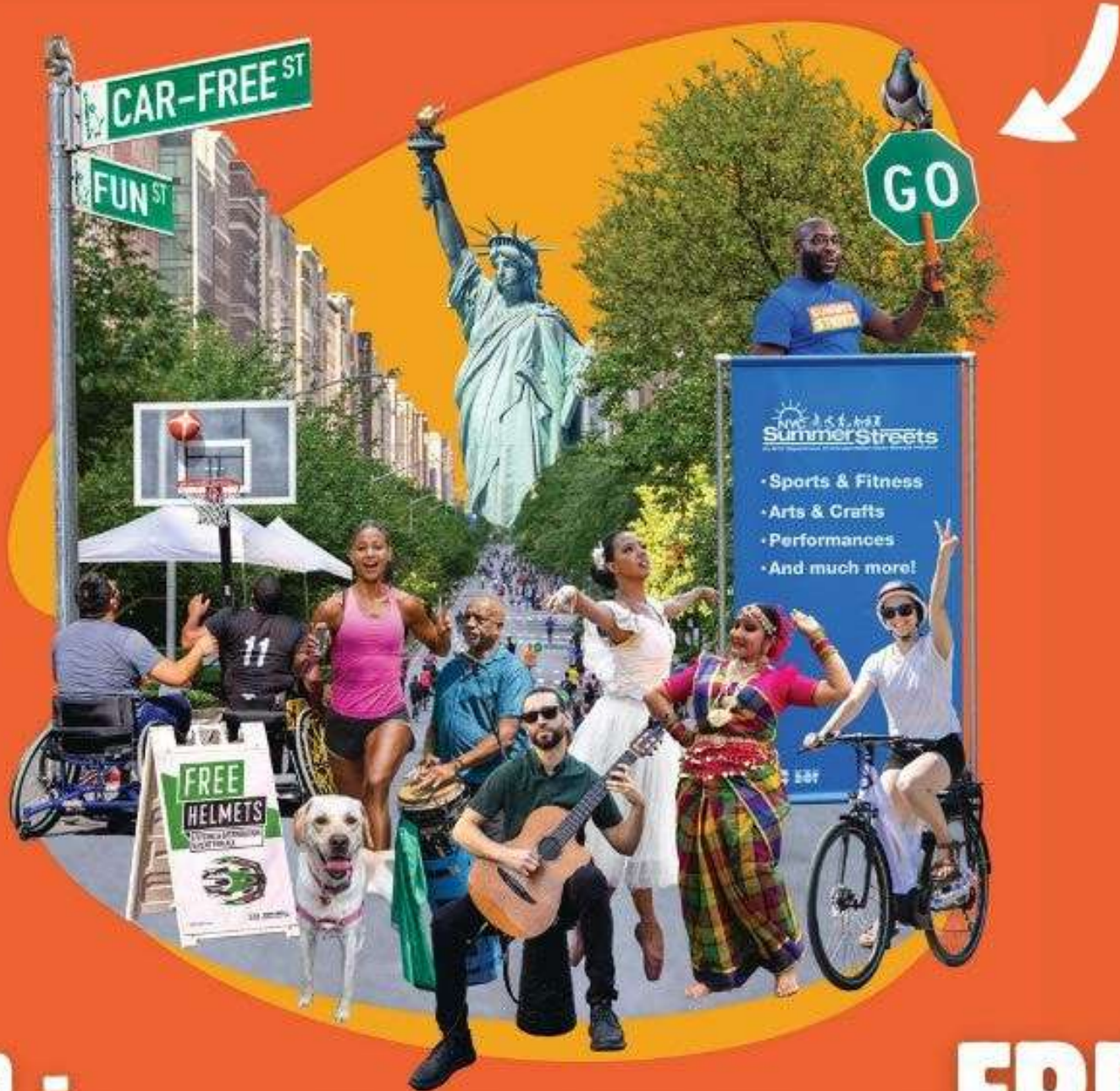
prioritized balance and well-being. Attendees enjoyed outdoor activities including boating, archery, fishing, sports, and nature hikes, fostering friendships and rejuvenating minds. Comfortable cabin lodging with modern amenities—restrooms, AC/heating, and refrigerators—as well as provided meals ensured a hospitable and refreshing atmosphere. More than a getaway, the Imam Retreat proved to be a vital reset—a weekend where leadership was nurtured not just through lectures, but through lived experience and shared growth. It brought clarity to the mission ahead, rooted participants in their shared purpose, and offered a hopeful vision for what strong, relevant, and compassionate faith leadership can look like in today’s world.





NYC Summer Streets

An NYC Department of Transportation Open Streets Initiative



**7 Am -
3 PM**

July 26th

**FREE
ACTIVITIES!**

Queens: Vernon Boulevard
44th Drive to 30th Road
Programming @ 41st Avenue and 30th Drive



Exclusive Media Sponsor





MUSVOTE Empowers Voter Engagement

Community gathers with Zohran Mamdani and Public Advocate Williams



Photo: Zohran Mamdani and Jumaane Williams join MusVote's NYC 2025 celebration to uplift South Asian civic voices.

Amkel Norush

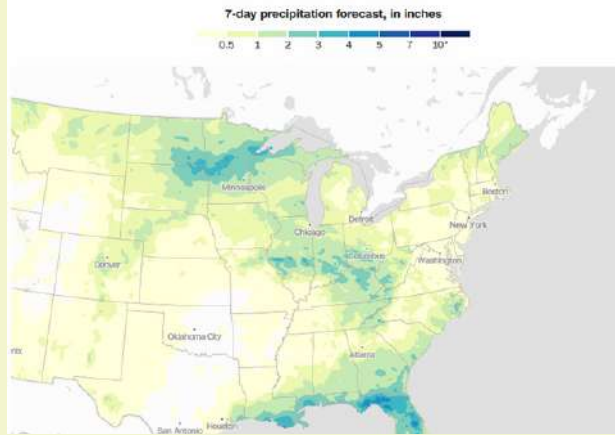
In a vibrant post-election celebration, MusVote hosted "ZOHHRAN & JUMAANE for NYC 2025," a well-attended community event that brought together elected leaders, activists, and residents to celebrate civic engagement and spotlight the rising influence of South Asian voters in New York City politics. Held in Queens, the event featured appearances by Democratic nominee Zohran Mamdani and Public Advocate Jumaane Williams,

HIGHLIGHT

•MusVote hosted "ZOHHRAN & JUMAANE for NYC 2025" as a post-election celebration

who discussed political inclusion, representation, and the shifting landscape of local power. Organized by Shahriar Rahman, the event encouraged meaningful dialogue on how immigrant communities can move from the margins to the mainstream of political life. Attendees spoke about the historic underrepresentation of South Asian voices

and emphasized that their growing numbers must translate into long-term engagement and leadership. One speaker remarked that the energy in the room reflected "a movement that's been waiting to be seen." Beyond celebration, the event served as a reminder that real political change requires continued community mobilization. As MusVote continues its mission, gatherings like these are strengthening the foundation for a more inclusive and representative New York.



Gulf Coast Flooded in Mid-July Downpour

Tropical disturbance triggers severe flooding in Florida and Louisiana

Photo: 7-day precipitation forecast, in inches
Image Source: Byron Manley and Renée Rigdon, CNN

Nassr Al Shams

HIGHLIGHT

A tropical disturbance known as Invest 93L unleashed torrential rainfall across the Gulf Coast on July 16-17, inundating parts of Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi with up to 10 inches of rain. Flood watches were issued along the I-10 corridor, affecting cities from New Orleans to Pensacola, with repeated storm cells overwhelming flood-control systems and triggering flash floods. Communities in suburban Plant City, FL, reported street-level flooding, with downed trees and local power outages in the Tampa Bay region. In Houma, LA, localized deluges left roads submerged. Authorities in New Orleans preemptively distributed 8,000 sandbags, and Jefferson Parish closed public buildings amid warnings of a possible deluge.

•Tropical disturbance (Invest 93L) dumped up to 10 inches of rain

Invest 93L drifted inland but maintained its moisture, threatening similar conditions in Alabama and parts of the Mid-Atlantic. Emergency officials warned that even a foot of moving water could pose major danger, especially to vehicles and pedestrians. Though the system did not organize into a tropical storm, its slow movement carried risk. Forecasts suggest the storm may linger in the region through the weekend, keeping flash flood alerts in place and prompting continued vigilance. This event underscores how increasingly moist tropical systems can wreak havoc, even without being named.

Target Set to Open New Store in Astoria

New 41,000 sq ft location brings jobs and convenience to Queens.

Adrian Smith

A new Target store is set to open on July 20, 2025, in Astoria, Queens, at 22-11 31st Street. The 41,000 sq ft store will be the eighth Target location in the borough and aims to bring both new retail options and approximately 100 jobs to the area. The store will offer a wide variety of products, including home essentials, apparel, groceries, and beauty items. A key feature of the new location is a CVS Pharmacy, providing convenient access to pharmaceutical services. In addition, shoppers can take advantage of Order Pickup and same-day delivery services through the Target Circle 360 program. The grand opening will be a festive occasion with giveaways and community-focused events, encouraging local residents to explore the new space and enjoy the enhanced shopping experience. This new store is expected to have a significant positive impact on the Astoria community by offering greater convenience and supporting local employment. With this expansion, Target continues to make strides in meeting the growing demand for accessible retail in New York City.

Liberty Stars Shine at WNBA All-Star Weekend

Sabrina Ionescu wins 3-Point Contest, Natasha Cloud claims Skills Challenge

Julian Alvez

The 2025 WNBA All-Star Weekend in Indianapolis was dominated by New York Liberty stars, as Sabrina Ionescu and Natasha Cloud took home major honors in their respective competitions. Ionescu earned her second 3-Point Contest title, cementing her place as one of the league's top shooters. With a score of 30 points in the final, she overcame defending champion Alisha Gray in a dominant performance, including an impressive 11 straight shots. This win marked a milestone for Ionescu, making her only the second player to win the contest twice. Afterward,

she made a point of sharing the moment with her fans, even calling Steph Curry to show him her trophy. Meanwhile, Cloud triumphed in the Skills Challenge, edging out Erica Wheeler with a final time of 36.4 seconds, just 1.1 seconds faster than Wheeler. Cloud's victory was met with cheers from her teammates, including Ionescu, and a heartfelt hug with her girlfriend and fellow Liberty teammate, Isabelle Harrison, who had motivated her to win. Both Ionescu and Cloud not only took home the coveted trophies but also substantial cash prizes, including \$60,000 for Ionescu and

\$55,000 for Cloud, along with \$2,575 each from the league. These wins were a reflection of their hard work, dedication, and synergy on the court, underscoring the Liberty's status as a team to watch in the second half of the WNBA season. The night was filled with emotion, excitement, and fierce competition, and as Ionescu stated afterward, the feeling of victory was made even sweeter by the fact that she could share it with Cloud, her teammate and close friend. The Liberty's success at the All-Star Weekend serves as a reminder of their strength as a team and their drive to secure another championship title this season.



Photo: New York Liberty's Sabrina Ionescu shoots during the 3-point contest at the WNBA All-Star basketball weekend, Friday, July 18, 2025, in Indianapolis.

Image Source: AP Photo/Michael Conroy