



Brooklyn Borough President launches bid for NY-7

page-02



A Celebration of Faith and Knowledge at Elhaam Academy

page-04



Spirit of the "Oxford of the East" Shines in New York

page-07



A Night of Recognition: Emirates Airlines Honored in Queens

page-12

Sunday, DECEMBER 07, 2025
nyn.press
Jumada Al-Akhira, 1447
+1646 444 6644
info@nyn.press

NEW YORK NEWS

The Voice of People

From New York



Photo: Putin and Trump last met in August for a summit at a US base in Alaska Image Source: AFP via Getty Images / BBC

Security Strategy Sparks Alarm

EU uneasy over Trump administration's softened stance toward Russia

Alexandar Sullivan

Russia has openly welcomed the U.S. National Security Strategy released last week by the Trump administration, calling its tone and priorities "largely consistent" with Moscow's worldview. In remarks to TASS published Sunday,

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov described the shift as "a positive step," signaling immediate geopolitical reverberations across Europe. The 33-page document notably avoids framing Russia as a major U.S. adversary, instead asserting that Europe faces "civilizational erasure" and urging

HIGHLIGHT

●Russia calls the new U.S. National Security Strategy "largely consistent" with its own approach.

Washington to restore "strategic stability"

with Moscow. The strategy sharply criticizes the European Union, accusing it of censorship, obstructing U.S. peace efforts in Ukraine, and pursuing a trajectory the U.S. should actively resist. European officials reacted with alarm. German Foreign Minister Wadepuhl questioned

why issues of "freedom of expression" appeared in a national security framework, while Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk reminded Washington that "Europe is your closest ally, not your problem." Former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt warned the document "places itself to the right of the extreme right." The strategy's embrace of "patriotic European parties" and its bleak forecast that Europe may be "unrecognizable in 20 years" fueled concerns that Washington is endorsing far-right movements. It also urges expanded defense spending in Japan, South Korea, Australia, and Taiwan, and hints at potential U.S. military action in Venezuela. On Capitol Hill, Democrats denounced the framework. Representative Jason Crow called it "catastrophic to America's standing in the world," while Representative Gregory Meeks said it "discards decades of value-based U.S. leadership." As EU leaders continue negotiations with the administration over a possible Ukraine peace plan, the new strategy introduces fresh tension into an already fragile transatlantic relationship.

Ceasefire Shift Nears

Netanyahu expects second phase "very shortly"

John Paul

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday that the Gaza ceasefire plan is poised to enter its second and more challenging phase "very shortly," signaling a new diplomatic and security push in the region.



Photo: German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu take part in a press conference after talks in Israel.

Image Source: Michael Kappeler/picture alliance via Getty Images Speaking alongside German Chancellor Friedrich Merz in Berlin, Netanyahu said the leaders focused on efforts to "bring an end to Hamas rule in Gaza." Netanyahu confirmed he will meet U.S. President Donald Trump later this month to discuss "opportunities for peace," marking their latest engagement since Trump returned to the White House in January. The first phase of the U.S.-brokered plan, launched on October 10, halted hostilities and enabled hostage-prisoner exchanges. The upcoming second stage calls for an international security force and the disarmament of Hamas, measures that remain under negotiation. Netanyahu warned that the tasks ahead—including Gaza's demilitarization and long-term deradicalization—will be difficult but achievable. Meanwhile, Qatari and U.S. officials acknowledged that the ceasefire remains fragile, with both sides reporting violations amid ongoing mediation efforts.

Judge Halts DOJ Access

Court blocks evidence use in dismissed Comey case

Lily Anderson

A federal judge on Saturday issued a significant setback to the Justice Department, temporarily restricting its access to evidence gathered in the dismissed criminal case

HIGHLIGHT

●Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly temporarily blocked the DOJ from using evidence tied to James Comey's dismissed case.

●Ruling centers on allegations of unlawful access to digital data belonging to Dan Richman.



Photo: Former FBI director James Comey Image Source: Andrew Harnik / AP / CNN

against former FBI Director James Comey. The ruling comes as the Trump administration signals its intent to seek a new indictment following last week's abrupt dismissal.

In a sharply worded four-page order, Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly found that Comey's friend and former lawyer Dan Richman is likely to succeed on claims that investigators accessed

and retained his digital communications without proper warrants. The judge ordered the DOJ to "identify, segregate, and secure" the 2017 image of Richman's computer and related

email and cloud data, blocking the government from using any materials derived from those files. The restricted evidence had been central to prosecutors' attempt to charge Comey with misleading Congress in 2020, though another judge dismissed the case after ruling that Trump-backed attorney Lindsey Halligan lacked legal authority to act as U.S. Attorney. Richman, a Columbia law professor, criticized what he called a "callous disregard" of his constitutional protections. The DOJ must certify compliance by Monday, setting the stage for a pivotal week that could determine whether prosecutors can rebuild their case—or see it further unravel.

NEW YORK NEWS

Sunday, DECEMBER 07, 2025

ISSUE-57

Please send news to

info@nyn.press

Published by NYNN

New York News Networks



COMMUNITY NEWS

NYC DOT chief marks four years of major milestones

NYN Desk

Surrounded by city officials, transportation leaders, and community advocates, NYC DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez presented a sweeping overview of his four-year tenure during a public event at 55 Water Street. The gathering, marked by a robust turnout, included a networking session followed by formal remarks from CCNY President Vincent Boudreau, who praised Rodriguez's decades-long commitment to public service. Rodriguez formally released "Reimagining Transportation," a comprehensive report detailing major accomplishments in safety,



infrastructure modernization, and equity-driven policy. Among the highlights was a historic



rise in M/WBE participation, expanding from 11% to more than 30% and generating over \$500 million in contract

opportunities. The Commissioner announced that New York City is on pace to finish the year

with the lowest traffic fatality count since 2018, crediting redesigned intersections, expanded automated enforcement, and targeted awareness campaigns. Under Rodriguez's leadership, the city also built a record 87 miles of protected bike lanes, added 1.5 million square feet of pedestrian space, and modernized key systems including parking meters and battery-swapping infrastructure for delivery workers. With the release of his landmark report, Rodriguez leaves behind a transformative blueprint for New York City's mobility future.

Global NRB Summit to be held in December

Staff Reporter

Dhaka is preparing to host the largest-ever gathering of expatriate Bangladeshis as the NRB Global Convention is set to take place on December 30, 2025. Organized by NRB World, the daylong convention will bring together Bangladeshi entrepreneurs, academics, scientists, IT professionals and business leaders from more than 25 countries. Large delegations are expected from the U.S.-Bangladesh, Canada-Bangladesh, British-Bangladesh, Singapore-Bangladesh, Japan-Bangladesh, Korea-Bangladesh and Australia-Bangladesh chambers,



alongside major Bangladeshi business groups. Senior government policymakers are also due to attend, signaling strong official backing for deeper diaspora engagement. The program will include thematic seminars on health, education, development, economics and ICT, with keynote speakers drawn from both Bangladesh and the global NRB community. The convention will also host

the NRB Awards, honoring expatriate Bangladeshis for significant contributions in various sectors. Enamul Haque Enam, founder of NRB World, said the convention's primary goal is to create an effective, "two-way bridge" between Bangladesh and its global diaspora. He noted that organizers hope to encourage large NRB investors to explore opportunities at home, while helping skilled expatriate professionals connect with domestic entrepreneurs. The upcoming event is expected to set the stage for stronger investment, knowledge transfer and long-term collaboration between Bangladesh and its worldwide community.

Brooklyn Borough President launches bid for NY-7



Photo: Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso is running for Congress. Image Source: File Photo / Gabriele Holtermann

Senior Reporter

Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso officially announced his candidacy for New York's 7th Congressional District, setting off a closely watched race to replace longtime progressive leader U.S. Rep. Nydia Velázquez, who will retire in 2026 after more than 30 years in office. Reynoso is the first to enter what is expected to be a competitive contest in a district spanning neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Queens. Calling Velázquez a "hero and friend," Reynoso said her legacy shaped generations of progressive leaders. "We must continue her fight," he said, pointing to threats he sees

under President Donald Trump's administration. Reynoso, who represented Bushwick, Ridgewood, and Williamsburg on the City Council before winning the borough presidency with more than 72% of the vote, highlighted his record on equitable development and maternal health initiatives. Reynoso emphasized his lived experience as the son of immigrant parents who relied on food stamps and housing assistance. "I am only here because of that safety net," he said, vowing to defend it in Congress. He enters the race with endorsements from Jen Gutiérrez, Sandy Nurse, Shekar Krishnan, and Lincoln Restler, all praising his progressive leadership and community-grounded approach.

Upper East Side property prepares for 27,000-sq-ft condo rise



Photo: Preliminary rendering of 213 East 83rd Street. Designed by DOME Architecture, Design & Engineering. Image Source: newyorkyimby.com

Community Desk

Demolition has begun at 213 East 83rd Street on Manhattan's Upper East Side,

clearing the way for a new seven-story residential building after months of preparation. The AVENU-

developed project, designed by DOME Architecture, Design & Engineering, will rise 85 feet and span 27,000 square feet, delivering eight condominium units averaging just over 1,000 square feet each, along with a 30-foot rear yard. The 5,000-square-foot site, situated between Second and Third Avenues, has been shrouded in scaffolding since mid-summer, when the Church of St. Elizabeth of Hungary and its historic steeple were covered to facilitate safe construction activity. Asbestos remediation was recently completed,

allowing demolition crews to move forward in earnest. Workers are expected to proceed through the winter months, with the teardown potentially wrapping by early spring. The redevelopment marks another significant residential upgrade in the neighborhood, which has seen steady reinvestment in recent years. Once complete, the modern condominium building is anticipated to add new housing options to a highly sought-after corridor of the Upper East Side while continuing the broader trend of mid-block revitalization across the area.

Prayer Time IN New York

FAJR	DHUHR	ASR	MAGHRIB	ISHA
05:46	11:48	02:10	04:28	05:50
05:47	11:48	02:10	04:28	05:50
05:47	11:49	02:10	04:28	05:50
05:48	11:49	02:11	04:28	05:50
05:49	11:50	02:11	04:29	05:51
05:49	11:50	02:11	04:29	05:51
05:50	11:51	02:11	04:29	05:51

OPINION

Interfaith Harmony, Peacebuilding, and a Safe NYC — Imam Shamsi Ali

New York City is a melting pot of humanity, with diverse ethnic, national, cultural, and religious backgrounds. As such, it should serve as a role model for global harmony, peace, and cooperation among its citizens. My long-term vision emphasizes the importance of interfaith cooperation in NYC, where faith leaders play a crucial role in maintaining peaceful and harmonious coexistence. Faith leaders are trusted by their communities and have direct interactions with their constituents, making them ideal role models. Houses of worship, such as synagogues, churches, mosques, and temples, are not just centers for ritual activities but hubs for human life. Building relationships and cooperation among these institutions can positively impact harmonious relationships among NYC citizens. To address hate crimes and antisemitism, concrete steps are needed, such as intensifying interfaith

dialogue, involving clergy, community leaders, and academics in promoting inclusive and contextual religious interpretations. Interfaith social activities, like soup kitchens for the homeless, can also foster cooperation. The Muslim and Jewish communities can work together, leveraging their shared Abrahamic roots. Initiatives like joint community events, clergy meetings, and social services can promote cooperation. I've been involved in building relationships with the Jewish community, including a 2004 high-level meeting of Imams and Rabbis, and co-authoring a book with a Jewish titled: Sons of Abraham: issues that unite and divide Jews and Muslims. Key Initiatives:



— Imam Shamsi Ali :
Director of Jamaica Muslim Center,
Member of Mayor Elect Mamdani's Transition Team

●Interfaith Dialogue: Foster mutual understanding and respect among different faiths

●Community Service: Collaborate on social issues, such as poverty alleviation, education, and healthcare

●Youth Engagement: Promote interfaith understanding and cooperation among young people

●Education: Develop ongoing educational programs to reduce misunderstandings and hate.

Building Trust:
●Faith leaders should be visible and actively involved in crises, protests, and conflicts

●Government support is essential for interfaith initiatives

●Ongoing educational programs can promote long-term trust and cooperation, such as developing a more progressive and contextual interpretation of religious texts to foster harmonious relationships among faith communities.

Conclusion:
In recent months, we've witnessed deep divisions in New York City's society due to differing views and political choices. The mayoral election is over, and now it's time to look forward and build unity and cooperation to make New York City better, safer, and more accessible for all its citizens. By working together, New York City can be a role model for many cities around the globe as its title "capital of world".

“

“Faith leaders are trusted by their communities and have direct interactions with their constituents, making them ideal role models.”

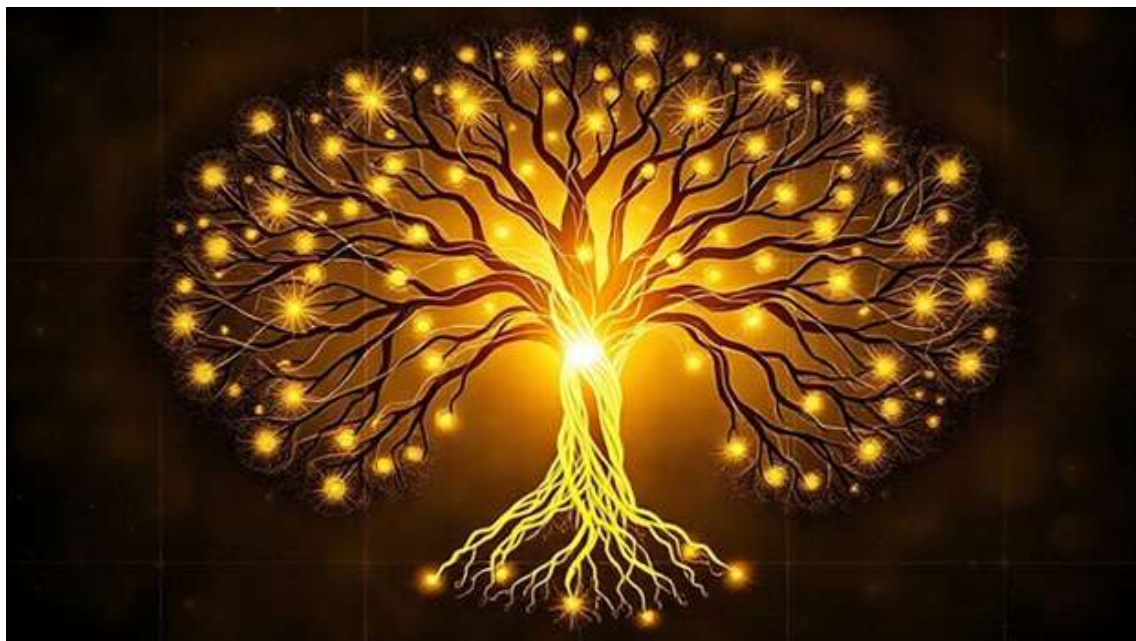


Photo: Branches of Faith and Harmony

Image Source: Online

“

“By working together, New York City can be a role model for many cities around the globe as its title 'capital of world'.”

Words and Symbols of Peace and Hate

— Imam Muhammad Shahidullah, Shukhen Gomes, Dr. Emmanuel Ess & Rev Phillips Fally

Human history is shaped not only by actions but by the words and symbols people choose to represent their beliefs. Across cultures and eras, language and imagery have carried immense power—capable of inspiring peace, unity, and compassion, or fueling hatred, violence, and division. Understanding these forces allows societies to build bridges instead of barriers. As an Imam and representative of the Muslim community, I have witnessed how spiritual teachings guide people toward peace and warn against harmful speech.

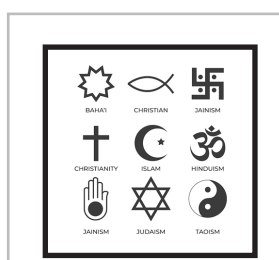
The Power of Peaceful Words

Words that promote peace appeal to universal human values. Terms like “compassion,” “mercy,” “justice,” and “forgiveness” resonate across religious, cultural, and political boundaries. In Islam, Allah describes the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as “a mercy to all creation,” reminding believers that gentle speech is a form of worship. The Qur’an teaches: “Speak to people good words”—a timeless principle that

encourages kindness even in disagreement. Leaders across the world—Gandhi, Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr., and many faith leaders—used peaceful words to challenge injustice. Their messages emphasized shared humanity and moral courage. For imams, scholars, and community leaders, peaceful language is not only a social duty but a sacred responsibility.

Symbols of Peace Across Cultures

Symbols can communicate peace instantly. The dove and olive branch represent hope after hardship. The peace sign has become a universal emblem of harmony. In Islamic tradition, the word “Salaam” itself is both a greeting and a prayer for peace, while the crescent often symbolizes guidance and renewal. Across sacred spaces, the call to prayer, the sound of church bells, the lighting of candles, or the chanting of mantras all act as symbols reminding



— Imam Muhammad Shahidullah, Shukhen Gomes, Dr. Emmanuel Ess, Rev Phillips Fally

communities to turn toward peace, not conflict.

Words That Spread Hate

Just as language can heal, it can harm. Hate-filled words dehumanize others by portraying them as threats or outsiders. Throughout history, propaganda used labels such as “enemy” or “invader” to justify violence. Islam strongly condemns this behavior. The Prophet (peace be upon him) warned that “A true believer is one from whose tongue and hands others feel safe.”

This teaching directly challenges any speech that spreads hatred or division. In the modern world, online hate speech—through posts, slurs, or coded messages—has become a dangerous tool of radicalization. Faith leaders play an essential role in reminding communities that hateful speech corrupts the heart and destroys unity.

Symbols of Hate and Division

Hate symbols often originate from extremist groups. Some were once peaceful but were misused—like the swastika, originally a sacred symbol in Asia. Others include violent group insignias, flags, numbers, and gestures that signal supremacy or exclusion. Such symbols intimidate entire communities, especially minorities, and can ignite fear. As Muslims, we are taught to oppose injustice, protect the vulnerable, and stand against any symbol that promotes oppression.

Choosing Peace Over Hate

The tools that divide societies can also heal them. By promoting peaceful language, teaching youth media awareness, encouraging interfaith cooperation, and rejecting all forms of hateful imagery, communities can redefine their future. Islam teaches that peace begins with the heart, extends to speech, and becomes action. When we choose words and symbols of compassion, we honor our faith and strengthen humanity.

FAITH

A Celebration of Faith and Knowledge at Elhaam Academy

Students receive medals and certificates in the school's first Qur'an recitation competition

James Anderson

The Elhaam Academy in Jamaica, Queens, marked a memorable milestone as it hosted its 1st Annual Qur'an Competition, a heartwarming and inspiring event that brought together students, parents, and teachers in a shared celebration of learning, faith, and dedication. The event, sponsored by the Furqaan Project, reflected the academy's growing role as a center of holistic education that integrates both academic and spiritual development. Young students, both boys and girls participated in the competition, reciting verses from the Holy Qur'an with remarkable precision, confidence, and sincerity. They were evaluated on their Hifz (memorization), Tajwid (pronunciation and rules of recitation), Fluency, and Adab (etiquette and character) — key elements that reflect not only technical mastery but also respect for the sacred scripture. As the rounds



concluded, students who excelled received certificates and medals, celebrating their dedication and effort. However, beyond the awards, the competition served as a greater reminder of the importance of nurturing children's connection to the Qur'an from a young age. The proud smiles of parents and the applause of teachers filled the room as each participant took the stage, demonstrating both courage and reverence in their recitation.

The competition's success is a testament to Elhaam Academy's mission of fostering not only academic growth but also moral and spiritual development. By organizing this event outside the standard curriculum, the academy emphasized that true education extends beyond classrooms and textbooks — it involves cultivating values, identity, and a sense of purpose. Events like this, educators noted, are vital for shaping confident,



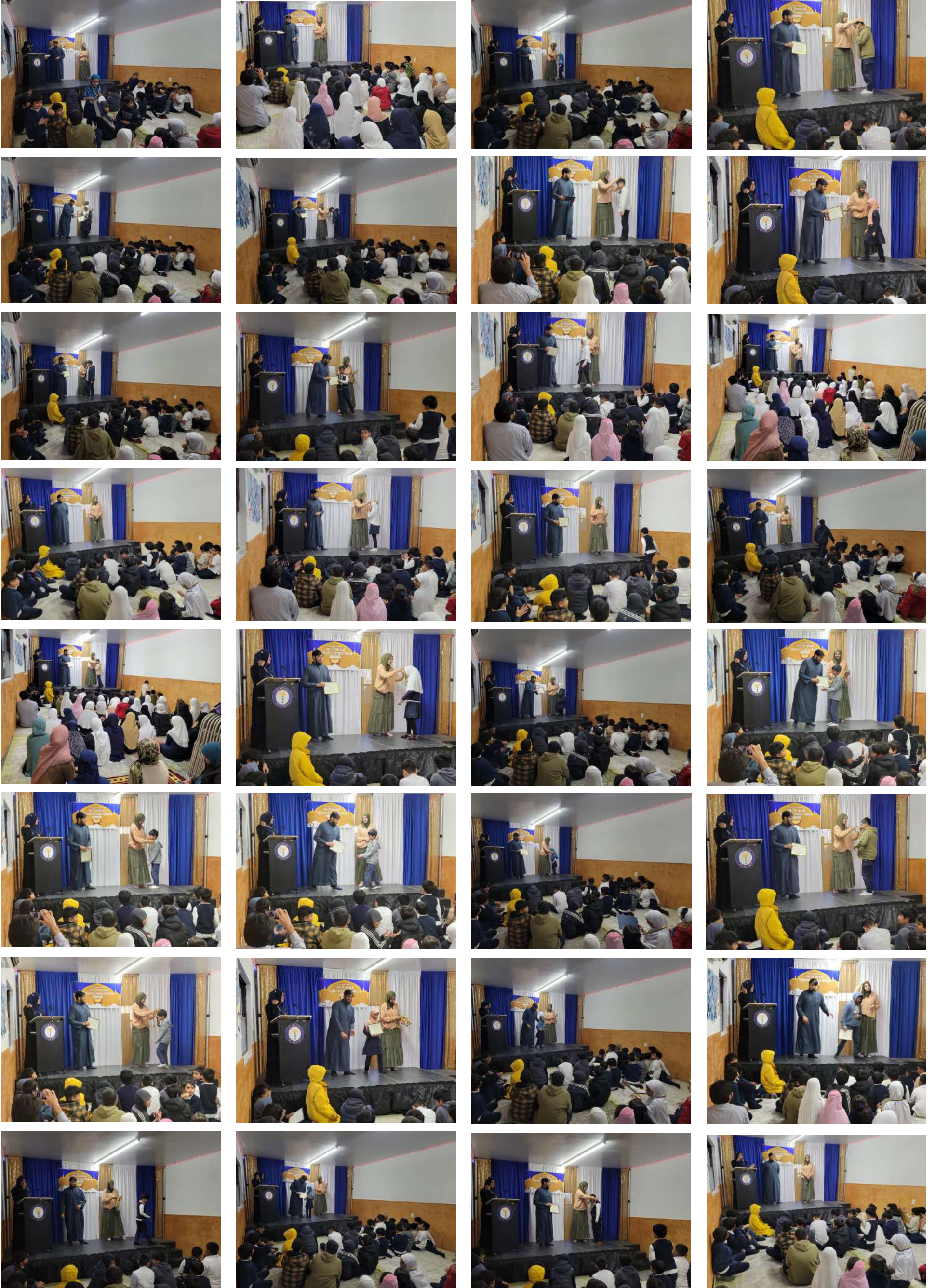
the teachings of their faith. The competition also helped strengthen community bonds, bringing together families and educators in an environment of encouragement and mutual respect. Parents expressed deep appreciation for the academy's initiative, highlighting how it encouraged their children to engage with the Qur'an in a meaningful way. For many, it was their child's first experience performing in front of an audience — an

opportunity that blended spiritual enrichment with personal growth. Teachers and organizers commended all participants for their hard work and commitment, underscoring that the event's true success lay in inspiring love for the Qur'an and in reinforcing the importance of spiritual education alongside academic achievement. The 1st Annual Qur'an Competition at Elhaam Academy concluded with an award ceremony filled with joy, gratitude, and reflection. It stood as a beautiful example of how educational institutions can go beyond academics to nurture well-rounded individuals — young learners who are not only intellectually capable but also spiritually grounded. As the medals were presented and certificates handed out, one sentiment resonated throughout the event: this was not just a competition, but a celebration of faith, community, and the next generation's bright potential.



FAITH

The academy's first-ever event highlights students' talent, discipline, and spiritual growth



FAITH

Students receive medals and certificates in the school's first Qur'an recitation competition



APPLY NOW

**APPLICATIONS
NOW OPEN
FOR 2026-2027!**

ELHAAM ACADEMY
NEW YORK STATE APPROVED
ISLAMIC SCHOOL

مدرسة إسلامية معتمدة من ولاية نيويورك
নিউ ইয়র্ক স্টেট অনুমোদিত ইসলামিক স্কুল
نیو یارک سٹیٹ نے اسلامک سکول کی منظوری دے دی۔

KG TO 8TH GRADE



SCAN TO ENROLL





EDUCATION

Spirit of the “Oxford of the East” Shines in New York

Dhaka University alumni gather for their annual dinner and cultural night at Gulshan Terrace

Ashley Reed

The Dhaka University Alumni Association USA, Inc. held its much-anticipated Annual Dinner Party in a warm atmosphere of friendship, nostalgia, and celebration at Gulshan Terrace (formerly Dhaka Club) in Woodside, New York City. The gathering brought together a large number of former students of Dhaka University (DU) — fondly known as the “Oxford of the East” — who now reside and work across the United States. The event was presided over by S.M. Alam, the organization’s President, with General Secretary Rahul Amin Sarkar serving as the Master of Ceremonies. The program featured reflections from several notable alumni who shared their fond memories of university life and their experiences as part of Bangladesh’s most prestigious academic institution. Among the speakers were Saied-Ur Bar, former CEO of Thikana newspaper; Dr. Chowdhury Sarwarul



Hasan, founding president of the Alumni Association; Nasir Ali Khan Pol, Murshed Alam, Mohiuddin Dewan, Azizul Haque Munna, Mohammad Hossain Khan, and Molla Moniruzzaman. The Annual Dinner Committee was chaired by Abul Kalam Azad Talukder, with Yusuf Ali serving as Member Secretary, supported by journalist Md. Abul Kashem. Distinguished guests also included U.S. Supreme Court Attorney at Law Moin Chowdhury,



Bangladesh Society General Secretary Mohammad Ali, and representatives from other Bangladeshi university alumni associations — including Chittagong University

Alumni President, Jahangirnagar University General Secretary, and Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University President Syed Mizanur Rahman. The event saw attendance from several well-known personalities in the Bangladeshi-American community, including Fakrul Alam, former General Secretary of the Bangladesh Society; writer and columnist Shitashu Guha; Anisul Kabir Jashir, Habibur Rahman, Mursheda Zaman, Reena Saha,

Farida Yasmin, and Asim Saha, among others. The evening also featured a captivating cultural program, jointly conducted by former General Secretary Golam Mostafa and Cultural Secretary Shamsun Nahar Nupur Chowdhury. Members’ children and young performers from the new generation entertained the audience with patriotic songs and traditional recitations. Golam Mostafa and Azizul Haque Munna recited poetry, adding artistic depth to the

celebration. Behind the scenes, the program’s success was ensured by the hard work and coordination of Tajul Islam, Saiful Islam Bhuiyan, Azhar Ali Khan, and Iqbal Murshed, whose efforts helped create a seamless and memorable evening. For many attendees, the event was more than just a dinner — it was a reunion of minds and hearts connected by the shared legacy of Dhaka University. With over 10,000 former DU students now residing in New York and other parts of the U.S., the Alumni Association continues to play a vital role in fostering unity, preserving heritage, and building bridges between the Bangladeshi and American communities. As the night concluded with laughter, conversation, and music, one thing was clear: the Dhaka University spirit remains alive and strong — even thousands of miles away from the campus that shaped generations of Bangladesh’s brightest minds.



EDUCATION

Event features cultural performances, reflections, and renewed commitment to community unity



ORGANIZATION

Together in Spirit and Celebration: JBFS Family Night 2025

The event honored friendship, family, and the contributions of community members

William Henry

The Jamaica Bangladesh Friends Society (JBFS) hosted its much-anticipated Family Get-Together and Community Appreciation Night at the Agra Palace Party Hall, located at 116-33 Queens Blvd, Forest Hills, New York, on Saturday, December 6, 2025. The event, which began at 5:00 p.m. and continued until midnight, drew a large number of Bangladeshi-American families, community leaders, and special guests for an evening of celebration, reflection, and unity.

The grand event was organized under the leadership of Fakrul Islam Delwar, Founder and President of JBFS, and Anayet Monsi, General Secretary, with the coordination of a dedicated organizing team including Nowshad Haider (Convener), Saidul Islam Riadh (Member Secretary), J. Molla Saani (Chief Coordinator), and A.B.M. Osman Ghani (Chief Advisor). Their efforts helped ensure a warm and well-structured program that reflected



JBFS's continued commitment to serving and uplifting the Bangladeshi community in Queens.

The evening's program featured a colorful lineup of cultural performances, musical entertainment, and engaging activities for children and families. From lively songs to moving performances, the night offered something for everyone — symbolizing the vibrancy and togetherness that define the Bangladeshi diaspora. The venue



buzzed with laughter, conversation, and camaraderie as old friends reunited and new bonds were formed. During the event, President Fakrul Islam Delwar expressed his appreciation to

guests, volunteers, and supporters for their continued contributions to the organization's mission. He emphasized JBFS's focus on strengthening community harmony and cultural pride among Bangladeshi-Americans. The leadership collectively highlighted that gatherings like this one serve as reminders of the community's shared strength, unity, and commitment to progress. The Community Appreciation Night

also highlighted the contributions of members who have gone above and beyond in supporting the organization's social, cultural, and educational initiatives. Certificates and words of recognition were shared to honor their service. The spirit of gratitude and mutual respect ran through every aspect of the evening. Guests praised the JBFS leadership for their tireless work in organizing such

meaningful community events. One attendee remarked that the night felt "like a big family reunion," reflecting the close-knit relationships among Bangladeshi residents in the area. Beyond the entertainment, the event carried a deeper message — one of cultural preservation, intergenerational connection, and community empowerment. By bringing families together in a space of celebration and appreciation, JBFS continues to strengthen the social fabric that binds the Bangladeshi-American community. As the night came to a close with music, laughter, and shared meals, attendees left with a renewed sense of pride and belonging. The JBFS Family Get-Together and Community Appreciation Night not only celebrated friendship and heritage but also reinforced a shared commitment to collective progress and unity within New York's growing Bangladeshi diaspora.



ORGANIZATION

An evening filled with culture, connection, and appreciation at Agra Palace Party Hall



ORGANIZATION

The event honored friendship, family, and the contributions of community members



All Photo Credit: Neher Siddiquee

BUSINESS

A Night of Recognition: Emirates Airlines Honored in Queens

Community Leaders and Media Attend Special Appreciation Ceremony



Jessica Morgan

In a gesture of gratitude and recognition, Emirates Airlines, one of the world's most prestigious carriers, hosted a special appreciation event at Sanaa Restaurant in Jackson Heights, Queens, marking a

meaningful occasion for local travel partners, media professionals, and valued customers. The event, held recently in the heart of one of New York City's most culturally vibrant neighborhoods, brought together members of the ETAB (likely a local or regional



travel or business association), respected representatives from various media outlets, and loyal Emirates customers. It served not only as a formal

appreciation gathering but also as a celebration of the long-standing ties between Emirates and the Bangladeshi and South Asian communities in the region. One of the key figures behind the organization of the event was Belal Hossain, the owner of Digital One Travel, a well-regarded travel service provider. His role in orchestrating the event underscored the importance of collaboration between global airlines and local travel agents in serving diverse and growing customer bases. The evening was filled with camaraderie and shared reflections on the importance of dependable air travel, especially for diaspora communities with strong transnational connections. Attendees were acknowledged for their ongoing support of Emirates and their role

in facilitating seamless travel experiences for thousands of customers each year. For Emirates, such initiatives represent more than brand promotion—they are about community engagement and building trust at the grassroots level. Hosting the event in Jackson Heights, a neighborhood known for its immigrant diversity and strong South Asian presence, was a strategic and meaningful choice. While no formal speeches or quotes were provided for this report, the presence of both industry professionals and community members spoke volumes about the strength of Emirates' relationships in the area. Events like these help bridge the gap between global service providers and local stakeholders, fostering

mutual appreciation and sustained partnerships. In an industry where loyalty and service go hand in hand, Emirates' effort to personally recognize those who contribute to its success reflects a broader trend of customer-focused engagement. As the airline continues to expand its global footprint, its commitment to local outreach remains a central part of its strategy. The appreciation event at Sanaa Restaurant not only highlighted Emirates' gratitude but also strengthened its presence within a key demographic in New York City. For organizers like Belal Hossain and attendees alike, the evening offered a moment to reflect on shared successes and look forward to continued collaboration.



BUSINESS

Recognition Event Showcases Growing Support in the Diaspora



All Photo Credit: Neher Siddiquee

RECOGNITION

Rabbi Bob Kaplan Honored for Advancing Interfaith Unity

Community Leader Recognized for Decades of Service in Diversity and Conflict Resolution

Noah Presley

In a powerful acknowledgment of a career dedicated to unity, advocacy, and interfaith dialogue, Rabbi Bob Kaplan was recently recognized for his decades of service fostering cooperation among New York's diverse communities. As the Senior Advisor and founding Executive Director of The Center for Shared Relations Council of New York (JCRC-NY), Rabbi Kaplan has become a vital figure in the city's civic and faith-based efforts to bridge social divides and promote inclusivity. For years, Rabbi Kaplan has worked at the intersection of community leadership, public service, and education. His role on the NYC Commission on Human Rights and as Co-Chair of the Governor's Task Force on Bias and



Hate places him at the forefront of New York State's response to discrimination, intolerance, and intergroup tensions. His efforts have consistently centered on building understanding among communities facing challenges related to race, religion, culture, and identity.



Through initiatives like YouthBridge-NY, which empowers young people from diverse backgrounds to lead in dialogue and community action,

Rabbi Kaplan has left a lasting impression on future generations. His programs emphasize leadership development rooted in mutual respect and cultural awareness—core values of the shared society model he champions. Over the years, Rabbi Kaplan's work has extended beyond city

and state borders. He has consulted for international organizations on issues of diversity, led conflict prevention initiatives, and served as a guiding voice in dialogues around coexistence and social cohesion. His academic contributions across the country include teaching Jewish Studies at The City College of New York, where he helped students navigate complex intersections of faith, culture, and civic responsibility. Colleagues and community leaders point to his unique ability to bring disparate voices to the same table. A certified mediator and former grief counselor, Rabbi Kaplan's approach has always been one of empathy, active listening, and sustained engagement. He believes that meaningful social change starts with relationships, and he has built a career rooted in that philosophy.

While no single accolade can fully capture the breadth of his contributions, the recent recognition underscores the vital importance of leaders who prioritize dialogue over division. At a time when communities face heightened polarization and increased incidents of hate, Rabbi Kaplan's work stands as a beacon of what is possible when commitment meets compassion. His presence on various interfaith and civic boards, and his ongoing influence within both secular and faith communities, continues to shape a more inclusive New York. The legacy of Rabbi Bob Kaplan is not merely one of service—it is a living reminder that society thrives when we invest in understanding, bridge-building, and the belief that all communities have a shared stake in one another's well-being.



RECOGNITION

Commissioner, Educator, Mediator – Honoree's Career Spans Faith and Public Service



Flashback2025

Elhaam Academy – Building the Future, One Leader at a Time

Emily Parker

Nestled in the heart of Jamaica, New York, Elhaam Academy is a full-time, state-approved Islamic school that

masterfully blends spiritual growth, strong moral values, and academic excellence. The Academy embraces a modern STEAM-based curriculum alongside traditional learning,

empowering students through hands-on experiences in science, technology, engineering, arts, and math. Guided by the pillars of faith, knowledge, and community,

Elhaam remains committed to nurturing future leaders with purpose, character, and vision. In 2025, the Academy stood out through its dynamic programs, global exposure,

and deep community engagement—proving once again it is more than a school; it is a center for holistic development.

Elhaam Academy at the United Nations – A Glimpse into Global Leadership



In a landmark educational experience, students from Elhaam

Academy visited the United Nations Headquarters in New York City to mark the UN's 80th Anniversary. The trip offered students firsthand exposure to international diplomacy, sustainable development, and technology's role in global problem-solving. Highlights included a tour of the UN Technology Museum, where they explored how satellites, digital tools, and innovation are used to address critical

issues like climate change, poverty, and education inequality. During the visit, students engaged with UN officials and global advocates including Shaffiou Assoumanou, Carolina Nazzaro, and Mafizul Islam, who shared insights on leadership, diplomacy, and the importance of youth involvement in global affairs. A dynamic Q&A session allowed students to discuss peacekeeping,

international cooperation, and the role of technology in shaping a better future. The experience—made possible through partnerships with SDG Academy New York and Save the People USA (STPUSA)—left a lasting impression on the students, inspiring them to see themselves as future changemakers equipped to contribute to a more peaceful, sustainable, and interconnected world.



Elhaam Academy Leads 6-Month Interfaith Program to Foster Unity and Understanding



As part of Save the People USA's "Hate to Hope" initiative, Elhaam Academy organized a powerful six-month interfaith program



bringing together Muslim and Jewish students from across New York City. In collaboration with Kinneret Day School, the program included a series of five immersive

events aimed at building empathy, promoting respect, and fostering lasting friendships among young learners of different faiths. Students visited the Museum of Jewish Heritage and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where they explored cultural and religious artifacts, shared personal stories, and reflected on the deep connections between their traditions. A

highlight of the initiative was the interfaith Iftar hosted at Elhaam Academy, where students and families came together to share food, prayers, and experiences in a vibrant atmosphere of unity. Through storytelling, collaborative art, and cultural exchange, students developed a deeper understanding of each other's practices, values, and histories. Activities

such as sharing family heirlooms, explaining religious customs, and creating joint exhibitions fostered dialogue and mutual respect. The program served as a meaningful model of how early interfaith education can break down stereotypes, nurture compassion, and inspire future generations to lead with peace and understanding in a diverse world.



Flashback 2025

Elhaam Academy Marks 24 Years Since 9/11 with a Program on Muslim American Perspectives



In a powerful moment of reflection, Elhaam

Academy hosted a special program

titled "24 Years Since 9/11 – The Muslim

American Perspective," bringing together

students, teachers, law enforcement, and community members to commemorate the lives lost and explore the lasting impact of September 11, 2001. The event featured heartfelt discussions led by local police officials, including Captain Cedillo, Captain Ehtasham Khan, and officers from the Community Outreach Division, who spoke about resilience, representation, and the importance of building trust between communities and law

enforcement. Through open dialogue and shared reflection, students learned about the complex aftermath of 9/11 for Muslim American communities, the role of public service in healing, and the ongoing work needed to foster peace, justice, and unity. The program served as both a history lesson and a call to action—encouraging young people to lead with empathy, engage in civic responsibility, and stand against hate in all its forms.



Elhaam Academy Students Visit Turkish House for a Cultural and Diplomatic Exchange

In a memorable cross-cultural experience, students from Elhaam Academy visited the Turkish House in New York City, where they were warmly received by M. Ahmet YAZAL, Ambassador and Consul General of Turkey. The visit provided students with valuable insights into Turkey's rich cultural heritage, Islamic history, and its modern-day role in global diplomacy.

During an interactive Q&A session, students asked thoughtful questions about Turkey's language, religion, cuisine, and history—leading to an engaging discussion that deepened their understanding of the country's diverse identity. The visit also featured a presentation of Elhaam Academy's school book and crest to the ambassador,

along with student-made posters celebrating cultural appreciation. The experience gave students a firsthand look at international relations in action, strengthened their awareness of global cultures, and highlighted the importance of dialogue, diplomacy, and mutual respect in building a more connected world.



Elhaam Academy Launched SDG-Focused Book to Empower Youth for Global Change



In a collaborative initiative with Save the People USA, Elhaam Academy hosted the launch of a student-of the World," inspired by the Development Goals (SDGs), brought together students, leaders to explore global inequality, climate through the lens of education. The book serves as resource and a call students to and recognize their to meaningful change. featured discussions local impact, and the building a sustainable Students left the event of global issues and agency. Through this strengthened its commitment are informed, inspired, and world.



The People USA, Elhaam Academy centered book titled "We Dream United Nations' 17 Sustainable Held on campus, the event educators, and community challenges such as poverty, change, peace, and justice youth empowerment and

both an educational to action, encouraging understand the SDGs potential to contribute The launch event on global responsibility, power of young voices in future. with a deeper awareness a renewed sense of initiative, Elhaam Academy to shaping future leaders who ready to take action for a better

Flashback2025

Elhaam Academy Launches “I Am The Future” to Celebrate Student Dreams and Creativity



In a proud and inspiring moment, Elhaam Academy launched I Am The Future, a student-authored book featuring the dreams, career goals, and creative expressions of children from kindergarten to 6th grade. Held in the academy's auditorium, the launch brought together community leaders, educators, families, and city officials to honor the young authors whose voices were brought to life through this unique publication. The book captures the individuality and imagination of each student, combining their handwritten reflections



and original artwork to showcase a future envisioned by young minds. With strong emphasis on S.T.E.A.M. education and creative development, the project empowered students to see themselves not only as learners but as leaders and contributors to the world around them. Through this initiative, students experienced the joy of publishing, gained confidence in their own voices, and learned that their dreams have value. The event stood as a powerful reminder of how early encouragement, community support, and creative expression can shape the leaders of tomorrow.



Elhaam Academy's Youngest Learners Explore the Wonders of Science at the American Museum of Natural History

In an exciting hands-on learning experience, K-2 students from Elhaam Academy visited the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, where they explored exhibits on dinosaurs, space, wildlife, and earth sciences. Guided by teachers and chaperones, the children engaged with real-world scientific displays that brought their classroom lessons to life. The trip sparked curiosity and imagination as students observed



ancient fossils, marveled at planets and stars, and interacted with educational installations. It also offered valuable lessons in teamwork, patience, and respectful exploration. The experience reinforced Elhaam Academy's commitment to experiential, observation-based learning—leaving students inspired, energized, and more connected to the natural world around them.



Flashback2025

Elhaam Academy's Young Explorers Discover Wildlife at Queens Zoo

As part of its experiential learning approach, Elhaam Academy took its K-2 students on an exciting educational adventure to the Queens Zoo. Surrounded by nature and animals from around the world, the children observed sea lions, colorful birds, deer, and many other species, connecting their classroom learning with real-world ecology. Throughout the day, students



practiced observation, asked questions, and learned about animal behavior, adaptation, and the importance of conservation. The trip also encouraged teamwork, empathy for nature, and curiosity beyond the classroom. For these young learners, it was a day of wonder and discovery—strengthening their understanding of the natural world and their role in protecting it.



Elhaam Academy Students Celebrate Peace Through Art and Reflection



In observance of the International Day of Peace 2025, Elhaam Academy, in collaboration with Save the People USA, GNRC, UNA-USA Queens, and other partners, hosted a creative and inspiring event centered on the theme of peace and unity. Nearly 100 students participated by decorating paper doves and writing personal reflections, turning a global observance into a hands-on exploration of empathy, kindness, and

hope. Through art and writing, students expressed their understanding of friendship, compassion, and tolerance, showing how peace can begin with simple acts and shared values. The event not only nurtured creativity but also reinforced the idea that children play a vital role in building a more peaceful future—starting in their classrooms, homes, and communities.

Elhaam Academy Hosts Empowering Self-Defense Training for Muslim Women and Children

As part of its commitment to community well-being and empowerment, Elhaam Academy partnered with Malikah to host a free self-defense workshop for Muslim women and children in Jamaica, Queens. The training created a safe and supportive space for participants to learn practical self-defense skills, situational awareness, and de-escalation strategies, all tailored to their lived experiences. More than just a physical training session, the event became a powerful moment of connection and resilience. Participants left feeling more confident, prepared, and empowered, gaining tools not only to protect themselves, but also to advocate for safety and solidarity within their communities. The program underscored the importance of teaching self-worth, strength, and sisterhood—lessons that will resonate far beyond the walls of the classroom.



Flashback2025

Elhaam Academy's Annual Book Fair Turns Pages and Sparks Passion for Reading

From April 14–18, 2025, Elhaam Academy hosted its vibrant Annual Book Fair at its Queens campus, transforming the school into a lively hub of books,

creativity, and community spirit. With participation from students, families, teachers, and local leaders, the fair featured a wide variety of books, educational supplies,

and live activities, all aimed at promoting literacy, cultural identity, and the joy of reading. Students engaged in read-aloud sessions, managed

stalls as volunteers, and shared peer-to-peer book recommendations, turning the event into an interactive and empowering learning experience. More than just a

marketplace, the fair nurtured a genuine love for books and strengthened school-wide enthusiasm for lifelong learning.



Elhaam Academy Hosts Anti-Bullying Workshop to Promote Empathy and Action

As part of its ongoing focus on student well-being and character development, Elhaam Academy welcomed CAIR-NY's Maryam Shuaib for an engaging session on bullying prevention and upstander behavior.

The workshop empowered students to recognize bullying, respond with empathy, and take active steps to support their peers both in person and online. Through open discussion and

relatable scenarios, students learned how to identify safe reporting methods, build respectful relationships, and promote a school culture grounded in kindness, inclusion, and moral courage. The session reinforced the

Academy's commitment to social-emotional learning, leaving students more confident and better equipped to stand up for themselves and others.



Elhaam Academy Celebrates Growth and Achievement at Summer School Graduation

In a joyful gathering of families, educators, and community members, Elhaam Academy hosted its Summer School Graduation Ceremony, honoring the academic and

personal progress of students who completed the summer program. The event featured Qur'anic recitations, student performances, and certificate presentations, highlighting

the Academy's commitment to holistic education rooted in faith, culture, and academic excellence. Through their involvement, students gained not only

knowledge, but also confidence, discipline, and a stronger connection to their identity and values. The ceremony reflected the collaborative efforts

of teachers, parents, and students in nurturing well-rounded learners prepared for both academic success and responsible citizenship.



Looking Back, Moving Forward

The year 2025 marked a period of meaningful growth and achievement for Elhaam Academy, defined by impactful programs, academic milestones, and community-centered

initiatives. From international collaborations to student-led creativity and character-building experiences, each event contributed to a broader vision of education that blends

academic excellence with values-driven development. As the academy moves forward, the focus remains on equipping students with the skills, mindset, and integrity needed to thrive

in an increasingly complex world. The foundation laid in 2025 continues to guide a future shaped by learning, leadership, and lasting impact.

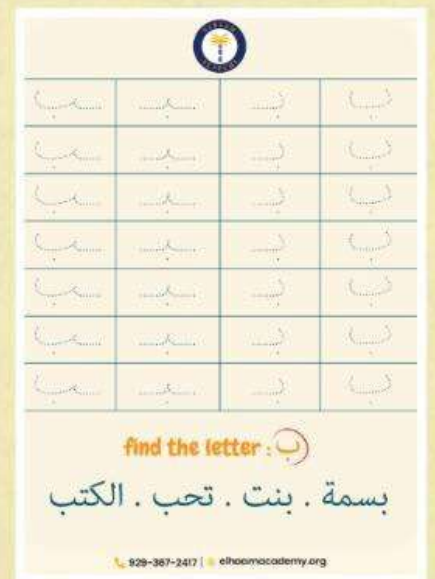
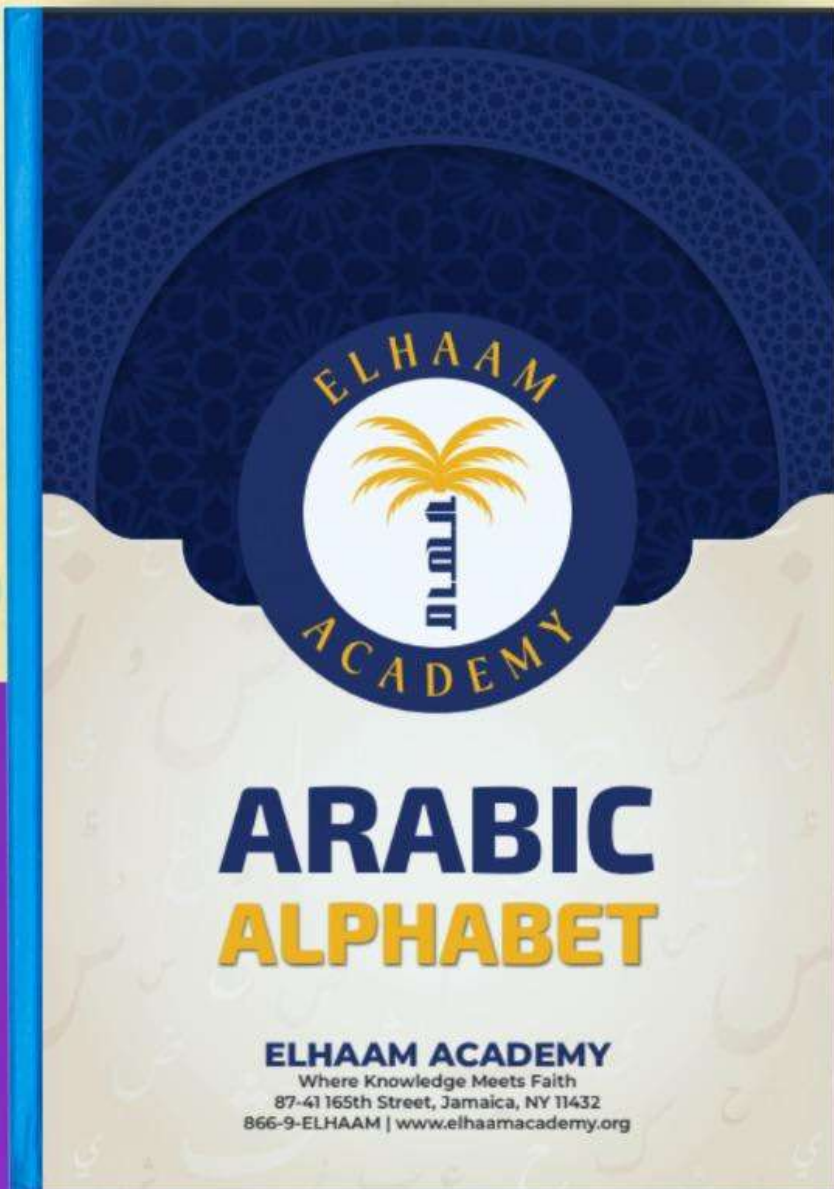
ARABIC ALPHABET BOOK



DEVELOPS STRONG ARABIC HANDWRITING SKILLS.

ENHANCES ARABIC WRITING FLUENCY

MAKES LEARNING FUN AND ENGAGING.



COMPLIMENTARY COPY – DONATIONS ARE APPRECIATED TO HELP SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS' LEARNING.

PRINTED COPIES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE OFFICE.

SPOTLIGHT

Marcos Alonso

Rabbi Kaplan, a veteran Jewish community leader in New York City and a long-time partner in interfaith and civic coalitions, has spent decades working alongside Muslim and other minority communities to strengthen social cohesion and public safety. In this conversation, he reflects on relationship-building, youth leadership, responding to hate, and creating a more just, united city for all

Q: Rabbi Kaplan, over your many years of service, what have been the most effective strategies you've found for building long-term trust and collaboration between the Jewish and Muslim communities in New York City?

Rabbi Kaplan:

We have used that methodology over the past decades that includes coalition building on quality of life issues, leadership development, and most of all standing up and showing up when another community has challenges facing them whether it's a challenge of hate or need. It is these very important, baseline activities that have allowed us to build these long-term relationships, full of trust and creativity that have withstood the challenges of crisis in the toxic polarity plaguing our society.

Q: You helped create programs like YouthBridge-NY. In your experience, what role can young Muslim and Jewish leaders play in shaping a more united, hate-free New York?

Rabbi Kaplan:

I don't wanna sound corny and saying that the youth are our future, but in reality they really are and it's organizations like youth bridge that allow young people to know each other, to trust one another, and to gain the skills in being true leaders in our society that will allow us to get unstuck from the mess that we are in. If we do not put the proper resources to training our future leaders with the skills of building a common present and future together, then we are failing them.

“

“When Jewish, Muslim, and other communities in New York stand together—showing up for one another in times of need—we build relationships strong enough to withstand even the most polarizing crises.”

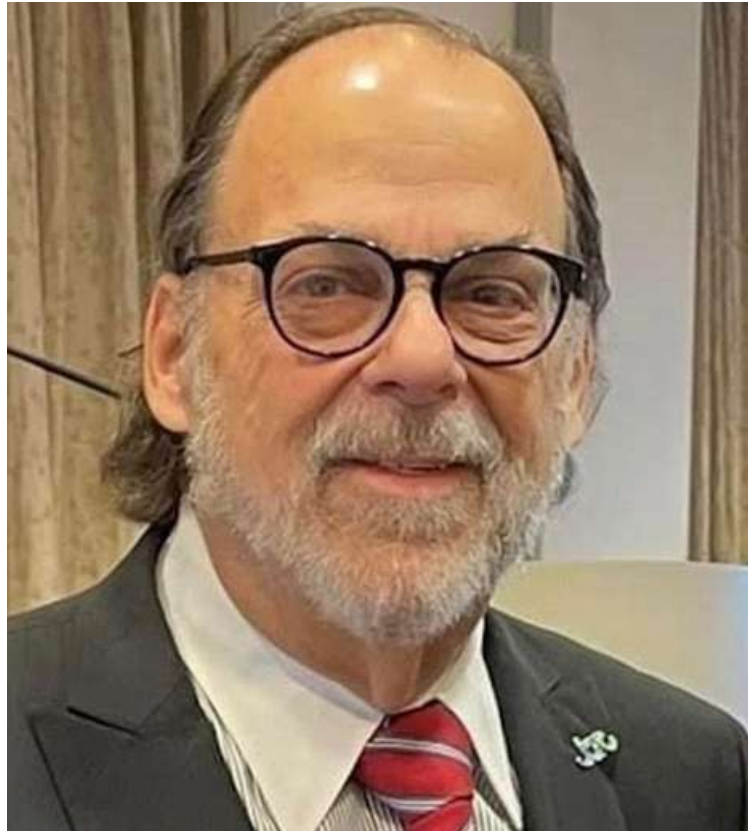
where we can have intergenerational dialogue and learning which means us learning from them and then learning from us. We cannot allow the generational divide to become one that will only increase the toxic polarity, which is plaguing our society.

Q: As co-chair of the Governor's Task Force on Bias and Hate, what approaches have proven most successful in reducing hate crimes targeting Muslim and other minority communities?

Rabbi Kaplan

I believe one of the most important tools that are taught to community leaders is how they can help their community to understand the impact of hate crimes and how they can be deeply involved in reporting them to law enforcement. While we understand that some communities may be reluctant to approach law enforcement because of what is happening in the world of immigration and ICE it's still important to have these incidents reported so the data is there and then the powers that be can effectively focus resources on those communities. If the data is not there, then there is no way for them to make damage driven legitimate arguments for the allocation of resources to particular communities.

Again, I fully understand that there is a difficulty and individuals approaching certain groups of law enforcement, however, trusted community based organizations can both translate the necessary information describing what the crimes are in the reporting system into the languages that are used in those communities and then be the helpmate or an interlocutor in reporting them



Across the Divide: A Conversation with Rabbi Kaplan

Building Trust, Confronting Hate, and Shaping a Shared Future in New York City

to Law enforcement and at the same time run educational programs in the local communities to ensure that people truly understand what is a hate crime what is a hate act and how they can be effectively met in the community.

Q: During challenging moments—locally or globally—what practical steps can interfaith leaders take to maintain relationships, reduce fear, and prevent division between Jewish and Muslim neighbors?

Rabbi Kaplan:

Well individuals and organizations located here in New York do not have the ability to affect the international tensions that are often at the base or foundation of much of the tensions that we are facing that trigger, difficult and often confrontational relationships between the Jewish and the Muslim communities here what community based organizations can do and should do is find as many opportunities as possible to allow both leaders and their communities to interface and learn about the communities here in New York, that they share neighborhoods and the city with.

We tend to in very difficult times in these particularly difficult times which are highly polarizing to dehumanize the other by interfacing with each other and spending time whether it's in coalitions, fellowships or other community building activities that are not necessarily connected to the conflict that is often international what comes from these opportunities is a process of humanizing, the other rather than dehumanizing the other and seeing them as the enemy.

We want participate say in a food justice program giving food to those in need we've learned that all of us have the same needs in the same love for our communities and family, and we find different pathways of connecting that de-escalate attentions between us. A good example of constructive and profound community building are the

we are all Brooklyn Fellowship against hate where leaders come together, learn about the diverse communities that they represent, gain the skills on how to engage in dialogue and de-escalate conflict and at the same time bring these back to their individual communities in a very healing and profound way.

There is also incredible work going on that look at how individual communities can share the responsibility of ensuring that those who were aging in their communities have the proper resources to age in dignity so it's a process of sharing resources and sharing the problem-solving process that confronts us all out of this comes incredible, long lasting, and sustainable relationships.

Q: Looking ahead, what opportunities do you see for deeper cooperation between Muslim organizations and JCRC in promoting shared society, public safety, and respect for all New Yorkers?

“In New York City, we learn that spending time together—working, serving, and solving problems side by side—turns neighbors of different faiths into partners, and partners into a shared community.”

Rabbi Kaplan:

Looking ahead, we need to double down on what is described above building of more opportunities for our communities to interface and learn about each other both through solving real problems on the ground in our communities and giving our leadership skills to no one another work with one another and create a common society together, and to translate those skills back into their communities as trusted messengers of conflict, resolution, and community building. We also need to stand with one another one one community is under assault and make sure that our communities know that we are doing that when one community is attacked whether the verbally or physically we need to be there to let others know that we care for them and that hate in any form against anyone group is something that is unacceptable. We cannot remain silent in a time

when hate has become almost acceptable out of the mouths of some of the leadership of our society, we must be the leaders that speak out and speak back at these kinds of accusations against certain communities and not allow ourselves to be drawn into an ever increasing cycle of heat and destructive behavior. We must hold our elected officials and other leaders accountable for their actions and words because words do matter and seek more resources to enable community and faith based organizations to engage in this work and to bring the message of a shared society back to their communities.



SPORTS

2026 FIFA World Cup Draw Sets Stage for Historic Tournament

USA, Mexico, and Canada Co-Host a Global Event Marked by Farewells and Fresh Hopes

Carlos Stewart

With anticipation building for what is poised to be the most expansive and emotionally charged tournament in FIFA history, the 2026 World Cup draw has officially mapped out the group stage matchups, offering fans around the globe a first look at the road ahead. The event, which will be co-hosted by the United States, Mexico, and Canada, brings the world's most watched sporting spectacle to North American soil for the first time since 1994. The 2026 edition marks a new chapter in the tournament's history. For the first time, 48 nations will compete, up from 32, reflecting FIFA's aim to further globalize the game and offer more nations a chance to participate on the sport's grandest stage. The matches will take place in 16 cities, from Los Angeles and New York/New Jersey to Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Toronto, showcasing the cultural and geographic diversity of the three host countries. Beyond the logistical scale, the 2026 tournament carries deep emotional weight. It could mark the final World Cup appearances for several football icons. Cristiano Ronaldo, now 41 by the time the tournament kicks off, and Lionel Messi, 38,



both appear set to bid farewell to international competition. Likewise, should Neymar stay injury free and make the Brazilian squad, this may be the swan song for one of the game's most gifted yet enigmatic players. Group stage matchups suggest a mix of expected dominance and potential upsets. Spain, seen by many as a pre-tournament favorite, leads a challenging Group H alongside Uruguay, Saudi Arabia, and Cape Verde. Meanwhile, the United States, one of the three co-hosts, features in Group D with Paraguay, Australia, and the winner of European Playoff C—a spot to be filled by either Slovakia, Kosovo,

Turkey, or Romania. Their fixtures are scheduled in Los Angeles, Seattle, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Mexico will open Group A play against South Africa, followed by matches against South Korea and the winner of European Playoff D—a team to emerge from Denmark, North Macedonia, Republic of Ireland, or the Czech Republic. Canada, meanwhile, draws Group B alongside Qatar, Switzerland, and the winner of European Playoff A, which could



be Italy, Northern Ireland, Wales, or Bosnia and Herzegovina. Group C sees five-time champions Brazil joined by Morocco, Haiti, and Scotland. Germany headlines Group E alongside Curaçao, Ivory Coast, and Ecuador, while the Netherlands feature in Group F with Japan, Tunisia, and the winner of European Playoff B: Ukraine, Sweden, Poland, or Albania. Belgium, Egypt, Iran, and New Zealand will compete in Group G, while France, Senegal, Norway, and the winner

of FIFA Playoff 2—to be decided between Bolivia, Suriname, or Iraq—battle it out in Group I. Argentina will take on Algeria, Austria, and Jordan in Group J, while Portugal shares Group K with Colombia, Uzbekistan, and the winner of FIFA Playoff 1, which includes New Caledonia, Jamaica, or Democratic Republic of the Congo. Finally, Group L promises drama with England, Croatia, Ghana, and Panama set to clash. The stakes are enormous, not only for teams but for players aiming to define legacies. Young stars will aim to announce themselves on a global platform, while

aging legends will fight to make their final memories golden. "This World Cup isn't just about new beginnings," noted one FIFA executive, "it's about honoring the players who've defined an era." For North American fans, the significance is cultural and generational. Hosting the tournament across three countries reinforces the region's growing influence in global football, both economically and competitively. With football's popularity rising sharply in the U.S. and Canada, and Mexico long a powerhouse in the sport, the 2026 World Cup offers a rare opportunity for collective national identity and celebration. The final, set for July 19, 2026, at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, is expected to draw a record-breaking global audience, as the sport's greatest names potentially bow out and new legends emerge. Whether it ends in triumph for a traditional power or the rise of a surprise contender, the 2026 FIFA World Cup promises to be more than a tournament—it will be a landmark in the history of the sport and the world's cultural consciousness.

Guts and Glory: Norris Wins F1 Championship in Season Finale

Verstappen and Piastri fall short as McLaren driver holds nerve

Stephanie Nicole

Lando Norris has been crowned the 2025 Formula One world champion after a tense and heroic drive to third place at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, becoming the 11th British driver to win the title. Despite Max Verstappen claiming victory at Yas Marina, Norris did enough to hold on to the championship by

just two points, with his McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri finishing second in both the race and the final standings. It marked a landmark moment in Norris's career and in McLaren's history, ending a 17-year wait for a drivers' title since Lewis Hamilton's 2008 triumph. In a high-pressure finale, Norris delivered a flawless performance, making bold overtakes and



Photo: Lando Norris became the first British driver since Lewis Hamilton in 2020 to win the F1 world title. Image Source: PA/Sky News

maintaining composure amid team strategy and on-track battles. The championship-deciding race was fraught with drama. Norris pulled off critical passes on Kimi Antonelli, Carlos Sainz, and a breathtaking move past Yuki Tsunoda, which faced post-race scrutiny but ultimately stood. While Verstappen did everything he could to keep his title hopes

alive, Norris's gritty drive sealed his maiden crown in his seventh F1 season—all with McLaren. For Piastri, it was a season of near glory, and for Hamilton, an ominous first year with Ferrari ended in disappointment. But in Abu Dhabi, it was Lando Norris who finally stood at the summit of the sport.

Messi Leads Inter Miami to Historic MLS Cup Victory

Argentine superstar delivers two assists in 3-1 win over Vancouver

Armin Grey

Lionel Messi added another chapter to his legendary career, leading Inter Miami to its first-ever MLS Cup title with a commanding 3-1 victory over the Vancouver Whitecaps at Chase Stadium on

Saturday night. Messi, who joined the club in July 2023, delivered two assists, including a decisive pass to Rodrigo De Paul in the 72nd minute, and another to Tadeo Allende in stoppage time to seal the win. His

performance earned him MLS Cup MVP honors, extending his career title count to 44 and capping a postseason in which he set a record for 15 goal contributions. Inter Miami had taken an early lead through an own goal by Édier

Ocampo, but Ali Ahmed equalized for Vancouver in the second half. From there, Messi took control, inspiring a dominant finish that fulfilled David Beckham's long-held vision for the club. "Leo is a winner. It's simple as that,"

Beckham said following the match, having now won the MLS Cup as both a player and an owner. The win also marked a farewell for veterans Sergio Busquets and Jordi Alba, who retire as champions, while

head coach Javier Mascherano secured a title in his debut season. For South Florida, it was a defining moment. Inter Miami, once in last place, now stands atop MLS—driven by the enduring brilliance of Lionel Messi.



Hegseth Defends Strike

Pentagon faces scrutiny over second missile



Photo: Hegseth won't commit to releasing video of second strike on alleged drug boat: "We are reviewing it right now" Image Source: CBS News

Amkel Nourush

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth on Saturday declined to say whether the Pentagon will release video of the deadly Sept. 2 second

strike on an alleged drug-smuggling boat in the Caribbean, as scrutiny intensifies over the operation that killed two survivors of the initial missile attack. Speaking at the Ronald

Reagan Presidential Library, Hegseth said the department is "reviewing" whether footage can be made public, stressing officials must be "very responsible" before releasing any material. The White House has confirmed that a second missile was fired, but both the administration and Hegseth deny accusations—first reported by The Washington Post—that he ordered all survivors to be killed. Hegseth insisted Saturday that the decision was made by Adm. Frank 'Mitch' Bradley, who led the mission and briefed lawmakers this week.

Video shown to Congress reportedly depicts the two survivors waving overhead before the second strike. Legal experts have questioned whether the attack could constitute a war crime, especially as the administration has yet to provide evidence that the targeted vessels were transporting narcotics. Hegseth defended the broader campaign, saying the U.S. will continue striking "narco-terrorist" boats. "We will find you and we will sink you," he said, vowing operations would proceed despite mounting criticism.



Photo: Netflix to buy Warner Bros film and streaming businesses for \$72bn Image Source: Bloomberg via Getty Images / BBC

Netflix Buys Warner Bros for \$72B

Historic deal reshapes global entertainment landscape

Charles Lewis

In a landmark move set to redefine the entertainment industry, Netflix has agreed to acquire the film and streaming businesses of Warner Bros Discovery for \$72 billion, outbidding rivals Comcast and Paramount Skydance. The deal, which includes franchises such as Harry Potter, Game of Thrones, and HBO Max, positions Netflix as one of the most dominant forces in global media—pending regulatory approval. Calling it a "rare opportunity," Netflix co-chief executive Ted Sarandos said the merger would combine "the last century of entertainment" with Netflix's original hits to "define the next one." The company expects \$2-3 billion in savings through streamlined operations, though

HBO's brand future on the platform remains undecided. The acquisition has drawn swift criticism. The Writers Guild of America urged regulators to block the merger, warning of job losses, lower wages, reduced output, and higher consumer prices. Cinema United's CEO Michael O'Leary called it an "unprecedented threat" to global theaters. David Zaslav, president and CEO of Warner Bros, hailed the agreement as uniting "two of the greatest storytelling companies in the world." Films will continue to debut in cinemas, and Warner Bros TV will still produce for outside partners. Regulators now face the task of evaluating a deal analysts say could "reorient Hollywood" and reshape the streaming landscape for years to come.

Chernobyl Shield Damaged

IAEA warns key safety functions lost

Nassr Al Shams

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has warned that the protective shield covering the Chernobyl nuclear reactor has lost its primary safety and containment functions following a February drone strike that ignited parts of its outer cladding. The assessment, released after inspectors

monitoring systems, the agency stressed that repairs are "essential" to prevent further degradation. "Timely and comprehensive restoration remains essential to ensure long-term nuclear safety," said IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi. Environmental scientists emphasized that the situation, while serious, does not pose an immediate public health threat. Prof. Jim Smith of the University of Portsmouth said the risk remains low because radioactive dust is still contained within the original Soviet-built concrete sarcophagus beneath the damaged shield. The incident comes as Russia continues widespread airstrikes across Ukraine, including overnight attacks on Kremenchuk, intensifying pressure on the country's energy infrastructure. The IAEA has expanded inspections of electrical substations, noting their critical role in cooling and safeguarding nuclear facilities nationwide.

HIGHLIGHT

•IAEA says Chernobyl's protective shield has lost primary containment ability.

completed a recent site visit, raises new concerns over the long-term stability of the structure built to secure the remains of the catastrophic 1986 disaster. Ukraine has accused Russia of targeting the facility, a claim the Kremlin denies. While the IAEA found no permanent damage to the structure's load-bearing elements or



Photos: A drone hit the protective shell around the Chernobyl nuclear reactor in February Image Source: Getty Images / BBC



Photo: Katy Perry posts photo with Justin Trudeau in Japan Image Source: Instagram/@katyperry

Katy Perry & Trudeau Go Public

Instagram post confirms months of speculation

Adrian Smith

Katy Perry and former Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau appear to have made their relationship public after the pop star shared a series of intimate photos and videos from their recent trip to Japan. The images, posted on Instagram, show the pair smiling closely for a selfie, sampling sushi together, and spending time during Perry's global Lifestyles Tour. The carousel was captioned, "Tokyo times on tour and more," marking their first official appearance on the singer's account. The post follows months of speculation fueled by repeated sightings, including Trudeau attending Perry's concert earlier this year. Just days earlier, Trudeau, 53, reposted a group photo on X featuring himself, Perry, and former Japanese

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida with his wife, thanking Kishida for "friendship" and global cooperation. Their public outing in Paris last month, coinciding with Perry's 41st birthday, first signaled a shift from rumor to confirmation. Photographs published by TMZ showed the pair holding hands before entering a car, with Trudeau assisting Perry into the back seat. Neither Perry nor Trudeau has directly commented on their relationship. However, during a recent London concert, Perry joked to a fan's proposal, "I wish you'd asked me 48 hours ago," hinting at her changing relationship status. Both recently ended long-term partnerships, and their emerging union has quickly become one of the most discussed celebrity-political pairings of the year.

Farewell to a Visual Icon

Photographer Martin Parr leaves enduring legacy

Julian Alvez

Britain has lost one of its most influential visual chroniclers with the death of documentary photographer Martin Parr, who died on Saturday at age 73 at his home in Bristol, his foundation confirmed. Widely regarded as one of the foremost photographers of his generation, Parr spent more than five decades capturing the humor, contradictions, and quiet charm of everyday life across the UK. His brightly saturated images of seaside towns, village fairs, cafés, and swimming pools built an international following and helped redefine modern documentary photography. Parr's work, celebrated for its wry social commentary, appeared in more than 100 books and entered the permanent collections of global

institutions including the Museum of Modern Art, the Tate, and the Centre Pompidou. The Martin Parr Foundation said he is survived by his wife Susie, daughter Ellen, sister Vivien, and grandson George, requesting privacy for the family. "Martin will be greatly missed," the statement read, noting that the foundation and Magnum Photos, of which he was a longtime member, will work together to safeguard his archives. Parr also curated major photography festivals and exhibitions, including Arles 2004, Brighton Photo Biennial 2010, and a 2016 Barbican Centre show. In 2021, he was awarded a CBE for his contributions to photography, cementing his place as a defining cultural figure of contemporary Britain.