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TUESDAY APRIL 9, 2024  
RAMADAN 30, 1445

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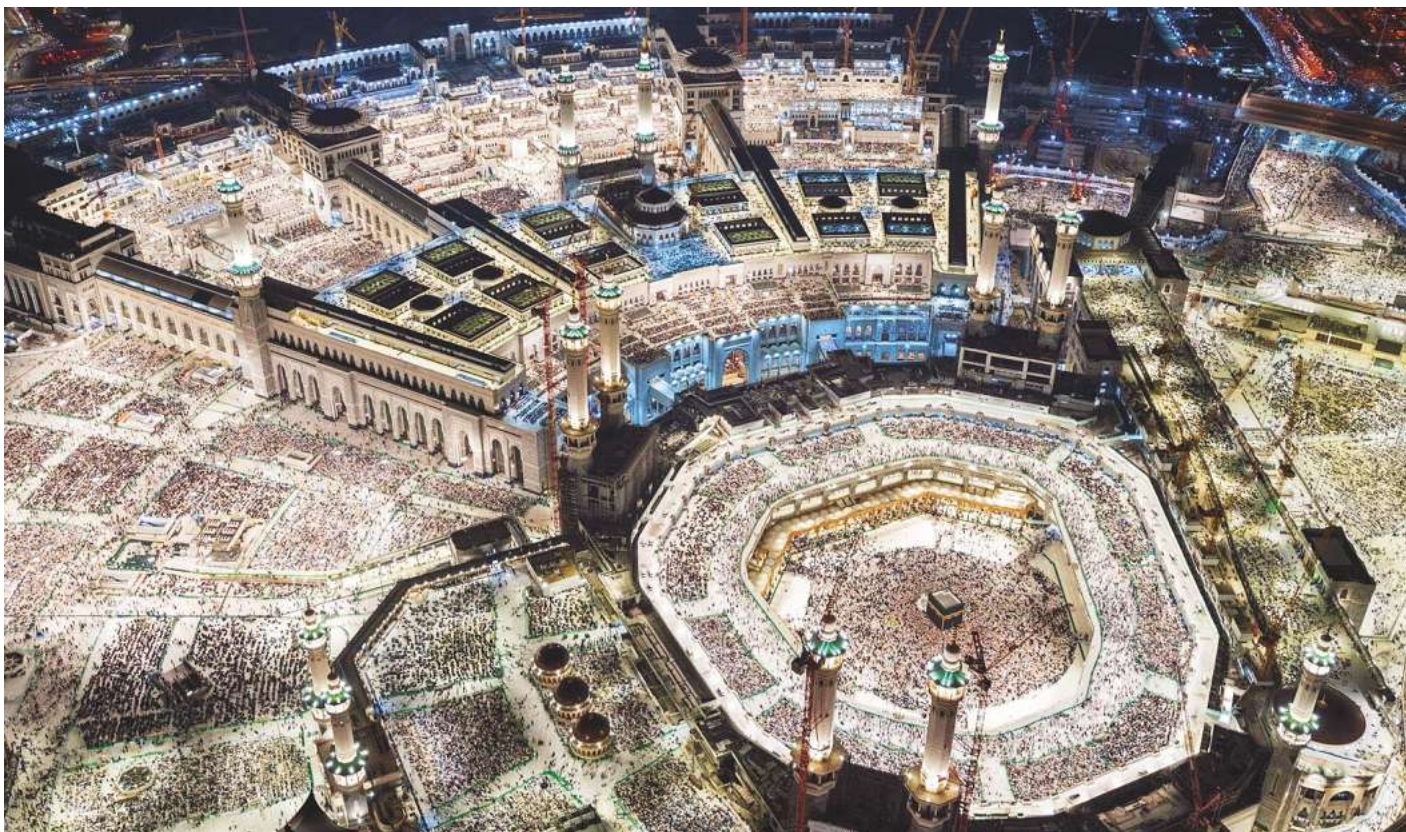
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Reuters

A staggering 2.5 million worshippers converged at the Grand Mosque in Makkah and also the Prophet's Mosque in Madina for the completion of the Quran recitation during Taraweeh prayers on the eve of Ramadan 29, on Sunday. **SEE ALSO P9**

## Eid Al Fitr begins in the UAE tomorrow

Saudi Arabia also  
declares today as  
last day of Ramadan

**DUBAI**

**BY KHITAM AL AMIR**  
Chief News Editor

The UAE has announced that tomorrow, corresponding to Shawwal 1, will be the first day of Eid Al Fitr. According to the UAE Moon-Sighting Committee,

today will be the last day of Ramadan.

Abdullah Bin Sultan Bin Awad Al Nuaimi, Minister of Justice and Chairman of the Committee, said that the committee, after exhausting the Sharia methods of sighting the crescent and making the necessary contacts with neighbouring countries, could not sight the Shawwal month crescent yesterday evening, and therefore declares that today is the last day of Rama-

### EID PRAYER TIMINGS

Abu Dhabi	6:22 AM
Dubai	6:20 AM
Sharjah & Ajman	6:17 AM
Ras Al Khaimah	6:15 AM
Fujairah & Khorfakkan	6:14 AM
Umm Al Quwain	6:13 AM
Al Ain	6:15 AM
Zayed City	6:26 AM

dan 1445, and that tomorrow is the first day of Eid Al Fitr. Saudi Arabia also announced that Eid Al Fitr will

begin tomorrow in the kingdom. Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait have confirmed today will be the last day of Ramadan and Eid Al Fitr will be celebrated tomorrow.

Earlier, Australia too officially announced tomorrow as the first day of Eid Al Fitr festivities. Following inquiries to local and global observatories, the Australian Fatwa Council has confirmed that the new moon will be born today, at specific times in Sydney and Perth.

## Gaza ceasefire talks make good progress

EGYPTIAN MEDIA REPORTS HEADWAY IN  
CONTENTIOUS POINTS OF AGREEMENT

**CAIRO**

Talks in Cairo aimed at brokering a truce between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip have made "significant progress", Egyptian outlet Al-Qahera reported yesterday.

The state-linked outlet reported "significant progress being made on several contentious points of agreement", citing a high-ranking Egyptian source.

Two Egyptian security sources said both sides had made concessions that could help pave the way for a deal for a truce which — as proposed during previous talks — would be staggered over three stages, with the release of any remaining Israeli hostages and a long-term ceasefire addressed in the second stage.

### Getting closer

Egypt, Qatar and key Israeli ally the United States have mediated previous rounds of negotiations, but a workable agreement to end the six-month war has remained elusive. Al-Qahera reported that Qatari and Hamas delegations had left Cairo and were expected to return "within two days to finalise the terms of the agreement".

**Senior Israeli officials  
said progress has been  
made in negotiations  
for a ceasefire in Gaza  
that would include the  
release of hostages and  
Palestinian prisoners.**

US and Israeli delegations were due to leave the Egyptian capital "in the next few hours" and consultations were expected to continue over the next 48 hours, the outlet added.

Senior Israeli officials said progress has been made in negotiations for a ceasefire in Gaza that would include the release of hostages and Palestinian prisoners, a move that drew criticism from far-right ministers who threatened to bring down the government. "We've reached a critical point," Foreign Minister Israel Katz told Army Radio yesterday. "If matters work out, a large number of hostages will return home and then, in stages, everyone. But remember that we are dealing with Hamas and there is not a lot of time. I am more optimistic than I was."

—Agencies  
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## Totality insanity: How North America geared up for eclipse

Festivals, viewing parties, mass weddings mark celestial event

**INGRAM, UNITED STATES**

Eclipse mania gripped North America yesterday as a breathtaking celestial event offered a rare convergence of commercial and scientific opportunities — and an excuse to party.

Festivals, viewing parties, and even mass weddings were planned along the eclipse "path of totality," where the Moon will completely obscure the Sun's light for up to a few minutes — weather permitting. Cloud cover was forecast over Texas and northeastern US states.

Businesses capitalised on the excitement with special events, while hotels and short-term rentals in prime viewing locations have been booked solid for months. At the Stonehenge II park in Ingram, Texas, a replica of the prehistoric structure in England, eclipse watchers had gathered from across the world.

Then there's the science. Nasa plans to launch a trio of sounding rockets before, during and just after the eclipse to measure



changes caused by the sudden darkness to the ionosphere. Former president Donald Trump, who notoriously gazed directly at the Sun during the 2017 eclipse, attempted to capitalise on the phenomenon by releasing a new campaign ad featuring his larger-than-life head blocking out our star.

— AFP

**SEE ALSO P9**