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MEDIA RELEASE

**Bengali New Year Celebration at Federation Square,
Melbourne, 20 April 2008**

The Bengali New Year (Bengali era 1415) will be celebrated by the Bengali community in Victoria this year at the Federation Square, the heart of Melbourne on Sunday, 20th of April 2008. This event, to be held for the first time at this venue, will be a day long one beginning at 11 am. The event will be organised by the students of various universities in Victoria and **Shurolok** Music Appreciation and Performance Group Inc. of Victoria, a premiere music appreciation and performance organisation (www.shurolok.org). Bengali New Year shares the same roots with few other calendars followed by Asian countries such as Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand and Cambodia, given their common Sanskrit heritage and lunar calendar.

The Bengali calendar is a traditional solar calendar used in Bangladesh and West Bengal in India. It is according to the Bhaskar (sun) Era, pioneered by Emperor Akbar in 1584 AD. The year begins on *Pobela Boishakh* (first day of the first Bengali month—Boishakh) which falls on 14 April. *Pobela Boishakh, the first day of Bangla calendar year* is indeed a momentous occasion in the life of each and every Bangalee. As a traditional secular event, Bengalis celebrate this event with cultural program and *Mela* – open market, and exchanging greetings. Bengalees greet " *Shubho Noboborsho* " (Happy Bengali New Year). *Pobela Boishakh* is also considered to be the most auspicious month for marriages and new business venture. Shop owners dish up delicious sweets and drinks to restore business connection.





The event will feature cultural performance by various community groups. These include members from the Bangladesh indigenous community, student groups, children organisations, drama clubs and music performance groups, as well as members of some Asian community groups. There will be typical *Bangalee* food stall and few other stalls with Bangladeshi clothing, art and other traditional items.

Melbourne is the host to some 5000 students from Bangladesh studying at various universities in Victoria. They have joined Shurolok (*the universe of music*) which was formed by some music lovers and performers of Melbourne. While the foundation membership of Shurolok comprises people of Bengali origin, it aims to build partnership between Bengalis and people of other ethnicity and linguistic background. Sponsors of this event include Monash University, Deakin University, Victorian Multicultural Commission and the Federation Square. Channel I, a prominent TV channel of Bangladesh will also join the event as the Media partner.

For further information on the program, please contact Mrs Rezina Hossain, President SHUROLOK 0421040444 or Syeed Ahamed, Students' Group 0411550937