Assembly Resolution No. 1095

BY: M. of A. Reyes

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 14, 2026, as Bangla New Year Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize official days that are set aside to increase awareness and enhance the profile of cultural diversity which strengthens the fabric of the communities of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 14, 2026, as Bangla New Year Day (Pohela Baisakh) in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Bangla New Year Day has its origins in the Mughal Empire of Indian subcontinent and is largely a secular holiday for most celebrants and enjoyed by people of several different faiths and backgrounds through music, dance, and fine arts; and

WHEREAS, Bangla New Year has its origins in the agrarian economy of medieval age Indian subcontinent by combining the solar Hindu calendar with the lunar Islamic calendar; and

WHEREAS, Different countries of Southeast Asia observe the new year around the same day, including Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and large parts of India; and

WHEREAS, Mongol Shobhajatra, the traditional mass procession taken out by University of Dhaka at dawn on New Year Day has been declared an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2016, categorized on the representative list as a heritage of humanity; and

WHEREAS, Leading lights and doyens from Bengal like Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, and others have been visiting the United States since the latter part of the 19th century and the United States has played a critical role in their lives and will continue to do so in Bengali renaissance down the line; and

WHEREAS, Bangladeshi immigrants began arriving in the United States in the late 19th century, leaving behind the hard economic and political times of the still developing Bangladesh, which achieved independence from Pakistan in 1971; and

WHEREAS, During this time, the largest groups of Bangladeshi immigrants arrived in New York City and even now more than 10,000 Bangladeshis immigrate to United States annually with half of them residing in New York City; and

WHEREAS, Countless Bangla speaking Americans have enriched America across multiple fields like arts, business, education, healthcare, and

literature; some of the leading names in these fields are Abhijit Banerjee, Vishaan Chakravarti, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Amar Gopal Bose, among many others; and

WHEREAS, New York City has the largest congregation of Bengali (the world's sixth most spoken language) speaking citizens globally outside of West Bengal and Bangladesh; and

WHEREAS, Many leading fine arts legends from Bangladesh and West Bengal have spent a significant time of their lives in New York contributing to its diverse cultural heritage; most notably are Fazlur Rahman Khan, Ali Akbar khan, Rumman Alam, Shahid Quadri, Jhumpa Lahiri, Enaytur Rahim, Debabrata Basu, Amitav Ghosh, Iqbal Quadir, Jawed Karim, Salman Khan and Omar Ishrak; and

WHEREAS, Bangla New Year has been celebrated with pomp and gaiety since late 1990s in vast areas of Queens and in Times Square, Manhattan since 2022; the day is celebrated with community singing and performances by 100+ groups from India, Bangladesh, and the United States; and

WHEREAS, For three decades, Muktadhara Foundation, a New York based organization dedicated to the promotion of Bengali culture has celebrated it history and literature by hosting Bangla Festival and Book Fair which has been attended by almost all leading litterateurs of contemporary times; and

WHEREAS, The State of New York recognizes the accomplishments of the Bengali people around the world as well their perseverance in their fight for independence; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 14, 2026, as Bangla New Year Day in the State of New York, and to recognize the many contributions of Bangla speaking diasporas in New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York; and Bishawjit Saha, CEO and Founder of Muktadhara Foundation Inc.