

Looking back to the years of glory

Shujeo Shyam reminisces on the glorious days

NOVERA DEEPTA

BORN in 1946, Shujeo Shyam has been singing since childhood. An eminent composer of widely rendered patriotic songs like *Rokto diye nam likhechhi* and *Bijoy nishan urchhey oi*, Shujeo Shyam had a long association with the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra (SBBK) from the inception of the radio in April 1971.

"The memories are still vivid," says a nostalgic Shyam. "Whenever I remember those days I feel the same spirit I had 34 years back. The inadequately equipped radio station was in a two-storeyed building." He asserts. The artistes of SBBK used to sing with just a tabla and a harmonium, he recalls.

The station had only one tape recorder and two microphones: one for the singers and the other for the musical hands. There was no separate place for rehearsal. Says Shyam, "There was food and water shortage. We did not even have enough space to sleep. But we were such a cohesive group that all these hassles seemed no big deal to us. We had a single goal and that was to sing with dedication and inspire the freedom fighters and the people of Bangladesh."

The SBBK artistes would get little time for rehearsals and usually recorded three songs a day. "SBBK was a popular station and every one waited to listen to the latest news and the inspiring songs. It was a great feeling," Shyam recalls. The freedom fighters used to write letters to the radio station from unknown places. One such message said, "The songs you play keep us alive, give us the strength to move on and fight the war."

Shujeo Shyam reminisces on the contribution



Shujeo Shyam

of the dedicated artistes at that time. Kamal Lohani used to write scripts for the *kathikas* (satirical plays) at night. "I remember lyricist Abul Kashem Swandip. He hardly had the courage to approach the senior artistes. Once this humble boy came to me and asked whether I would compose a song he had written. When I read the lyric, I was moved by the spirited words." The song is now widely rendered: *Rakto diye naam*

likhechhi Bangladesh naam.

Shyam recollects the day of December 16, 1971. When they were rehearsing a song, the programme producer Abu Tahir came and told them, "This song won't do, we need to sing the song of independence."

Describing his emotion at that time, Shyam recollects, "We were overwhelmed with joy. The feeling was incomparable and we could hardly believe. There was rumour that we might attain freedom very soon. So, when we actually won the war, our relation knew no bounds."

Lyricist Shahidul Islam told Shyam on the Victory Day that he would write a song and have the latter compose it for him. It took Shyam a fraction of a second to agree. "There was no quiet room for us to sit down and compose a song—everybody was excited and got carried away with the joy at the news of victory and also engaged in preparing for the telecast of the news. So, we went to the ground floor of the radio station."

Shahid wrote the *antara* (first stanza) and gave it to Shyam for composition. Shyam and singers Rothindranath Roy, Kaderi Kibria, Kalyani, Mala, Rupa and others, led by Ajit Roy, rehearsed the song. Shyam says, "We completed the song at 5:30pm and it was recorded after a skit the same evening. The song was played that evening after the speech of Syed Nazrul Islam, the then President of Mujibnagar Government who came to the station along with Tajuddin Ahmed, the Prime Minister."

Going back to those eventful times, Shyam says, "I can never forget those days. I am proud to have witnessed the most glorious days of the Bangalees and be a part of the struggle the nation went through during 1971."

Ajit Roy Days at Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

ON the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr in November 1971, when the artistes of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra glimpsed the moon, they all became emotional. As veteran singer Ajit Roy reminisced, "With due respect for the religion, nobody was in a mood to celebrate the Eid, when people were in pain and agony. We could not think of celebrating the Eid. Lyricist Shahidul Islam wrote a song that said, 'The moon of Eid, please go back and return when our land becomes independent.' Everyone shared this sentiment. I composed the tune of *Chand tumi phirey jao* and Rupa Khan sang it."

Ajit Roy has been a passionate singer since 1963. He has composed many popular patriotic songs including *Ekti Bangladesh tumi jagroto janatar*, *Apomaney tumi shedin jawaley uthechhiley barmomala*, *Banglar mukh ami dekiachhi* and *Hey bango bhandarey tabo*.

Going back in time to mid-1971, Ajit recalls receiving a message from Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra asking him to join the radio. He recalls, "I could not avoid the urge to join the radio. So, I prepared myself for the trip to India. I went with a group of freedom fighters led by Monirul Alam Manu who arranged everything for me."



Ajit Roy

Ajit says, "I can never forget how ordinary people of this land helped me on that journey." He reached a camp of freedom fighters in Agartala and finally made it to Kolkata in July. He still recalls the first moment of his arrival at the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra (radio station). "All the people who had already joined the radio station including singers Apel Mahmud, Abdul Jabbar, Kaderi Kibria, composer Samar Das and others were overwhelmed to see me. After I joined the radio, its structure was more organised," says Ajit.

Ajit has other memories. On December 16, like other ordinary days, he went out to have a cup of tea and heard the news of victory on the way. "We could hear the blank fires all around the city and everybody was extremely excited on hearing the news. There was celebration everywhere. Very naturally our daily plan was totally changed. We took preparation to sing songs of victory," Ajit says. Akhtar Hossain wrote *Shwadin shwadin dikey dikey aj* and Ajit composed the tune. After the recording the song went on air from that very day. "We had had nothing but tea all day long. But our excitement and joy dispelled the hunger. There is nothing to compare with the feeling of gaining independence," says Ajit.

In conversation with Rupa and Mala Sisters who sang inspiration

AFSAR AHMED

Rupa Farhad and Mala Khurum, the two prominent artistes of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra (SBBK) and the daughters of the pioneer filmmaker Abdul Jabbar Khan, got together for the first time after independence, to share their memories of 1971. In a lively conversation, the sisters talked about their experience of the Liberation War.



L-R: Mala Khurum and Rupa Farhad

"The memories remain fresh. I can very well recall the horrors of the crackdown on the night of March 25 and the uncanny feelings that haunted Mala and me at the DIT Television Centre," Rupa reminisces. She continues, "Actually we were scheduled to record a programme on that very night. But as soon as we entered the compound, we saw the Pakistani soldiers and an otherwise desolation at the TV station...the overall situation turned blood curdling. But fortunately, we met someone who told us to leave the compound immediately. We left the place without a second thought."

After the crackdown, other members of the family went to India to join the war and advised them to wait for further directions. "It was in mid-July, when the remaining members of our family, started the journey towards India from Kalganj in a private car," says Rupa, who still shivers at the memory of that journey. "We heard that the bridges were all blown up by the

Muktijoddhas." "When we got very close to the border of Agartala in India, we saw about 50 Pak army jeeps arriving there. They stopped and started firing indiscriminately on the river to terrorise people. We waited for the army to stop firing," adds Mala. "After a while when the Pak soldiers left the place, we met a

group of freedom fighters, who encouraged us to cross the borders," says Rupa.

While reminiscing on the experience in Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, Rupa says, "Almost every day we used to record songs, but had no clue as to where it was transmitted from. I still recall the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr when we performed the song *Chand Tumi Firey Jao* and other two songs *Nai diley eid Bangladesh* and *Amra Jokhon Mukto Hobo*, all of which carrying the same message, that is, we would celebrate Eid once we have attained freedom." The songs were played repeatedly on Eid day.

Then came the day--16 December. "In the morning, while we were rehearsing a song at SBBK, one of our co-artistes rushed into the centre with a big smile and gave us the most cherished news that we were craving to hear. Our prayers have been answered. We are free now", remember the sisters. "We were ecstatic and came out on the streets to celebrate. The usual blackouts in Kolkata city were finally over, there were lights everywhere. We could now go back home. We had achieved independence."

Liberation War on silver screen

KARIM WAHEED

Feature films, short films and documentaries have been made on our Liberation War in last 34 years. The first movie based on the Liberation War was made in India. Umprasad Moitra penned the script of the movie in Bangla and IS Johar developed the Hindi script in Mumbai for the movie *Joy Bangladesh*. Renowned actor Kabari was in the movie. However, the Liberation War was not accurately portrayed in that movie and it was strongly opposed by the Bangladeshi side; as a result, the Indian government banned the film.

Since 1971, some of the feature films have jarred our emotions and made us realise what we had to go through to attain our independence.

Ora Egarojon: Produced by Masud Parvez and directed by Chashi Nazrul Islam, this movie created intense impact on the audience



Sabita, Sumita Devi and Khasru in *Ora Egarojon*



Humayun Faridee in *Ekaturer Jishu*

for its realistic presentation, excellent storyline and skilled production. The film depicts a brave nation's struggle for independence. Khasru, Shabana, Sumita Devi delivered mind-blowing performances. *Ora Egarojon* is a must-see for the younger generation of our country.

Dhirey Bohey Meghna: Alamgir Kabir's first feature film. The style of narration in this movie is different from the conventional story format of regular feature films. This movie was well received by both the critics and the masses. Babita, Ajmal Huda, Mustafa and Khalil were believable as the characters in the movie.

Aguner Poroshmoni: Written and directed by

eminent writer Humayun Ahmed, this movie was one of the recent approaches to depict the Liberation War. The story revolved around a middle class family trying to deal with the atrocities during the war. Their lives change overnight when a young freedom fighter takes shelter in their house. Abul Hayat, Asaduzzaman Noor, Dolly Zahur, Bipasha Hayat and Shila Ahmed played lead roles and deserve applaud for their wonderful performances.

Ekaturer Jishu: Based on the story by Shahriar Kabir and directed by Nasiruddin Yusuf, this movie stands out for its unusual story and high calibre performance by versatile actor Humayun Faridee. The story features a bishop of a church and his experiences in 1971.

TV GUIDE

All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.

News Bulletin

BTV
News Headlines (Bangla) at 8:55 am, 12:10 pm, 2:00 pm, 3:00 pm, 4:00 pm, 7:00 pm.
News (Bangla) at 8:00 am, 1:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 8:00 pm.
News (English) at 3:00 pm, 10:00 pm.
Late Night News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.

CHANNEL-i
News (Bangla) at 7:15 am, 9:00 am, 2:00 pm, 7:00 pm, 9:00 pm, 10:30, 12:15 am.
Teletext of BTV news (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.

ATN BANGLA
News (Bangla) at 7:00 am, 10:00 am, 2:00 pm, 7:00 pm, 10:00 pm, 11 pm.
News (English) at 8:20 am, 7:00 pm.
Teletext of BTV News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.
Latest News (Bangla) at 9:00 am, 10:00 am, 11:00 am, 1:00 pm, 3:00 pm, 4:00 pm, 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm.

ntv
News Headlines (Bangla) at 10:00 am, 12:00 am, 6:15 pm, 9:30 pm.
News (Bangla) at 7:30 am, 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 7:30 pm, 10:30 pm.

TARA BANGLA
News Headlines (Bangla) at 5:30 pm, 7:30 pm.
Tara News (Bangla) at 8:30 pm, 11:30 pm.
Tara News Bangladesh (Bangla) at 9:30 pm.

BBC WORLD
Every hour on the hour

BTV

08:30 Live Telecast of the March Past by Combined Armed Force on the occasion of the Independence Day

12:15 *Shangbadpatrer Pata Thekey*

12:30 *Gaurab Gatha* (Compilation)

01:30 Bangla Feature Film Special Programme for Children

04:30 *Kobita Pather Ashor* (Independence Day Special)

05:10 *Desh Janopad*

06:10 Independence Day special musical programme

07:05 Independence Day special documentary: *Shadhinotar Ghoshok Zia*

08:25 *Protidin Bangladesh Swadhinota Mohan Swadhinota*

08:35 Special drama: *Mahubur Manchitra*

09:40 Independence Day Special Documentary *Teknat Thekey Tetulia*

10:25 Independence Day Special programme

11:20 Independence Day Special Television Reporting Satellite programmes

CHANNEL-i

09:45 *Trityo Matra* (Independence Day Special)

11:00 Music Plus (Independence Day Special)

12:20 Dhaka Guide

12:30 *Aaj Dupure O Citycell Tarokakothon*

01:00 *Ebong Cinemar Gaan*

01:35 *Shangbadpatrey Bangladesh*

01:50 Public Reaction

02:15 Independence Day Special Programme

03:00 Bangla Film: *Lal Shabuj* (Mahfuz Ahmed, Simla)

05:15 *Janopader Khabor*

06:30 Independence Day Special: *Sweet Kapot*

07:50 Special Drama: *Pap*, Script & Direction: Humayun Ahmed

09:35 Special Programme: *Shadhinotar 34*

Bachorey Amader Krishi Host & Director: Shykh Seraj

10:00 Special Musical Programme: *Desh Premier Gaan*

ntv

08:30 *Aajker Shakal*

09:00 Live Telecast of the March Past by Combined Armed Force on the occasion of the Independence Day

10:00 Independence Day Special Programme: *Birreshtha*

11:00 Special Programme: *Bangladesh Banshi*

11:30 Special Programme: *Shadhinota Tomar Jonyo*

01:30 Special Programme: *Bhaskariye*

02:30 Special Programme: *Dhrubalara*

03:15 Special Telefilm: *Meghbaloker Golpo*, Script & Direction: Ferdous Hasan; Cast: Zahid Hasan, Pricilla

INDEPENDENCE DAY SPECIAL

Shet Kapot Ar Kabyo
This special drama, featuring Ferdousi Majumdar, Tauquir Ahmed, Bonya Mirza, Anisur Rahman and written and directed by Sohel Arman, will be telecast on ntv at 9:00pm.

Lal Shabuj
Written & directed by Shahidul Islam Khokon, and featuring Mazfuz Ahmed & Shimla the feature film premieres on Channel i at 3:00pm

Deshpremer Gaan
Hosted by Asad Chowdhury and participated by Rizwana Chowdhury Bonya and Saadi Muhammad, the musical programme will be seen on Channel i at 10:00pm.

Kobita O Shadhinota
Hosted by Saiful Bari and Participated by Nirmalendu Gon, Fajal Shahabuddin, Ruby Rahman, Al Mujahidi the show will be telecast on ATN Bangla at 4:25pm.

Parveen, Litu Anam, Romana, Kushum, Shikdar
04:25 Gallery
05:15 *Itihaser Ei Diney*
05:20 *Alokpatri*

06:20 *Shubho Shondhya*
06:50 *Shonkskrity Ei Shoptaho*

08:15 Special Programme: *Shwapner Shabuj Shimana*, Producer:

Dipu Mahmud: Artistes: Manir Khan, Kanakchampa, Sohel, Riya
09:00 Special Drama: *Sweet Kapot Ar Kabya*

11:25 *Dindarpan*
12:00 Special Concert (Sabina Yasmeen, Kumar Bishwajit, Nagar Baul, LRB, Tishma and Asif)

ATN BANGLA

09:00 Live Telecast of the March Past by Combined Armed Force on the occasion of the Independence Day

10:00 Special Musical Programme: *Shurer Madhuri*

11:30 Special Programme for Children: *Amar Janmabhumi*

12:15 Special Bangla Film: *Bidroho Charidikey* (Riaz, Poppy, ajib, Humayun Fareedi)

03:50 Special Children's Programme: *Shadhinota tumi*

04:20 Special Recitation Programme: *Kobita O Shadhinota*

05:10 Special Programme on Women Freedom Fighters: *Ma O Muktiujdha*

05:45 *Jibon Jigyasha*

06:20 Special Programme: *Celluloid Uddin Potaka*

08:00 Special Musical Programme: *Amar Shadhinota*

08:30 Special Documentary: *Onkar*

09:00 Special Drama: *Andhokarer Gaan*

10:35 Special Musical Programme: *Pepsi Rock & Rhythm*

12:10 Special Bangla Film: *Bashira* (Manna, Rani, Rajib, Diidar)

HBO

9:00 Tremors 3: Back to Perfection

11:00 A Mighty Wind

1:00 Danle's Peak

3:15 Live From Baghdad

5:30 Bean

7:15 Only You

9:30 Half Past Dead

12:00 Tales From The Crypt 31: Creep Course

12:15 Presumed Innocent

STAR MOVIES

8:15 Madeline

9:45 Terror Peak

11:30 Bruce Almighty

1:15 Joy Luck Club

3:30 Bottle Rocket

5:10 League Of Extraordinary Gentlemen

7:00 Spartacus

8:30 Aliens

10:45 League Of Extraordinary Gentlemen

12:45 Snow Job

STAR WORLD

3:30 The Kumars At No. 42

4:00 Cops

4:30 Koffee With Karan

5:30 International England Vs Germany (S)

7:00 Asian Tour Weekly 2005 (T)

7:30 Super Centuries (T)

8:00 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers (England) Senior International England Vs Northern Ireland (L)

11:00 Asian World Cup Qualifiers 2006 FIFA World Cup: Saudi Arabia Vs Korea Republic Group A (S)

ESPN

7:00 Australia Tour of New Zealand 3rd Test Day 1 (L)

11:30 Cricket Gold (T)

2:30 Motorsport Asia (R)

3:00 ICC Cricket World (R)

3:30 Sportscenter Week In Review (T)

4:00 Hitz (R)

4:25 Sportscenter Weekend (T)

5:00 Nba Action (T)

5:00 Nba Basketball Indiana Pacers Vs Detroit Pistons (S)

7:30 Sportscenter Week In Review (R)

8:00 Australia Tour of New Zealand 3rd Test Day1 Highlights(S)

9:30 Cricket Gold (R)

STAR SPORTS

10:30 Football Locker Room (T)

11:00 Asian Tour: Indonesia Open Day Three(L)

2:00 Brazilian Football (R)

4:00 Football Asia (T)

4:30 Football Locker Room (R)

5:00 Euro Qualifiers (England) Under 21 International England Vs Germany (S)

7:00 Asian Tour Weekly 2005 (T)

7:30 Super Centuries (T)

8:00 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers (England) Senior International England Vs Northern Ireland (L)

11:00 Asian World Cup Qualifiers 2006 FIFA World Cup: Saudi Arabia Vs Korea Republic Group A (S)

ESPAN

7:00 Australia Tour of New Zealand 3rd Test Day 1 (L)

11:30 Cricket Gold (T)

2:30 Motorsport Asia (R)

3:00 ICC Cricket World (R)

3:30 Sportscenter Week In Review (T)

4:00 Hitz (R)

4:25 Sportscenter Weekend (T)

5:00 Nba Action (T)

5:00 Nba Basketball Indiana Pacers Vs Detroit Pistons (S)

7:30 Sportscenter Week In Review (R)

8:00 Australia Tour of New Zealand 3rd Test Day1 Highlights(S)

9:30 Cricket Gold (R)