



***Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra* was named Bangladesh Betar on December 6, 1971.**

were as important as the news bulletin. "The cooperation we got from the Bengali speaking people living in Calcutta was overwhelming," Lohani reminiscences. "There was a time, when we wanted to give our listeners a break from the old recorded songs, thus we were in need of some new inspirational set of songs. While we were looking for a lyricist, Gobinda Haldar, a low-income fellow living in Calcutta appeared like a saviour with two exercise books loaded with 24 to 30 songs. That is how we got the three revolutionary songs like *Mora ekti phool ke bachabo bole judhdho kori shur, Purbo digonte shurjo uthechhe, and Ek shagor rakter binimoye.*"

Radios have always served as a great source of power to transmit propaganda among the war-torn countries. Bangladesh could also recognize that radio broadcasting could motivate the freedom loving nations. News circulation was a crucial role of this radio centre.

Kamal Lohani defines the duty of the *shobdo shoinik* (the people who fought with words) as multi-faceted. "I was in charge of the news desk, but my work was not confined in news collecting and reading," he says. "We had to perform work whatever was required to do at that moment. Our workstation in Baliganj circular road, was nothing fancy, rather it was a small stuffy room. The recording studio was not soundproof, so outside noises and disruption were always there. We used to collect news by monitoring Voice of America, BBC, Pakistan radio, Akashbani and thus we used to broadcast 3 news bulletines in Bengali, English and Urdu thrice a day."

"Each and every day working with *Shwadhin Bangla Betar Kendra* was historically significant. From the early morning of 16 December as we started to sense victory, we had got the order of playing martial songs and circulating triumphant slogans. I am fortunate enough that I was entitled with the responsibility of writing and reading the news bulletin on our victory. The 1 minute news bulletin had only two sentences in it. The first sentence began with cursing the Pakistani arm forces stating that we won the battle. The following statement was about their surrendering to us. The news bulletin was followed by the victorious song *Bijoy nishan urchhe oi*, (song written by Shohidul islam and music composed by Shujeyo Shyam)," says the man who gave this historic piece of news to the nation.

Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra was adorned with a new name Bangladesh Betar as soon as Indian Government gave formal recognition to independent Bangladesh and its provisional government on December 6, 1971. On December 22, 1971 Bangladesh Betar started its new journey in newly born independent Bangladesh and helped to strengthen the spirit of the nation. ■