



Shaheen Samad, an internationally famous Bangladeshi living legend, is one of the torch bearers of Nazrul Geeti in Bangladesh. But she is mostly known for her contribution to the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, the radio station which inspired millions during the Liberation War in 1971. She joined *Bangladesh Mukti Sangrami Shilpi Shongstha* during the Liberation War, and with the other members, motivated the many freedom-fighters to fight for the nation with zeal. She received many awards for her outstanding contributions in the War of Liberation. The *Star Weekend* got the opportunity to talk to the historic singer and learn about her experiences during the period of 1971.



What was the first song of you that you sang publicly?
"Aji Modhur o Bashori Baaje", at the British Council. I was 13-years-old then. Mohammad Shah Jahan was on *Tabla*.

What was your most recent performance?
From the first day of the month till today, days are getting busier. Even today, I just returned from NTV after performing for a show.

Share some experiences as a singer of *Bangladesh Mukti Sangrami Shilpi Shongstha*-
We worked as "Shabda-Sainik" (those who inspire through the use of words) and tried to motivate the freedom fighters by singing *Gano Sangeet*, patriotic songs, Nazrul and Rabindra Sangeet to them. We were very young then and used to go to the camps to sing, as well as inspire the fighters. We all had the same goal- to establish a free nation.

What would you like to say to the young, aspiring singers of today?
The songs of war should be practised, preserved and spread across the nation by the young singers, so that they remain timelessly spirited. Know about Bangladesh, work for Bangladesh and represent Bangladesh internationally.

What are your dreams for today's Bangladesh?
I hope, in Bangladesh, women empowerment will be properly established soon, and illiteracy will be removed as early as possible. Our nation will go far with the positive changes.

— NILIMA JAHAN
PHOTO: RIDWAN ADID RUPON



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