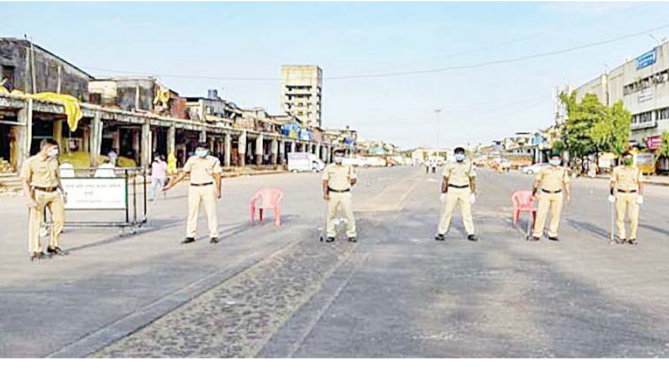


## #COVID-19

### Global Trust Amidst Pandemic

Policies introduced to contain outbreaks including restrictions, testing, and contact tracing, mitigated the perceived threat of the virus and reduced the public's sense of vulnerability and uncertainty.



In a week when the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has admitted to breaking Covid-19 lockdown rules, a new study has found that impartial, transparent and truthful government communications are fundamental for achieving and maintaining government trust during public health emergencies.

The research, led by the University of Portsmouth, found that in public health emergencies, governments must be accountable, act quickly, and establish frank and timely dialogue with the public to encourage trust, cooperation, and alleviate fear, says a report in the British Journal of Management.

Professor Jia Liu from Portsmouth Business School, Dr Yasir Shahab from Xijing University and Hafiz Hoque from The University of York explored how well the public-trusted government to take appropriate measures to combat



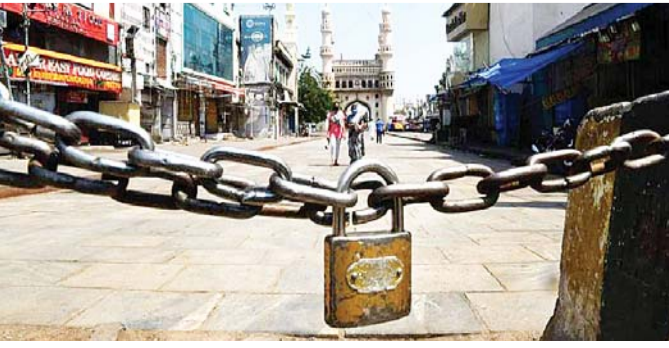
public health emergencies, and how this trust might impact them in preventing the spread of Covid-19.

The study, published by the British Journal of Management, analysed global data from the International Coronavirus Survey made up of 111,196 respondents across 178 countries between 20 March and 8 April 2020. This research provides the first global evidence that integrated government response policies in conjunction with containment health measures and economic relief are crucial to winning public trust and support.

The researchers found that the effectiveness of these measures and restrictions depended on cooperation from individuals, founded in public trust.

Professor Jia Liu said: "Trust has been researched extensively in different settings from diverse perspectives, however government measures and how they impact public trust have not been studied on a global scale, nor in the context of a public health emergency. We investigated what factors determined public trust when governments undertook counteractive measures at the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic, providing vital insights for managing the crisis and its aftermath.

"The *we are all in this together* mantra must never be forgotten and the spirit of common purpose must become the coordinated international responses to pandemic." "The creation of such a global alliance will empower countries in struggles against all future public emergencies, including threats to mankind posed by global warming."



Sheikh Mujib said that Mr Bhutto kept pressing him to enter into negotiations to retain some link, no matter how tenuous, between the two Pakistani regions. "I told him I had to know one thing first - that I am free or not?" Sheikh Mujib said. "If I am free, let me go. If I am not, I cannot talk." "You are free," he quoted Bhutto's saying, "but I need a few days before I can let you go." Despite the promise of freedom, Sheikh Mujib said, he did not discuss substantive matters with Mr Bhutto. At another point when Bhutto had been contending that the two wings were still united by law and tradition, Sheikh Mujib - reminding him that the Awami League won a national majority in the last election, the results of which were never honoured - said "Well if Pakistan is still one country, then you are not President and Chief Martial Law Administrator. I am."



Maj Chandrakant Singh Vrc (Retd) Military Historian

## #SANJAY-UVACH

At a later date what Sheikh Mujib told Schanberg was repeated by him to another very famous journalist, Gavin Young, of the London Observer. Gavin Young was present in Dacca during the war and was witness to the surrender negotiation between General Niazi and General Jacob, and also attended the famous lunch hosted by Niazi, about which mention was made in the Indian Parliament as the cause of delay in the signing of the surrender document.

About the Bhutto-Mujib meeting Gavin Young writes that Sheikh Mujib told him that Bhutto shamelessly tried to play the religious card with a hope to reunite the two countries and asked him to become the prime minister of a reunited Pakistan. At the same time blocking recognition of Bangladesh as an independent country and its entry into the Commonwealth and United Nations. Mujib told Gavin Young, "If Bhutto tries his tricks again I will take over Pakistan and rename it Bangladesh."

Confirming to Gavin Young that he was not joking about Bhutto, Mujib said, "But wait. You think I am joking about Bhutto but no. If he tries to join to stop us from joining the Commonwealth by insisting that East and West Pakistan are legally one nation, I could say 'all right, but I am the majority leader since I won the election. You are only president at the whim of the army, so democratically, I am the prime minister of Pakistan. I will appoint my people all over your provinces.'"

Returning to Schanberg's account: Bhutto told Mujib that when Yahya Khan was handing power to him, he said that his one great regret was that he had not killed Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and asked if he could finish this one piece of work". Mr Bhutto told Sheikh Mujib that the general offered to predate the papers so it would appear that the execution took place under him. Mr Bhutto refused. Sheikh Mujib said that the reason Bhutto refused to execute him was largely political. Mr Bhutto reasoned, he said that if the Bengali leader was executed, they would kill nearly one hundred thousand Pakistani soldiers who had surrendered in East Pakistan and then the people of the Punjab and North West Frontier Province - where most of the soldiers come from - would blame Mr Bhutto and rise against the Government.

Sheikh Mujib said that Mr Bhutto kept pressing him to enter into negotiations to retain some link, no matter how tenuous, between the two Pakistani regions. "I told him I had to know one thing first - that I am free or not?" Sheikh Mujib said. "If I am free, let me go. If I

am not, I cannot talk." "You are free," he quoted Bhutto's saying, "but I need a few days before I can let you go." Despite the promise of freedom, Sheikh Mujib said, he did not discuss substantive matters with Mr Bhutto. At another point when Bhutto had been contending that the two wings were still united by law and tradition, Sheikh Mujib - reminding him that the Awami League won a national majority in the last election, the results of which were never honoured - said "Well if Pakistan is still one country, then you are not President and Chief Martial Law Administrator. I am."

Curiously, on 7 January 1972, exactly ten months after Sheikh had made the declaration of Independence of Bangladesh in his famous speech at the Ramna Race Course, Bhutto came to see Sheikh for the third and last time. The Bengali leader said he told him, "You must free me tonight. There is no more room for delaying. Either free me or kill me."

Sheikh Mujib said Mr Bhutto replied that it was difficult to make arrangements at such short notice, but finally agreed to fly him to London. Sheikh Mujib said that on 8 January 1972, as Bhutto saw him off, he was still asking him to consider a political tie with West Pakistan. He was flown in a special PIA aircraft to London. After a short halt in London Mujib was flown in a Royal Air Force Comet C4 to Delhi. In Delhi Sheikh Mujib, wearing a black coat over a black suit with an open Nehru collar, was greeted and draped with garlands of marigolds by Mrs Indira Gandhi, President Giri along with other Indian dignitaries and members of the Bengali diplomatic mission in New Delhi. After inspecting a guard of honour the Indian Prime Minister gave a short welcome speech. Mrs Gandhi addressing Bangabandhu said, "His soul could not be imprisoned and inspired by him the people of Bangladesh liberated their



Yasser Arafat, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Muammar Gaddafi in an iconic image from 1974.



## Release of Bangabandhu (...2)

# ...And A Nation Was Born

During this war we decided to do three things, support the Mukti Bahini, stand by the people of Bangladesh, and secure the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman. We have kept our promise."

In response Sheikh Mujib gave a five minute speech in which he expressed gratitude to the Indian people and the magnificent Prime Minister for making possible this journey from darkness to light, from captivity to freedom, from desolation to hope.

Continuing he said, "my country and India would be bound in eternal friendship as brothers. The people of India stood by us as brothers in our darkest hour. The people of India gave refuge to millions of Bangladeshis at a time when they were themselves facing hardship. We will never forget." Present on the occasion were members of the Diplomatic Corps from twenty countries. Conspicuous by their absence were the American whose ambassador

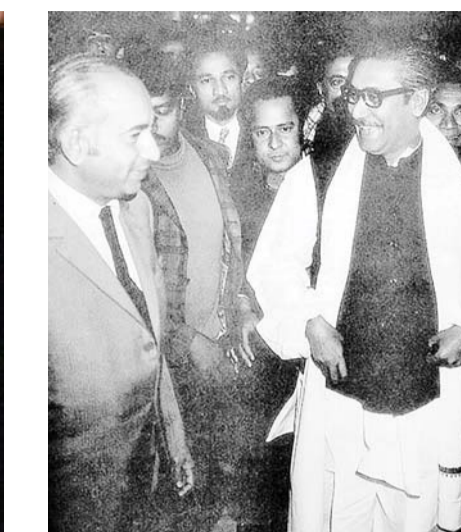
to Delhi Kenneth Keating had been instructed by Kissinger not to attend.

**Dacca, 10 January**  
During the 1971 Liberation War, I had been part of a group of soldiers and common people who had created history, in fact, we had created something more, a new nation Bangladesh, which had never before existed and the preceding chapters have been about that part. But this account is when I along with many others were mere witnesses and not perpetrators to history and even though our role was of a witness, just to witness such an event has been one of the most memorable events of my life. On 8th January 1972, we received a word of Mujib's intended release from prison, the news spread like wild fire, and the whole of Bangladesh exploded in a frenzy of celebration. There was firing of weapons in the air in jubilation by the Mukti Bahini as men and women were out in the streets celebrating, the atmosphere was even more electrifying than after the surrender on 16 Dec, when still afraid of the Pakistan Army no women came out on the streets, but now they came out in thousands and lakhs. Our Battalion was tasked to secure the airport and make sure that the millions of jubilant Bengalis who were expected to gather at the airport to receive their beloved leader were kept clear of the runway and did not create a stampede by rushing towards the aircraft bringing Mujib home when he landed. At the airport I also met Ziaur Rehman, Shafulullah, Khaled Musharraf and Rafiq ul Islam, all former Pakistan Army personnel, who had joined the freedom struggle and were now heroes of Liberation War. All of them were well known to me as they had been with my colleagues and friends in Tripura during the pre-war days, but where now senior officers in the Army of Bangladesh, during the war they had commanded sectors which were considered as equivalent

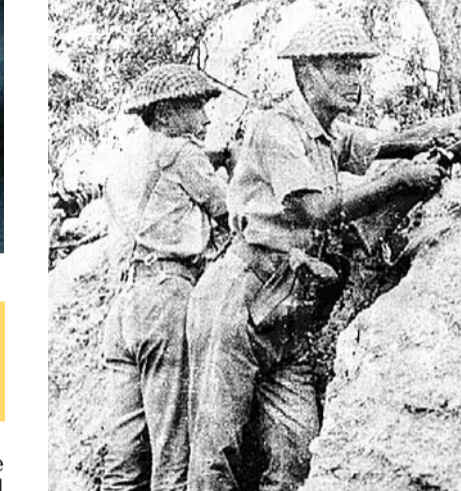


## International Playdate Day

If you're one of those people who believe that kids should go outside more often then this is the holiday for you. International Playdate Day is all about scheduling and making time for your kids to grow by playing outside. With the way technology is today, it's easy for kids to get caught up in their games. This holiday aims at bringing children and parents together through the act of playing and inspiring kids' imaginations.



Mujib, Bhutto talk on President's House lawn.



ing news but still we all heaved a sigh of relief knowing that he had been released and was safe. We still got no news from Delhi in spite of the fact that Mujib had been flown from London to Delhi in a Royal Air Force Comet 4C aircraft and had met Indira Gandhi in Delhi.

### Excited & Restless Crowd

The crowd too was getting restless and I too was getting worried for when you are made responsible for the safety of such an event and there is a million strong very excited and restless crowd one never knows what might happen. It was sometime after mid-day that we got a message that the aircraft carrying message would be arriving in about an hour's time, but it will not be an IAF plane but an RAF jet transport. This message got my goat, how the hell was the RAF Comet a fast passenger plane going to land on a runway which was badly cratered right in the middle reducing the usable part of the runway to half its length. After the bombing by our air force the Dacca air field could not even be used by the Pakistani Air Force F86 Sabre jets some of which were still in a serviceable condition.

It was when I was in this frame of mind when we heard the roar of a jet and looking upwards spotted the contrails made by the exhaust from the aircraft's engines. The pilot was now in communication with the control tower and he informed the tower that he was going to reduce his altitude and fly over the runway to get a good look at it. Soon he descended to about few hundred feet and flew over the length of the runway and then again climbed up a few thousand feet of altitude. We thought that finding the runway unusable he had decided to return to Delhi or Calcutta and from there Sheikh Mujib would come to Dacca in an IAF plane as per the original plan.

As if the tension about the arrival plans was not enough I got involved in a bit of a tiff with a senior Indian Officer Maj Gen Sircar. He had been appointed to the Advance Hq of Eastern Command which had only recently moved to Dacca. But that was not our concern for we received our orders only through our established chain of command which in my case was My Commanding officer Lt Col Himmeth Singh, above him Brigadier Commander Brig Mishra, then the Div Commander Maj Gen Gonzalves and finally the Corps Commander Gen Sagat Singh.

His orders as passed down to me through the well established chain of command were that no Indian Officers should be on the runway or take part in the reception of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman. Being an important event in their history he wanted the Sheikh and other Bengalis to feel that it was entire-

ly their show and under no circumstances should we present ourselves with even a hint of being a conquering and occupying army. We should not be seen throwing our weight around, Gen Sagat Singh himself included and all his subordinate formation commanders were given instructions to let the Bangladeshis be in the limelight, we would have ample occasions to meet and interact with the Sheikh later.

When Gen Sircar and a few officers of his team arrived I told them what my instructions were and that they should not go beyond the airport reception line. Gen Sircar and one other officer were permitted to join the reception committee. Gen Sircar returned spitting venom with his eyes and mumbling something which I am sure was something to the effect that he would sort me out. I was looking and junior to even carter even though he was a general and I a lowly major, there was little he could have done against me, he was only a staff officer and that too not a part of my chain of command.

But the aircraft instead of returning to India started to circle overhead. In the beginning I could not make out what he was up to, nor could anyone in the control tower enlighten us. In my heart of hearts though disappointed at the delay I really wished that the pilot would take the aircraft back to India and not endanger the Sheikh's life. Neither his newly independent nation nor India could afford to lose him and that too in an accident caused by a foolhardy pilot. The aircraft had been circling overhead for over an hour when it dawned on me that the pilot was jettisoning or burning excess fuel so that he could land on the truncated length of the runway. Having seen the craters and runway closely I was not convinced that the aircraft could be landed safely. Soon the Comet made one more low level approach and flew over the runway.

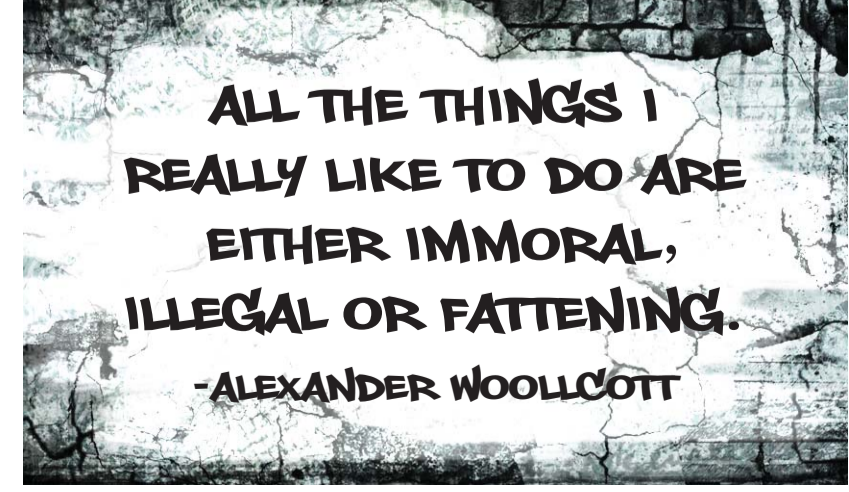
**Returning Leader & Hero**  
When I saw the aircraft bank and do a 360 degree turn, my heart was in my mouth and a prayer in my heart, at the same time curses the RAF pilot for risking the life of the Father of Bangladesh. The pilot managed to make a hard landing at the very edge of the runway, even though it was some distance from us we heard a loud thud. With engines at full reverse thrust and brakes applied hard causing the wheels on the undercarriage to heat and start emitting smoke, the aircraft rolled at high speed towards the bombed craters. A million hearts stopped and only started beating again when the aircraft came to a full stop less than a hundred feet from the crater on the runway.

The silent sighs of a million souls was like a thunderclap. Slowly the pilot turned the aircraft around and taxied it to the reception area where a guard of honour by the Bangladesh Army and the reception party of senior Bangladesh officials were waiting to meet and greet him. At one time I had been told that my battalion would have to provide the Guard of Honour, but Gen Sagat overruled the proposal saying that it would be more appropriate for the Bangladesh Army to do the honours to their returning leader and hero. Initially I was a bit disappointed but on second thoughts felt that it was the right decision.

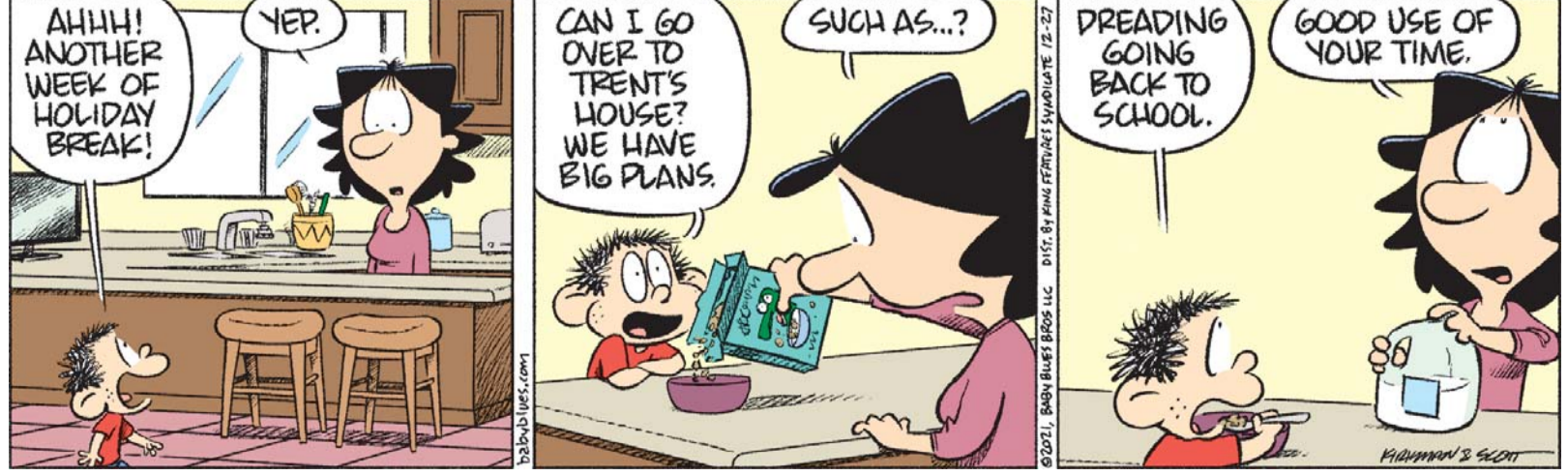


Sheikh Mujibur Rehman seen with then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Union Ministers Jagjivan Ram, Moinul Haque Choudhry, Swaran Singh and Chavan in Delhi on January 11, 1972.

## THE WALL



## BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

## ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman