

## TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Trim Tabs make subtle changes to a boat's trajectory.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

## Thinking Trim Tabs

In 1994 the technology world was turned upside down by an invention called the World Wide Web. In the eye of the storm were a handful of research organisations and companies, including Sun Microsystems, a computer maker where I was employed as a software engineer. The Internet explosion enabled Sun to grow quickly and career growth opportunities abounded. To move ahead, one had to have the proper training and thus it was that one day I found myself in a weeklong leadership course.

On the first day of class, the instructor introduced herself and her company, which was called Trim Tab. Then she explained the meaning of the name. The funny thing is this: there were many topics covered in that training, including how to lead and manage engineers and how to build cutting-edge products, but what I remember most from that class, after all these years, is the Trim Tab.

What is a Trim Tab? Trim Tabs have to do with setting directions. When sailing a ship, the captain sets direction with the rudder. When flying a plane, the pilot sets the direction using the rudder and the aileron. Now, rudders and ailerons are coarse mechanisms. Making changes with them create large changes in the trajectory which can be a lot of work. A Trim Tab, on the other hand, is a small, secondary fine-tuning mechanism in both boats and planes that makes ever so small adjustments to direction – either to compensate against wind and currents to maintain the original heading, or to approach a new heading.

Over time, the Trim Tab can have a substantial effect on where the boat or plane is going.

But here is the interesting bit. Our instructor described the Trim Tab as a metaphor for making changes in one's life. Thinking about it, I realised it is about a small change giving a big result. But, the change must be sustained over time for this to happen. And you have to know where it is you want to go.

Many profound changes in life can be made with the Trim Tab model. For example, spending twenty or thirty minutes a day exercising, and doing it for a long period of time, improves health and longevity. Other examples in areas of personal growth abound, such as improving one's writing or photography, or pursuing a goal or passion. Many times in life we need to reach a certain (minimum) level of competency before making a big jump. This competency can often be reached using small steps – by the Trim Tab approach.

It turns out my instructor did not invent the Trim Tab idea. Steven Covey's 1989 self-help bestseller *Seven Habits of Effective People* mentioned it. However, the originator seems to be the visionary Buckminster Fuller who also pictured individuals in the role of Trim Tabs. He said that small, determined groups of people can be catalysts for large changes. History is replete with examples of this.

Over the years, I have found the Trim Tab to be a powerful thinking and empowerment tool. I hope you do, too.

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INCREASING MONTHLY CONTRIBUTION FOR RETIREMENT BENEFITS  
MPO teachers reject govt decision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Teachers and employees of non-government MPO-enlisted schools and colleges yesterday demanded that the government withdraw its decision of increasing the amount of monthly contribution from their salaries for their retirement benefits and welfare allowances.

They also demanded pension facilities and other allowances like teachers and employees of the government institutions saying that they do the same amount of work like the government ones.

They threatened to wage a tougher

movement after September 7 if their demands are not met by then.

Before that, demonstrations in the form of human chains and protest rallies will be staged across the country under the banner of National Front of Teachers and Employees (NFTE), they said.

The announcement was made at a press conference organised by NFTE, a platform of 11 organisations of teachers and employees, in the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

According to NFTE, the ministry of education on March 15 last year came up with a "sudden" decision to increase the amount of the monthly

contribution to 10 percent from six percent.

Last month, the education ministry issued two gazette notifications, increasing the amount for retirement benefits to six and welfare allowance to four percent. According to the notifications, the decision is supposed to be effective from this month.

NFTE Chief Coordinator Principal Quazi Faruque Ahmed said the teachers and employees of the non-government institutions always face discrimination in terms of getting facilities from the

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Dhaka Skating Club and five sporting associations form a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday, protesting an alleged assault on their nine-year-old fellow skater Pias, inset, by a guard at Sheikh Russell Roller Skating Complex recently. The boy went there to take part in a practice session.

## UN allocates \$1m for landslide, flood victims

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has allocated US\$1 million for providing life-saving assistance to the people affected in deadly landslides and floods in June.

The landslides and severe flooding claimed 166 lives and left many injured in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, according to a press release of the UN in Dhaka yesterday.

The CERF allocation will be used to provide 1,500 temporary shelters and repair 1,500 homes damaged in the landslides. It will also support the cleaning of water sources, the provision of sanitation facilities, and the distribution of hygiene supplies.

The deadliest landslide-related disaster in recent Bangladeshi history left thousands of homes buried in mud and rubble, forcing families to seek refuge in temporary shelters. The most severely affected districts are Rangamati, Chittagong and Bandarban.

Following an assessment undertaken

in partnership with the Government of Bangladesh and international and national NGOs, the UN has developed a response plan which seeks US\$10 million to provide assistance to 51,000 people.

The CERF funding will cover part of the needs and will be provided to three UN agencies -- UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF -- to respond to needs in the most affected district of Rangamati.

"While this disaster was very localised, it has had a very severe humanitarian impact. The CERF funding will help UN Agencies working with affected communities to address immediate life-saving needs," UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh Robert Watkins was quoted as saying in the press statement yesterday.

In addition to the CERF funding, START Network, an international network of NGOs and its NGO-managed pooled fund for rapid humanitarian response, earlier allocated US\$250,000 to Action Aid and World Vision Bangladesh in support of the humanitarian response.

## Police await Farhad Mazhar's explanation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police now await an explanation from poet and columnist Farhad Mazhar regarding his "abduction" claim as they believe the incident was a "drama" staged by Farhad himself.

Golam Mostafa Rasel, additional deputy commissioner of police's Detective Branch, told The Daily Star yesterday that analyses of technical evidence and statements from two witnesses prove that "the writer was not abducted. Still, we are checking the evidence again to ensure a foolproof investigation."

In order to piece the puzzle together, police now need to get some questions answered by Farhad and his family members, he added.

With that objective, police on Wednesday "tried to communicate with him for his statement, but [his] doctor told us it wasn't the right time [for him] to talk," he said, adding that they now expect that the writer will come forward with his response.

Earlier on July 4, Farhad Mazhar in a judicial statement claimed that on early morning of July 3, a number of unidentified people "abducted" him, minutes after he came out of his Adabar home in the capital to buy medicines. His family members later filed a case with Adabar Police Station.

Around 11:30pm the same day, more than 18 hours after he went missing, a joint team of police and Rapid Action Battalion found Farhad on a Dhaka-bound bus of Hanif Paribahan at Noapara in Jessore.

In his statement, the writer also said that the unidentified people took him to Khulna by a microbus and released him

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The mid-lane of the road below Moghbazar-Mouchak flyover near the FDC is being used as an extension of adjacent automobile workshops. Other businesses there use the road as their parking space too. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Numbers on the rise yet hurdles remain

UNB, Dhaka

Though the number of female journalists is increasing, there are still challenges which need to be addressed and overcome.

According to an October 2016 report by senior journalist Shahnaz Munni, women journalists in Bangladesh media houses account for only 5 percent in print media and 25 percent in broadcast media.

Also, the total members of the Jatiya Press Club are now 1,252 and of those women account for only 74, said General Secretary of Jatiya Press Club Farida Yasmin.

Nusrat Jahan Audety, a sub-editor at Dainik Amar Din, a national daily, said women are interested to join this profession as they think it is a better medium to get connected with people and serve society.

But they do not get proper recognition of their good works from the colleagues and offices unlike their counterparts.

Farzana Rupa, a special Correspondent at Ekattor TV, a private news television channel, said the presence of women journalists are visibly increasing but the number is still much less than their male counterparts.

"Though the number of women journalists is low, their successes are noteworthy, which is inspiring the new generation of women to join the profession," she said.

Regarding policymaking, Farzana said there is no visible representation of women journalists yet at that level, and this is a great lacking.

"Female journalists are not given the opportunity to hold the policymaking positions though they are capable or sometimes better skilled than their male counterparts," Rupa observed.

She said the owners and policymakers of the media houses need to ensure safe and secure work environment for women

journalists and provide training to make them aware about their safety in emergency situation.

Angur Nahar Monty, a joint news editor at News24 TV, said media houses need to take adequate measures for providing skill development training to female journalists.

Monty, also the coordinator of Women Journalists' Network, Bangladesh, said female journalists have to manage both home and office. "So, the office has to understand that they are not helping their female colleagues rather it is their right."

Monty said many times they see lots of girls leave the profession in the middle of their journey for various reasons. "Instead of giving up, female journalists should take the challenge to survive. They'll have to fight

back by being skilled and competent using their merit," she said.

Ekushey TV CEO Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul said the number of female journalists is increasing notably in recent days. "There was a time when female journalists worked in some particular beats or in the news desk but now the situation has improved a lot. We've overcome many problems of female journalists like night-shift work and transportation problems," he said.

Bulbul, also the president of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), said still there are problems over gender issue in the media houses though they have achieved a lot.

Regarding maternity leave, General Secretary of Jatiya Press Club Farida Yasmin said, "Maternity leave should be given for the sake of society and civilisation, and there shouldn't be any confusion over the leave."

Asked why the number of female members of the press club is so low, Farida said, "The number is less because their number in the profession as a whole is much less than that of men."

## WOMEN IN JOURNALISM