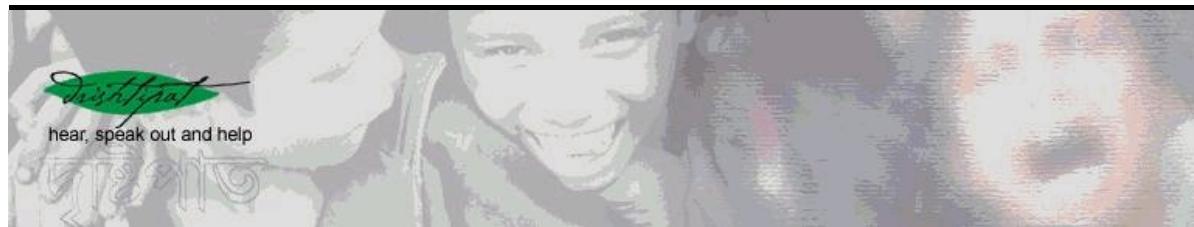


# Drishtipat Writers' Collective

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[ABOUT THE WRITERS' COLLECTIVE](#)



## About the Writers' Collective

We live around the world, but share a common home— Bangladesh. We are like-minded people with diverse opinions. We write for a democratic polity, a liberal society and better living for all. We believe that not only is pen mightier than the sword, it is also a more civilized and effective instrument for changing the world.

We had been writing individually, and felt that by writing together, we could better provide independent voices and make ourselves heard— so the Collective was born. "Drishtipat" has served as a venue for our writing, hence the name.

This blog is the archive of all our published articles. Readers will find articles on issues relating to politics, economy, human rights, international affairs and issues of current development discourse.

**Arif Syed:** Arif Syed works in IT Management for a large university in New York. In his free time he likes to read about the history, politics and culture of Bengal. He is also interested in the discussions of individualism, secularism, multinationalism and regional integration.

**Asif Saleh:** Asif is a technologist, human rights activist and a writer. Even though he is a firm believer of action rather than endless discussion, he is involved with talkshops like this because only through these channels and the blogs, he had the privilege to meet many multi-talented young Bangladeshis worldwide with whose help he is able to run Drishtipat, the organization of young changemakers. He has a bachelors degree in Computer Science and an MBA in management and works as an executive director at an international investment bank.

**Faisal Gazi:** Faisal was born in Bangladesh and brought up in Liverpool, Dhaka and London. He studied civil engineering in Leeds University where he came politicised upon coming into contact with the writings of George Orwell, Christopher Hitchens and Vladimir Nabokov. He was involved with the politics of anti-racism and the far-left in the 1980s, followed by associations with Islamic mysticism, anarchism and rave music. He has lived and worked in various countries in jobs varying from editor to project manager to van driver. He currently works in London as a software architect for a financial corporation. His areas of interest are religion and religious identity, race, multiculturalism and technology. He writes in various capacities for the defence of secularism, free speech and democracy and against the growing culture of religious supremacism.

### Farhad Mahmud

**Fariha Sarawat:** Fariha Sarawat is a communications specialist and is currently working for Save the Children.

**Jalal Alamgir:** Jalal Alamgir is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. His work is on democratic/authoritarian politics and globalization, spanning the South Asian region, including Bangladesh, India, and Burma. He has held research appointments at Brown

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University, Columbia University, the Center for Policy Research (New Delhi), CEPRA (Colombo), and has consulted for the United Nations. Jalal also writes regularly in different media venues: newspapers, current affairs magazines, literary magazines, and blogs.

**Jyoti Rahman:** Jyoti believes in individual freedom, participatory democracy and internationalism. He wants to smash the sorry scheme of things around him and remould it to his heart's desire (he read Khayyam when young). But he also thinks that ideas are much more powerful than vested interests (he also read Keynes in his salad days). That, and the fact that he lacks any practical skills, is why he spends most of his waking hours writing something or other.

**Mashuqur Rahman:** In his "real" life, Mash is a software architect and project lead. He works at a small federal contractor in Arlington, Virginia. He has lived in the Washington DC suburbs most of his adult life. He graduated from Vassar College in 1989 with a degree in Mathematics. He has been a political and foreign policy junkie. Ironically, almost everyone he used to argue politics with in college now works for either conservative think tanks or conservative politicians. He on the other hand tends to be liberal in his views.

His heart has always been in Bangladesh and he tries to stay in touch by visiting relatives there when he can. He runs a personal blog where he writes mostly about American foreign policy. He tries to post about Bangladesh every now and then as a way of introducing it to the American readers.

**Mridul Chowdhury :** Mridul Chowdhury is the CEO of a global tele-health company called ClickDiagnostics, which was born out of Harvard and MIT in 2008, after winning MIT's 100K Entrepreneurship Competition in the Development Track. ClickDiagnostics is currently focusing its operations in Africa and South Asia. In his prior work-life, he has worked in Bangladesh as a Consultant for UNDP, Ministry of Planning and Bangladesh Enterprise Institute. He is also a co-founder and former Executive Director (a.i.) of D.Net, the largest IT-for-Development NGO in Bangladesh with operations across the country. He was also a part of the core research team behind the Global IT and National Competitiveness Report published jointly by Harvard University and World Economic Forum in 2002.

In a parallel life, he is a filmmaker – his co-directed film Deshantori (<http://www.deshantori.com>) has won numerous national/ international recognitions in film festivals, including nomination for Best Director of Documentary in the Asian First Films Festival held in Singapore in 2007. He is currently working on a long-term film project on looking at 1971 from the perspective of a 'global' struggle. He is also a frequent contributor to the Daily Star and Executive Times in Bangladesh on issues of politics, economics and youth engagement. Mridul was selected as a Dean's Fellow to pursue a Masters degree in Public Administration/ International Development at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, which he completed in 2008. He has a Bachelors Degree from the University of Texas at Austin with majors in Economics, Mathematics and Political Science and minor in Computer Science.

**Naeem Mohaiemen** works on art and technology projects.

**Rumi Ahmed :** Rumi grew up in middle class Dhaka and was possibly motivated by a very politically conscious family to get involved in grass roots political foray while he was still in high school. Later as he entered medical college, he again unintentionally got embroiled with turbulent student politics and the restlessness of young Bangladesh. Within six weeks of his enrolment, one night he found himself caught between a gun fight of two warring groups of students allied to two feuding national political parties. That night, all of his belongings, including his books, were burnt into ashes. Over the following six years, his room would be burnt twice more, two of his good friends would lose their lives and too many of them would seriously lose focus and the sense of

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priority.

Rumi started writing while at medical college and writes mostly to vent his raw emotions. He moved to the US in late 1995, went through post graduate medical training at NYU/ Mount Sinai School of Medicine, Wayne State University School of Medicine and is now a specialist physician and an Assistant Professor at a major midwestern medical school. Rumi plans to restrict his formal public writings on healthcare reforms for Bangladesh.

**Syeed Ahamed :** Syeed is a public policy analyst by training. He holds liberal views as he writes on political, social and economic issues. His primary research interests include governance, public management, macro economy, and trade.

**Tazreena Sajjad :** Tazreena Sajjad is a PhD candidate at American University in Washington DC. She works on issues of transitional justice, war crimes, impunity and political reconciliation. She also works in the field of gender and conflict and specifically looks at women in guerilla warfare and their roles in peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction.

She graduated from the Nordic United World College in Norway and completed her bachelors from Macalester College in Political Science and International Relations. She holds a Masters degree in International Peace and Conflict Resolution from American University. In between her degrees, she worked in the field of democracy- building with the South Asia division in National Democratic Institute and later on in human rights violations and law with Survivors' Rights International and had a stint in Israel/Palestine focusing on the issues of refugees and the impact of occupation. Before starting her PhD program, and also during, she was in Afghanistan working on legal education and human rights law.

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