

Prez hosts Amitav Ghosh as writer-in-residence July 2016



Dr Amitav Ghosh

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New Delhi: New York and Goa have long been author Amitav Ghosh's homes. But from Sunday (10.07.2016), Ghosh will have a new base for five days: **Rashtrapati Bhavan**.

The sprawling Presidential Estate — the second largest such building after the new President's Palace at Ankara in Turkey — has been hosting writers, artists, scientists, and even teachers as a part of its In-Residence programme since 2013.

"My wife and I received an invitation from President's press secretary Venu Rajamony. I think it's a very interesting initiative and a great privilege as well. We were honoured to accept the invitation," Ghosh said in an email to Hindustan Times.

Regarded as **(our inspirational DU Visitor) President Pranab Mukherjee's pet project**, as many as 140 personalities have been part of the programme so far.

However, Ghosh and his **wife Deborah Baker** will be the first to stay in the guest wing of Rashtrapati Bhavan — the coveted section which is normally only opened for Heads of States like Russian President Vladimir Putin. Other guests are usually accommodated in different guest houses of the Presidential Estate. "I have not done many writer's residencies as I generally prefer to write at my own desk. **This is certainly by far the grandest circumstances that I (or any other writer) could wish to be in.** We are very much looking forward to it," Ghosh told HT.

The Residency programme began in December 2013 with one of the country's best contemporary painters MP Jogen Choudhury.

Sculptor Subodh Gupta and artist Paresh Maity have also participated in the programme.

Rajamony underlined that there is no compulsion to do anything in the In-Residence programme. The artists or writers are not required to gift their work produced during the stay.

But the award-winning author said he hopes "to finish a short piece," though he added, "I am sure most of my time will be spent wandering around the buildings and the garden, trying to take it all in."

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