**Amitav Ghosh – Life, Work & Legacy**

**Early Life & Academic Background**

* **Born:** 11 July 1956, Calcutta (now Kolkata), India [Encyclopedia Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Amitav-Ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amitav_Ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* Grew up across India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Iran, influenced by his diplomat father’s postings [Encyclopedia Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Amitav-Ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[GradeSaver](https://www.gradesaver.com/author/amitav-ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* Earned his **BA (1976)** and **MA (1978)** from the University of Delhi, followed by a **PhD in Social Anthropology** from the University of Oxford in 1982 [Encyclopedia Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Amitav-Ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[GradeSaver](https://www.gradesaver.com/author/amitav-ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* Taught at institutions including Delhi University, the American University in Cairo, Columbia University, Queens College (CUNY), and Harvard (from 2004), before transitioning to full-time writing [Encyclopedia Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Amitav-Ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[GradeSaver](https://www.gradesaver.com/author/amitav-ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

**Fictional Works & Major Novels**

* **The Circle of Reason** (1986): His debut novel, blending fable and picaresque elements; won France’s **Prix Médicis (étranger)** [Encyclopedia Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Amitav-Ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[amitavghosh.com](https://amitavghosh.com/about/biography/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Wikipedia](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amitav_Ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* **The Shadow Lines** (1988): Family saga across generations and national boundaries; earned the **Sahitya Akademi Award** and **Ananda Puraskar** [amitavghosh.com](https://amitavghosh.com/about/biography/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Wikipedia](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amitav_Ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* **The Calcutta Chromosome** (1995): A sci-fi-inflected novel exploring alternate histories of malaria’s discovery; won the **Arthur C. Clarke Award (1997)** [Encyclopedia Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Amitav-Ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[amitavghosh.com](https://amitavghosh.com/about/biography/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Wikipedia](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amitav_Ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* **The Glass Palace** (2000): Pan-Asian historical epic; was withdrawn from the Commonwealth Writers' Prize in protest over the language criteria [GradeSaver](https://www.gradesaver.com/author/amitav-ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Wikipedia](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amitav_Ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* **The Hungry Tide** (2004): Set in the Sundarbans, focusing on marginalized lives amidst ecological vulnerabilities [Encyclopedia Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Amitav-Ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[GradeSaver](https://www.gradesaver.com/author/amitav-ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* **Ibis Trilogy**:
  + *Sea of Poppies* (2008) – Shortlisted for Man Booker, won Crossword and Golden Quill Awards, and the Tagore Literature Award [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sea_of_Poppies?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
  + *River of Smoke* (2011) – Shortlisted for the Man Asian Literary Prize [Wikipedia](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amitav_Ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
  + *Flood of Fire* (2015).
* **Gun Island** (2019): A contemporary novel weaving myth, identity, and climate anxieties [Encyclopedia Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Amitav-Ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* **Jungle Nama** (2021): A graphic verse adaptation of the Bon Bibi legend from the Sundarbans, illustrated by Salman Toor [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jungle_Nama?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

**Nonfiction & Essays**

* **In an Antique Land** (1992): Blends travel memoir, history, and cultural detective work in Egypt [Encyclopedia Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Amitav-Ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* Other essay collections include *Dancing in Cambodia*, *The Imam and the Indian*, *Incendiary Circumstances* [amitavghosh.com](https://amitavghosh.com/about/biography/?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* **The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable** (2016): A powerful intervention on our cultural failure to narrate climate catastrophe [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Derangement%3A_Climate_Change_and_the_Unthinkable?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* **The Nutmeg’s Curse** (2021): An ecological and colonial history of the Banda Islands, blending narrative and research [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Nutmeg%27s_Curse?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* **Smoke and Ashes: Opium’s Hidden Histories** (2023): Historical account of the opium trade and colonial legacies [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smoke_and_Ashes?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

**Honors & Recognition**

* **Padma Shri** (2007) [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amitav_Ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[GradeSaver](https://www.gradesaver.com/author/amitav-ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* **Dan David Prize** (2010), shared with Margaret Atwood [amitavghosh.com](https://amitavghosh.com/about/biography/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[American Academy of Arts and Sciences](https://www.amacad.org/person/amitav-ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* **Blue Metropolis Grand Prix** (2011) [amitavghosh.com](https://amitavghosh.com/about/biography/?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* **Tagore Literature Award** (2012) for *Sea of Poppies* [amitavghosh.com](https://amitavghosh.com/about/award/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sea_of_Poppies?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* **Jnanpith Award** (2018): First English-language Indian writer to receive India’s highest literary honor [Encyclopedia Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Amitav-Ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[amitavghosh.com](https://amitavghosh.com/about/biography/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[The Hindu](https://www.thehindu.com/books/books-authors/amitav-ghosh-conferred-jnanpith-award/article27892765.ece?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* **Utah Award in Environmental Humanities** (2018) [amitavghosh.com](https://amitavghosh.com/about/biography/?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* **Erasmus Prize** (2024): For imaginative engagement with climate crisis [amitavghosh.com](https://amitavghosh.com/about/award/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[American Academy of Arts and Sciences](https://www.amacad.org/person/amitav-ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* Honorary doctorates and multiple lifetime achievement awards [amitavghosh.com+1](https://amitavghosh.com/about/biography/?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
* Named one of the "most important global thinkers of the decade" by *Foreign Policy* (2019) [amitavghosh.com](https://amitavghosh.com/about/biography/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[American Academy of Arts and Sciences](https://www.amacad.org/person/amitav-ghosh?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

**Recent News**

* Amitav Ghosh has been chosen to contribute a manuscript to the **Future Library project** in Oslo—a text to remain unread until 2114, reflecting his ecological and temporal sensibility [The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2025/aug/13/next-manuscript-amitav-ghosh-sealed-89-years-future-library-oslo?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

**At a Glance: Quick Facts**

| **Aspect** | **Highlights** |
| --- | --- |
| **Born** | 1956, Calcutta |
| **Education** | BA/MA (Delhi), PhD in Social Anthropology (Oxford) |
| **Fiction** | *The Shadow Lines*, *Ibis Trilogy*, *Gun Island*, etc. |
| **Non-Fiction** | *The Great Derangement*, *Nutmeg’s Curse*, *Smoke and Ashes* |
| **Themes** | Colonialism, climate change, identity, migration, myth |
| **Honors** | Padma Shri, Jnanpith, Erasmus Prize & more |
| **Current Highlight** | Manuscript sealed until 2114 in Future Library project |