

# DISTURBING FORCES AT WORK IN DELHI



Ashwin Sanghi is out with the second book in the 'Private India' series.

THERE'S an overwhelming sense of dread in the first chapter of *Private Delhi* (Random House; ₹399). The killer is waiting at the victim's house, filling a bathtub with cold water and ice, when he hears the tell-tale signs of someone at the door. Soon, the victim is overpowered and placed inside the icy shroud of the tub. He is afraid and has no idea what's happening to him but the killer — a fine conversationalist — fills in the gaps. The entire episode is free of gore (that comes in later in the novel) but the killer's dialogue at the end is just as disturbing. "Are you familiar with a procedure called enucleation?" he asks the victim, leaving us, the reader, full of dread.

*Private Delhi*, the second novel born of Ashwin Sanghi and James Patterson's literary partnership, sails along the unsettling seas of organ harvesting in Delhi. The tale is imaginary but reality, unfortunately, is just as macabre.

**'Private Delhi' sails along the unsettling seas of organ harvesting in Delhi**

By Srijani Ganguly

"Frankly, I imagined almost nothing. Fact, as usual, turned out to be stranger than fiction," says Sanghi, adding, "I knew absolutely nothing about the underground organ trading network. Luckily for me, one of my contacts in the police force was able to put me in touch with a tout who was happy to share methods and prices so long as he remained anonymous. Similarly, some of the medical procedures that have been described required the help of a surgeon. The stuff that appears regarding the underground wiki is real. Accessing TOR (The Onion Router) is straightforward — you simply need to download the software. Once this is installed, accessing the hidden wiki is child's play. I tried it for myself and was repulsed by what I saw."

Santosh Wagh, the protagonist, too is repulsed by it all. His head is still reeling from the events of the last book (*Private India*) due to which he quit his job in Mumbai and shifted to Delhi, when he gets swept into the organ harvesting case.

Like Wagh, his creators too faced a few challenges in the course of the book. Sanghi explains, "I think that our second outing together has been more challenging than the first. The first book, *Private India*, had elements of mythology in it. This fascinated James Patterson tremendously. *Private Delhi* has none of that. It is much more like the other books in the Private series. Hence, the contribution of James Patterson to quickening the pace and magnifying the suspense has been tremendous. The one area that both of us were fascinated by was the interplay between business, politics and media. That comes across very clearly in the plot."

Don't go just by the author's testimony though. Read the book, and find it out for yourself.