

Of Chanakya's legacy...

Mumbai-based author Ashwin Sanghi was in town, for the Chennai launch of his second novel - Chanakya's Chant. We catch up with him...

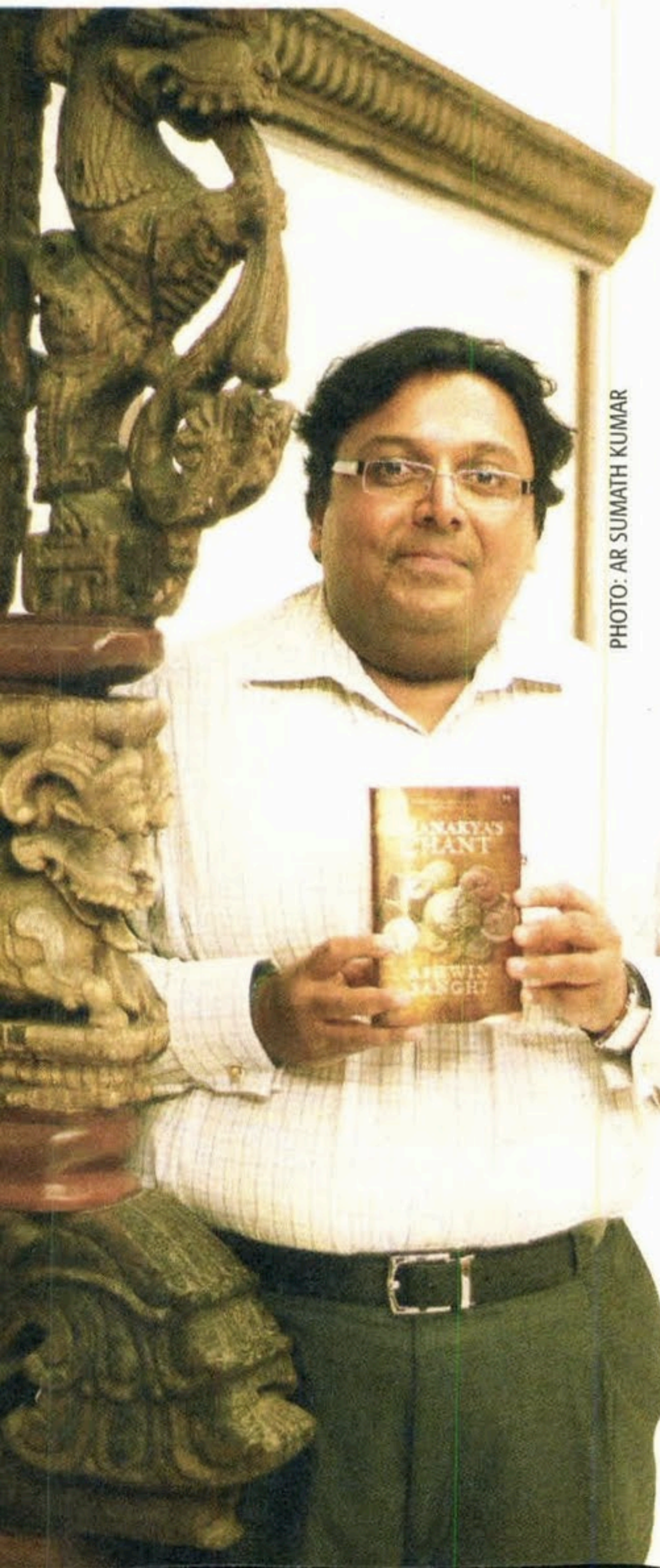


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More often than not, we're usually busy doing something else when opportunity knocks; an eventuality that explains why one is encouraged to have big ears and listen closely all day long. For Mumbai-based businessman-by-day-and-author-by-night Ashwin Sanghi, opportunity came in the guise of his wife, who, while on a family vacation to Goa, egged Ashwin on to begin exploring his creative and literary side. That was in 2006. Today, Ashwin has two novels to his name - The Rozabal Line and Chanakya's Chant - as well as the distinction of being, possibly, the first Indian English author to explore truly local flavours in the thriller genre.

"I was (and still am) a businessman," Ashwin declares, as we settle down for a quick chat before the Chennai launch of his second novel - Chanakya's Chant - a gripping narrative of the machinations of two king-makers separated by over 3,000 years, "However, about eight or nine years ago, once my the business itself

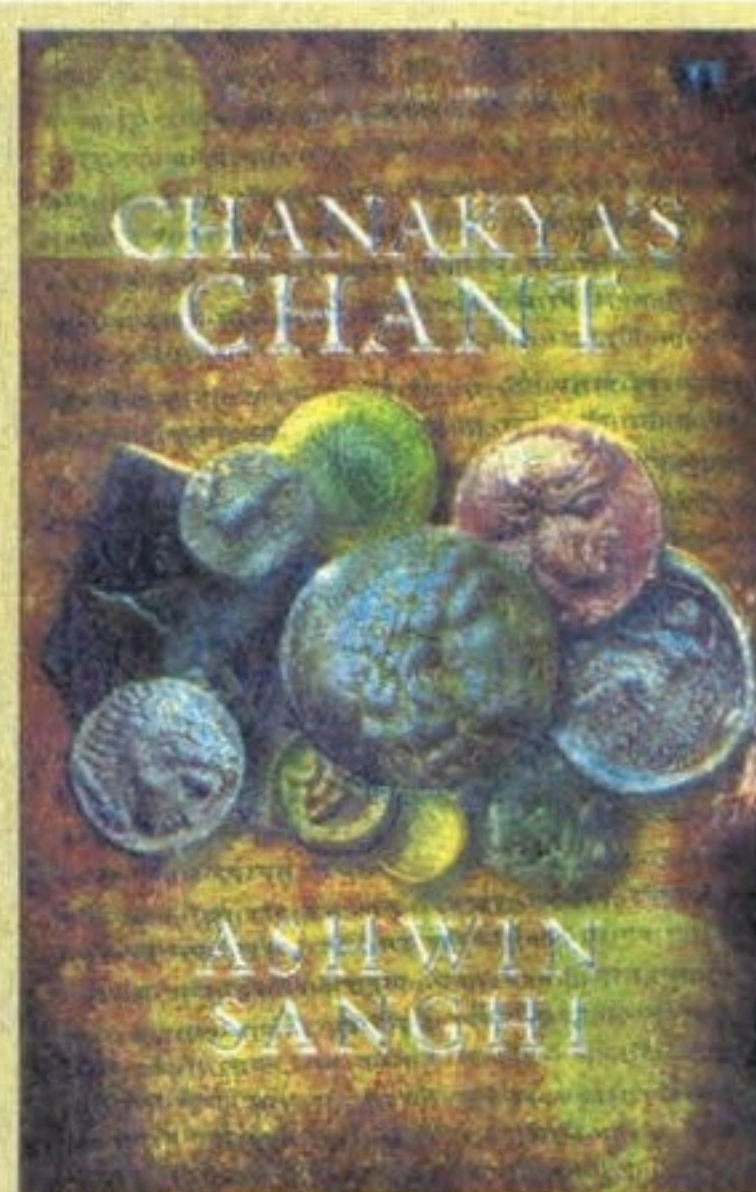
was stable and my family cared for, I began wondering if there was something I could do for myself... something that I was truly passionate about." He was at something of a crossroads in life, unsure of what he

wanted to do and where he wanted to go; a feeling that most of us have experienced at some time or the other. In any case, he did as his wife suggested.

Over the course of these two novels, Ashwin has carved out a position amongst the array of Indian English authors that is all his own. "For me," he explains, "life is all about mystery, conspiracy, secrets and history! That is a sentiment that finds expression in my books. Additionally, I believe that patterns in history repeat themselves, which is the fundamental concept behind my latest book."

"I must admit that I probably have a very distinct style of working. To begin with, once I have a story idea, I sit down with a spreadsheet (I am, after all, a businessman!), on which I detail every incident of the plot - events, characters, connecting threads between chapters...

everything! I know that some authors concentrate on creating the perfect characters; I'd rather create the perfect plot!" Ashwin concludes.



Chanakya steadied himself, clambered up the branch and swiftly untied the shikha. As gently as possible, he lifted the head, cradled it in his arms... tears were in full flood and rained upon his father's skull.

Excerpts from the book