

# 'I LOVED READING HISTORY IN SCHOOL'



Ashwin Sanghi

Their books are illuminating, he says, and clearly depict the amount of research these authors put into each novel.

He's also all praise for Ramachandra Guha's history of post-independence India. In fact, he says, the seeds of his next book have

already been sown. He's fast-forwarding his travels from ancient history to work on a novel based on a businessman in India, in 1946, on the cusp of Independence.

"My first work was rooted in theology, the second in politics and the third in mythology. This one will

focus on something I already have a footing in... business."

Given his rigour, you know he won't keep you waiting eternally for the next chronicle. It may be history, but for Ashwin, it's very much a day-to-day affair.

Prema Naraynen

**A**shwin Sanghi must be a very disciplined man. How else can one be a full-time businessman as well as author of three best-selling historical potboilers, all at the same time? He laughs out loud when you ask him how he manages to work two full-time jobs, and says, "I set aside time every weekday to write, from 5 to 9 am in the morning, but the rest of the day is spent at the office."

It's that sense of organization, coupled with a sparkling imagination, that has propelled Sanghi to success. Ashwin says he loved history in school, and often picked up books supplementary to his text books. More than the dates that the pedantic texts focussed on, he loved reading about the people — the kings and the queens. "If I were given the option to teach history," he says, "there are a hundred things I'd do differently."

In fact, it was in school that he picked up on how history could be jazzed up to make the characters come alive. While reading Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* as a literature text book, it moved him to discover that the events described in the play had actually occurred in history, and he felt that the words rang very true.

However, he's emphatic about the fact that it is storytelling and spinning a good yarn that drives him, not dexterity with language. The plain, straightforward style of writing of authors like Arthur Hailey and Robin Cook is what he adheres to.

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