

## Private India, public party



Prasoon Joshi, Meru Gokhale and Ashwin Sanghi

**THAT'S** the thing about Mumbai: never a dull moment. And so this Sunday, while the pillars of Bollywood had gathered for a charity football match, less than a mile away, the pillars of Mumbai society had converged for the launch of a standout book.

Held at the Rooftop of the Trident to the accompanying pop of champagne corks and much applause, was the official launch of 'Private India', the almost certain-to-be blockbuster, written by the internationally celebrated author James Patterson, and India's own Ashwin Sanghi, whose previous works have been no slouches on the best seller lists either.

Part of the suspense-thriller series penned by the USA-based Patterson in collaboration with local authors from different countries, the newest tome is set in Mumbai and promises to bring in all the flavour and fantasia of Maximum City.

But, for all the afternoon's hurrahs, both its chief guest lyricist Prasoon Joshi and Sanghi injected a note of thoughtfulness and modesty in their speeches. Joshi began his by crediting Divine Intervention for his creativity.

Sanghi, on his part, expanded on the themes of modesty and self-deprecation. "My biggest talent as a child was my ability to tell lies," he said to many guffaws. "What could be better for a story teller?"

But, aside from this, the afternoon was marked by high spirits and genuine good cheer for the Sanghis, especially the author's parents Manju and Mahendra — much loved on the social circuit.

Incidentally, Sanghi made a particular mention of Penguin Random House's statuesque new Publishing Director Meru Gokhale, whom he thanked for being the real inspiration behind the book.

Forget books, pedigree like hers can inspire lit genres!