

# —glam-sham—

## Epic of the modern era

Historical and mythological novels are back with a contemporary twist. The readers love this new trend

complex one because, by and large, young people think of history as boring and regressive. However, as they generally also want information in small and easily digestible packages, historical fiction offers an easy route in," she explains.

Her thoughts are mirrored by musician Nathan Harris who says, "I have always been fascinated with Indian mythology and historical characters. It is more fun to read about them in a novel format than some boring history textbook!"

Among other novels that have attracted the young and the restless is Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel* which also juxtaposes contemporary and the *Mahabharata*. *Mrityunjay*, a look through Karna's eyes, and *Yajnaseni* — Draupadi's take on what happened.

Ashwin believes the curiosity of the youth is what keeps these novels on the bookstands. "I do believe, however, that there is curiosity among the youth about ancient historical characters. The fact that my novel attempts to correlate a character with the messy and murky nature of the modern Indian political landscape is what may have struck a chord."

Jaishree adds, "Young people are more forgiving, I've found, of the 'elasticity' offered by historical fiction while older people tend to be more purist in their views."

Whether it is the contemporary track or just curiosity, this definitely seems to be the flavour of the season.



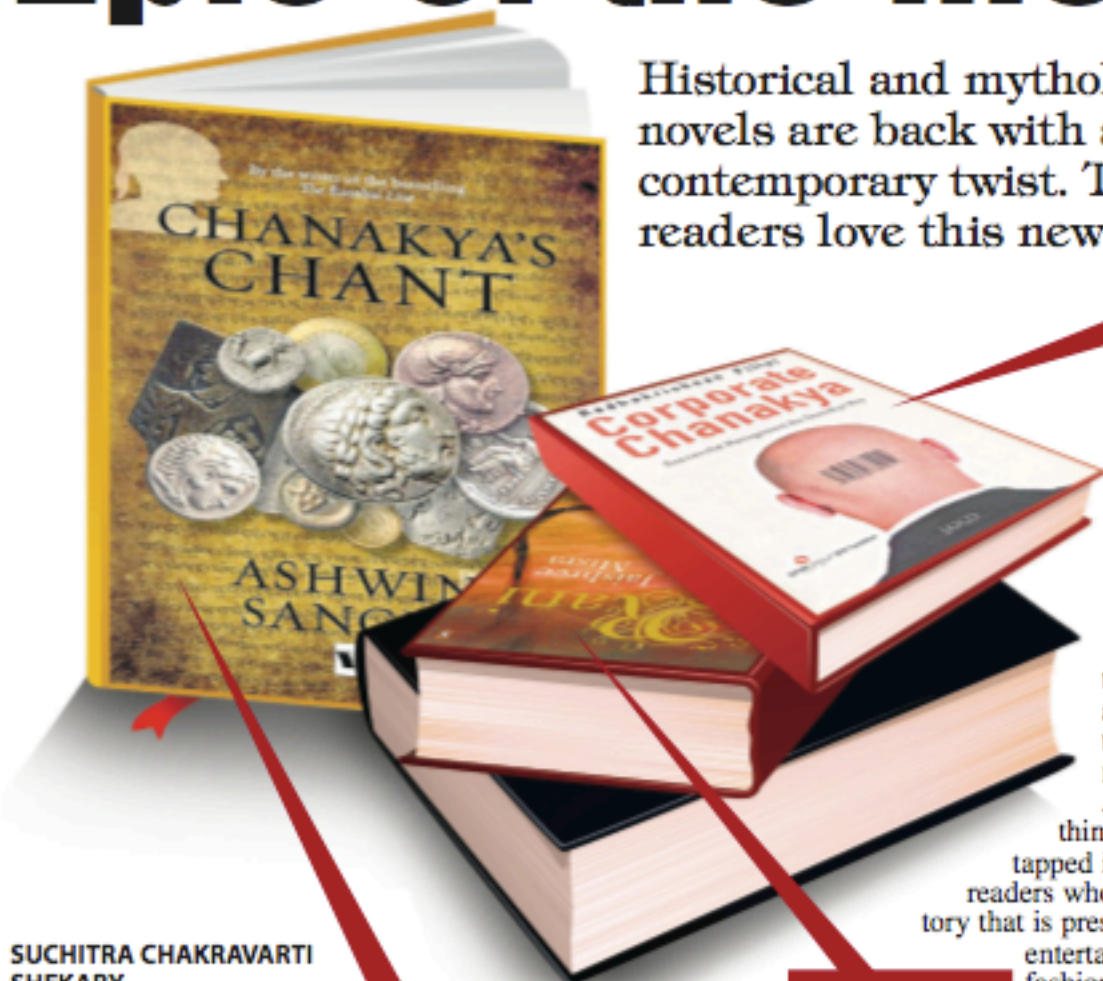
Radhakrishnan P

tics and thrillers, all in one, without the boring bits, feels young author Ashwin Sanghi, "I

think that we have tapped into a segment of readers who wish to read history that is presented in a fast, entertaining and gripping fashion."

And this is probably what attracts entrepreneur Meghna Vakada to these novels. "Anything historical appeals to me as long as the characters and stories are well treated and depicted," she says.

Author Jaishree Mishra adds that it is a complex but interesting situation. Her *Rani* did well despite the UP ban. "The relationship between historical fiction and young people is a



SUCHITRA CHAKRAVARTI SHEKARY

DECCAN CHRONICLE

Check out these stats — *Chanakya's Chant* by Ashwin Sanghi has been doing brilliantly across India. Number one on the best-seller list. The first print-run sold out in eight weeks. The same is the case with



Ashwin Sanghi

Radhakrishnan Pillai's *Corporate Chanakya* which is already in its third reprint. Jaishree Mishra's *Rani* is a best seller and so is *Parva* a Kannada novel based on the *Mahabharata*! The reason? Readers, especially young readers want a mix of history, poli-



Jaishree Mishra