

ASHWIN SANGHI

'Making 1.30 lakh words into a 2-hour movie a challenge'

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JAIPUR: From Jesus in Rozabal Line to Chanakya in Chanakya' Chant, writer Ashwin Sanghi has courageously taken up complex and diverse characters and made them his own. One can only imagine what he has got up his sleeve next. For now, he is back in his hometown for the Jaipur Literature Festival, where he spoke at a session, Top of the pops: deconstructing bestsellers, with Amish Tripathi.

What is the progress on the movie adaptation of Chanakya's Chant?

UTV has approached Ashutosh Gowariker to direct the film, but nothing has been finalised yet. The main issue at the moment lies in the screenplay. I've written a dense book of about 1.30 lakh words. The massive challenge lies in converting that into 2 hour movie. For now, we're just looking at augmenting the product and things should be set for a 2013 release.

Who do you see as lead roles in the cast?

My book has two stories—old and new. And whichever actor the production house decides upon, I want that person to play both characters, Chanakya and Pandit Gangadhar. I would imagine the actor being someone who has the ability to carry off a very rustic role and have a rustic charm.

A refined and sophisticated individual will not work.

What are your expectations from the film?

Take Da Vinci Code, where the movie was below par or for The Godfather where it was vice-versa. There's no way of knowing how things will turn out. But I think I think I have to stake that chance. As an author, you get to be possessive and conscious of your book and offended by someone else touching it. But as a story teller I think you need to be open and welcome to any medium of story being told.

What's in the pipeline currently, which popular figure you have in mind next?

No one, actually. My first two books were about theology and politics respectively. For the next one, I want to do something I know really well - business. So the book will primarily be a historical thriller revolving around four main characters.

Tell us about your association with Jaipur.

Jaipur has a very special place in my heart. Till the age of 18, I came to Rajasthan for 15 days every year and for Diwali in particular. My grandfather was from Jodhpur and the ancestral business started all over the state. The place has so much history. There's so much we can be proud of when we walk into this land. There's a story in every nook and cranny. Jaipur lends itself to this sort of festival. Which other state is unique in terms of location, hospitality and culture.



■ Ashwin Sanghi at the interview session on Monday.

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