

# The Asian Age

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## Military thriller blends fact and fiction

New Delhi, Feb. 3, 2010: Move over Frederick Forsyth, Tom Clancy and Robin Cook. India has its own answer to these writers of military action thriller in Mukul Deva, whose third novel in a four-part series on global terrorism titled *Blowback* (Harper Collins) was launched at the DLF Promenade in New Delhi on Thursday. The author, a former Indian Army officer, was in conversation with Maj. Gen. Gagandeep Bakshi and former IPS officer J.K. Dutt (Retd.). The series started with *Lashkar* and will culminate with *Tanzim*, due in February 2011. The second part, *Salim Must Die*, was released in April 2009.



Like earlier novels in the series, Deva draws a lot on the tentacles of terror spreading across the globe in general and the Indian subcontinent in particular. Even though *Blowback* carries the disclaimer (All characters, countries, places and organisations are fictitious...), the plot resembles the way terror unravels its networks in the real life. In *Blowback*, Deva shows how a warlord in the rugged tribal areas of Pakistan forges an alliance of terror groups to take on the “American surge”. Pakistan’s ISI is believed to be one of its allies. You are treated with a racy, fast-paced read as you keep flipping the pages to know who’s using whom and for what goals.

If you are left wondering what’s fact and what’s fiction, Deva wants to achieve “exactly that”. He said: “A lot of fiction in the book is actually my wishfulness,” he said, adding that the book does reflect his “personal views” and every author draws on his “thinking process” for his book. According to Deva, organised religion has done the greatest disservice to mankind. “It’s more important to be spiritual than religious,” he said.

Mr Dutt, who held that literature was supposed to “reflect reality”, termed the book as “racy and entertaining”. He said: “This genre has been missing in our literary outlook. The book deals with what terrorism is all about and also what terrorism is not about.”

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