

Straight off the shelf

Terror thrills

THOSE STARVED of *desi* action-thrillers, hear the bugle-blast in Mukul Deva's fast-paced novel, **Lashkar** (Rs 195, Harper-Collins). This is Tom Clancy-style stuff that starts straight from Ground Zero, Sarojini Nagar Market in New Delhi on the fateful evening of October 29, 2005. The Delhi terrorist blasts trig-



ger off a narrative that leads the reader to the LoC in Kashmir and then across the border to Pakistan. Iqbal is the boy

from Lucknow who 'crosses over' to train as a jihadi, which is when the "ultra-secret" Force 22 of the Indian Army comes in to avenge the attack Mossad style. Deva's powers of description — terrain that we usually pick up from news-

papers — are rivetting. **Lashkar** works and not least for its blistering pace.