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IN TRANSIT

Action in fiction

Mukul Deva is an ex-army man, and as an author he loves to dabble with what he calls 'military genre'

With the recent terrorist attacks in India and different parts of the world, Mukul Deva's newest release *Salim Must Die*, a work of military action fiction is well-timed. Lucknow born and an alumnus of La Martiniere College, he served in the army till 1981, took voluntary retirement and started his security business in Delhi.

Describing himself as "an armyman, an author and a businessman", Deva says that several episodes in the book, like the attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team cut uncomfortably close to the bone and have come true in recent times in an uncanny sort of way. Close on the heels of his first military novel "Lashkar" — another military thriller which he wrote last year — Deva promises that *Salim Must Die* will keep terrorist and military buffs, both enthralled and enlightened.

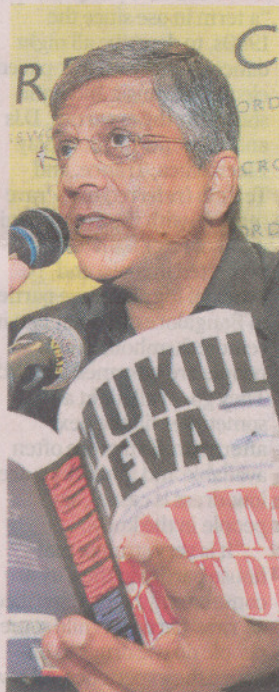
Research, he says is the key. "I base my work on actual facts and historical references that can easily be verified on the Internet or at any good public library. Through my novels, I have tried to explore the mental makeup of a *Jihadi*, as well as the circumstances that create a mindset that is capable of inflicting such widespread damage on innocent men, women and children with scant regard for his own safety or well-being," he says.

Lashkar was inspired by the Sarojini Nagar blasts of 2005 when the very concept of local people being involved was hard to believe. Iqbal, Anbu and Salim, the three characters from *Lashkar* also figure in *Salim Must Die*. The action moves across a dozen countries, a lethal plot for global domination and in-

volves detailed military intelligence tactics and operations. "Being a civic-minded, responsible citizen, however, my descriptions will not give a wannabe trouble-maker any real information that might be detrimental to the public safety," he states. "Our NSG commandos have to be at their peak of physical and mental abilities to be able to cope with crisis situations. In the 26/11 attack, they had a window of 30 seconds to decide whether a shadow crouching behind a wooden cabinet is a terrorist or a guest."

With two novels on terrorism out on the shelves and two more in the pipeline, Deva is looking forward to the possibility of his books being turned into a film in the future.

Jackie Pinto



Mukul Deva