

FICTION IN ACTION

Mukul Deva says his novel *Salim Must Die*, second of a four book series deals with global terrorism

around town

VEDA AGGARWAL

Mukul Deva, author of *Salim Must Die*, second of a four book series was in the town for a reading and for the release of the book. The series falls under the military action genre. "It's partly a by-product of anger. I believe that if New Delhi had responded strongly to the attacks on parliament in 2001, then the Sarojini Nagar blasts wouldn't have happened, neither would Guwahati and perhaps the 26/11 wouldn't have happened either," says Deva.

Another reason for writing the book was that Deva noticed he hadn't met a single person without a relation with someone in the defence, and still he found in their minds an unreal view of the defence services. "People think of the army as pedestrian footsoldiers," he explains.

"The third reason is that though Indians have won the highest possible awards when it comes to literary fiction, I'm the first to write in this genre! Not having competition is great!" he laughs.

"*Salim Must Die* is about global terror and the third book *Dust Will Never Settle* is to be about terrorism in India today," Deva reveals.

A great deal of research goes into each book. "For *Salim Must Die* it was eight months and as the book stretches across the globe,

Deva had included even a spreadsheet with different time zones to make the events possible!" he says.

But he does offer a solution to the terror problem. "We need to be both strong and firm. I believe in what Sun Tzu had to say: You will only fight the enemy's army as a last resort. First you have to kill his will to fight and his economical ability to wage war. Pakistan has been operating with a strategy to get India war fatigued and keep us economically drained. Operation Topac is real. Google it and you'll find that the aims and goals described in Lashkar are almost verbatim to Zia's speech," he says.

In 1981 Mukul was commissioned in the Sikh Light Infantry of the Indian Army. He took premature retirement as a Major after 15 years of service, including a decade of combat and operational duties in India and overseas.



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