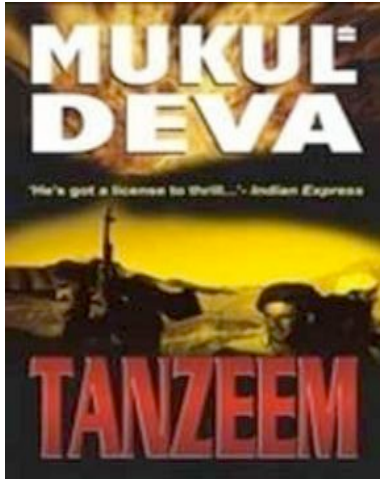


A writer with a difference



Mukul Deva, whose military thrillers like "Lashkar" and "Salim Must Die" literally smell of gunpowder, is not averse to shifting gears and says he would love to focus his writing on "corrupt politicians and dubious businessmen".

The ex-armyman, who has just come out with "Tanzeem", a thrilling finale to his "Lashkar" series, is however, busy with his next venture.

"My next venture is already underway - a series of thrillers inspired by the '7 Deadly Sins'. The first one of these seven - 'Death Came Calling' - is already in the edit phase and geared for a release by HarperCollins India in January 2012," Deva told reporters.

"Also coming up right after this is a thriller based on the Palestinian issue. Will not say anything more about it except that it's racy, relevant, very different... And ready to roll," says Deva, who was commissioned in December 1981 into the Sikh Light Infantry of the Indian Army and took premature retirement after 15 years of service.

He does not mind the military thriller writer tag but would like to be remembered as a writer with a difference.

"It's good to have been the first (military thriller writer) in India and also because the army is very close to my heart. However, I would like to be remembered as a writer who worked really hard at trying to make each successive book different," he says.

Deva has no immediate plans to try a hard, non-fictional account of the darker side of the military.

"Right now I do not see myself writing non-fiction any time in the near future. And even if I do I would rather focus on something far more relevant - like corrupt politicians and dubious businessmen who have systematically raped our country for all these decades - I do think that would be a far more relevant book to write," says the alumnus of La Martiniere College, Lucknow, NDA and IMA.

The novel "Tanzeem" is set deep in Waziristan, where Ameer-ul-Momineem, a powerful terrorist warlord embarks on a deadly mission to take the jihad across international borders.

"To carry out his horrific plan, he puts together the Tanzeem, a group of leaders spread

across the continents.

Supporting him are the Mullah in Quetta and the director of Pakistan's ISI," publishers HarperCollins says.

"Across the border in India, a young man named Iqbal is devastated by the death of his wife at the hands of Ameer's henchmen and sets out to settle scores. Supporting him is the spirited Force 22, India's strike action team."

The novel then tells how Iqbal tries to stop the jihadi terror.

Deva, who took premature retirement after 15 years of service including a decade of active combat duty and operations in India and overseas, is now an entrepreneur and settled in the national capital.

Ask him which book of his would he rate the highest, he says, "Please understand that it is not easy to come out with a book every year... And with each successive book the bar gets raised higher - not only due to reader response but my internal need to do better.

"Also it is hard for me to differentiate between my own books. I think all of them are really racy and nippy...And among them Lashkar and Tanzeem certainly stand apart.

Lashkar for the path breaking route it took and for exploding the myth that Indian writers don't do military action and Tanzeem for living up to readers' expectations and for maintaining the taut pace set by the previous three..."

Deva is also quite open to the concept of his books adapted into films.

"I am very open to it... I know that every single book of the Lashkar series will make a rocking movie. As will the ones from the next series... Am working hard to ensure that..." he says.