



RC Madan

jobs that required hard, manual labour - *jhaliwala* (who transports goods from a ration shop to the customer's house on a cane basket), rag picker, *rickshaw* puller and errand boy are but a few of them. "It was very difficult to adjust to all this, for a person who was born with a (golden) spoon his mouth. But, when a man feels hungry, he's ready to do anything - *har cheez*. I've gone through very tough times. I know what hunger is, what pain is, how it feels in your heart if you don't get a job anywhere."

His pained face is offset by the plush drawing room, a tasteful jumble of souvenirs from all around the world, reclining Buddha statues, crystal vases and vibrant carpets, which to Madan, are a symbol of his 'self-made man' status, one that he ratifies with a list of accolades, topped with some definitive superlatives, "Self-taught detective *hoon*, have won 15 awards, out of which four are international. First Asian, first Indian to win these awards. There is nothing higher than this, no post, no award. I have achieved the ultimate."

He began by investigating his own case against his stepmother, "since there were no detectives at that time (only policemen who did a bit of investigation if you paid them extra)", and proved to be so good at it that his lawyer's clients offered him money to look into their cases as well. In a few years' time, Madan started his own detective agency, The Indian Detective, allegedly the first of its kind in India (he charged a mere Rs. 25 per case then), now re-christened Goliath Detectives, spread across 11 cities and employing 500 detectives. Over the years, the 'hard-boiled' master has evolved his own techniques to track down criminals, keeping pace as crooks upgrade to more evolved criminal methods, "Nowadays, the criminals are so sharp. *Jaise science ne tarakki kar li hai, vaise hi criminals ne bhi apne techniques*

***There is nothing higher than this, no post, no award. I have achieved the ultimate***

*badal liye hain."*

Conversation on the subject of technology leads to an impromptu detour through Madan's den, his "hideout" as he calls it, sending the fiction-reality confusion to dizzying heights. Photographs of him in a costume that is an odd mix of Sherlock Holmes, Inspector Clouseau and Philip Marlowe (Humphrey Bogart hat and raincoat for added effect), pose on the walls. Newspaper clippings carrying his interviews are offered as testimony to illustriousness; one of them has photographs of him posing as an Arab sheikh, peeping from behind a bush, and lounging languorously on a plush sofa (a gold-embroidered throw rug for authenticity) in another; cigarettes are either delicately held in one hand, or wedged carelessly between the lips. 'I admire the intelligence of people who ask for my advice', brags a wall hanging amidst the paraphernalia scattered through the room - skull masks propped on tripods, ancient guns and batons, discreet dictaphones, awards and trophies - two walls are lined with spy fiction, conspicuously not too well-thumbed. Amidst it all, a television set displays the happenings at the entrance to the building, a sketch of Sherlock Holmes and an entire collection featuring the legendary sleuth in the background, bolsters the thrilling effect. "I just love Sherlock Holmes," he confesses, "I was even offered (a chance) to buy his home in London, but I didn't. And you see,