

# SUPER SLEUTH OF INDIA

**B**e it murder, kidnapping, dacoity, industrial espionage or undercover operation, there is hardly any crime mystery that Romesh Chander Madan cannot solve. He has the acumen which leaves everyone flabbergasted. He is neither a dramatised or a serialised character, nor a he-man borrowed from a novel, but a real life detective. But for his revolver, a torch, a chemical defence weapon and a multi-purpose knife always strapped on to his belt, he can easily pass off as a man living next door.

Madan is the super sleuth of India — the ace detective running a private detective agency, The Goliath. His name is inseparably linked with the detective movement in the country. He made a modest beginning in 1961 by setting up his first detective agency — The Indian Detective — in Delhi. However, the agency was closed down in 1970 to pave way for The Goliath, set up a year later. Today, it is rated as the best in the country having 16 branch offices and a staff of more than 600 sleuths, including 140 women.

He has his own style of functioning and lays strong emphasis on secrecy. Only the chief has an access to all the files. It is he who prepares the blueprint for investigations and gives assignments to the team members. Investigations are done by a well-coordinated team, with each member having a different

R C Madan :The Indian Sherlock Holmes

**Call him Sherlock Holmes or a chameleon, he is quite different from the stereotyped image of a private detective built up by the media over the years. The motto of his life is never-say-die. He has that extra sensory perception and insight which enables him to handle tricky situations with professional finesse**



role to play. The job involves trailing, interviewing, taking fingerprints and photographs. On several occasions the sleuths are required to disguise themselves. For this purpose, the agency keeps a complete range of attires worn in different parts of the country. False identity cards are also used as and when needed.

Often the sleuths are exposed to great risks. Madan himself has faced three attempts on his life. In the first assault, which took place in his office, three bullets pierced the back of his chair as soon as he got up to fetch a book. Yet again, on arriving early to office one morning, he found a man standing on the window sill, threatening him. He recalls, "The man had a gun pointed towards me. I kept my cool, started talking to him and eventually won him over." The third attempt took place while he was investigating a case involving a maharajah and a nautch. Madan had been asked to investigate why a particular maharajah was so generous in giving money to the dancing-girl. He found that the maharajah's son had raped the girl and killed her father. Left with nothing, the girl had been forced into prostitution. The maharajah, on learning this, had decided to disinherit his son and give all the money and property to her. It was during this investigation that the maharajah's son set a mercenary to eliminate Madan. "I was leaving the palace when I heard a sound. I turned around and found a man about to hit me with a metal rod. I quickly ducked to escape the blow, caught him, twisted his arms and snatched the rod."

These attempts have in no way unnerved him, though he is more cautious now. His office has no windows and his house is bugged. These attempts, he says, have made him all the more aggressive in his job.

So far, he has saved 26 people from the gallows, six of whom belonged to the same family. This is his greatest achievement because no private detective has saved so many people, thus making it a world record. Narrating the case, he says, "Six brothers hailing from Lakshnoor village near Saharanpur were falsely implicated by the police in the murder of their servant, Asha Ram. When they felt that justice was eluding them, they contacted me. My team set out on



Disguised to deceive

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the job of recording secret conversations of policemen with prosecution witnesses. I found that the story was entirely different. Asha Ram had been murdered by the rivals of the brothers who had all along vociferously campaigned against them." When Madan produced the evidences in the court, the entire complexion of the case changed, resulting in acquittal of the brothers.

In another equally difficult case, a forest contractor was sentenced to death on the charge of murdering his supervisor. It was suspected that the contractor had illicit relations with the supervisor's wife. On discovering this, the supervisor had threatened him with dire consequences. So, to get rid of him, the contractor had shot dead the supervisor. Pleading innocence, the contractor sought Madan's help. After studying the post-mortem report, Madan concluded that the revolver used for killing had been replaced. "I found that there was

only one such revolver in the whole area and it belonged to the local SHO who had been on leave ever since. Madan's men tracked down the SHO to his village and, to everybody's shock, the supervisor's wife was also found with him. The officer confessed his crime and thus the contractor was saved."

Because of these feats the super snooper bagged the Best International Investigator Award in 1989, thus becoming the first Indian, first Asian and the first non-white to get the award. With this win he broke the monopoly of the Americans, the British and the Canadians. Consequently, he was made the executive director of Council of International Investigators (CII). In 1990, he won another prestigious award — the Kieth Roger's Memorial at Oxford and in the same year was elected as the vice-president of the CII.

No doubt his is a success story today, but his early life was full of miseries. His parents died when he was only 11. So he had to take shelter in his stepmother's house after the Partition. He had to earn to sustain his brothers and sisters when he was barely 13. "From rickshaw-pulling to selling balloons and cinema tickets to picking glass pieces from the road, I have done it all," says Madan. His entry into the detective world makes an interesting story. His stepmother grabbed his share of property and this forced him to file a case in the court. His lawyer told him that he could do very little until he was supplied with all the facts and figures. He had no one to help him. But without losing heart, he decided to collect the required information himself. He did it so well that his lawyer decided to employ him as an investigator. And thus began his detective career.

By virtue of undaunted hardwork, Madan was unanimously elected as the president of the CII and will be taking oath in September this year.

In all his endeavours his wife has stood beside him. She has actively participated in several of his investigations and Madan proudly claims that they are the first detective-couple in the country. In fact, now his children are also involved in this and Madans may very well claim to be the first detective family as well. ■