

PRIVATE DETECTIVES

UPDATE

Summer jobs

● With summer vacations drawing near, school and college going students have a host of opportunities—quick crash courses, study tours, a trek to the mountains with a rock-sack or settling down for a part-time job. There are enough opportunities for the discerning student to pick up a new language, learn computers, freshen up for a competitive exam, or brave the heat and earn a few bucks. Almost all newspapers, especially on Sundays, carry advertisements seeking the services of undergraduates or fresh graduates. A trip to the university employment exchange bureau is also of great help in locating vacancies. Or else, the best way out is to walk into the office of your choice and find out for yourself.

Rhodes scholar

● Are you interested in the prestigious Rhodes scholarship at the university of Oxford? It usually takes six terms, that is two years to get a degree in the specialised field. The scholarship is a reasonable offer and covers tuition and university fees, plus a personal allowance of about ₹ 5,640 a year paid directly to the full-time scholar. The age limit for candidates is 19 to 25 as on October 1, 1993. Students must be single and must have a first class degree in the particular subject. Forms are available from British Council offices in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and New Delhi. Or from The Secretary, Rhodes Scholarship Selection Committee for India, St. Stephen's College, Delhi.

Running hotels

● For those inclined to seek employment in the ever booming hotel industry, the National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Pusa, New Delhi conducts an entrance examination for admission to the three-year diploma programme. The examination could get you a placement in institutes at Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Bhopal, Lucknow, Bhubaneswar, Bombay, Calcutta, Goa, Hyderabad, Madras and Srinagar. To be eligible for the examination you have to have passed class XII with at least 50 per cent in any discipline or you should be from the vocational stream with hotel management. The age limit is 22.

Mickey Mouse

● Escorting Mickey Mouse around Britain with a 60 ft-high, pink glass fibre castle in tow would, to many people, evoke scenes of nightmare potential. But not Vanessa Aves, a Disney publicist, currently on tour with Mickey to promote the opening of Euro-Disney. "It's a wonderful product," she says. "In the event of all my friends, I'm not like doing PR for a plumbing company. I don't have to press people to come on my Press trips." After joining the company last May, she spent a month in the American theme parks learning the Disney way of working, including terminology invented by Walt Disney himself. "The whole thing is a show. Our visitors are guests. When we're at work we're on stage." Whether EuroDisney will catch on remains to be

seen—the company predicts 11 million visitors for the first year. Aves says the research revealed that what Disney was good at was being American. "I think the French would have been excited if we'd tried to make it French." Aves working hours is 9 am to 6 pm, but currently the work load is more. The worst part of her job is, she says, "having to put up with some very stropic people".

The desi versions of Sherlock Holmes and James Bond have come of age. It is a hard and risky job and aspirants should know that life of a private detective is not a celluloid thriller, writes T S Sudhir

BHAGWAN KE naam pe bhata kar, bhagwan tera bhata karega, cries out the dishevelled beggar on the pavement. Overcome by pity, you drop a coin in his tray. You catch the hint of a grin and enquire to reveal the 'beggar' is a happy detective pleased with the credibility of his act.

That couldn't be a detective, you think because of the pre-set image in your mind of Sherlock Holmes or Poirot. The image,

glance at the city directory's yellow pages reveals that the tribe is burgeoning. It is boom time for private detectives.

"A detective is a fact finder," explains Kamlesh Madan of Gollath, Detectives, who also won the International Investigator of the Year award in 1989. Says he, "there are a lot of problems—like marital difficulties, business losses—for which the police cannot be approached for help. The private detective becomes invaluable."

sal Bureau of Investigation puts it. "The job is not glamorous at all. No semi-motors or racing cars, in fact the job entails sitting the whole day at a particular spot keeping surveillance on a person."

It's hard work and those hoping to emulate James Bond might find their expectations belied. It is a low profile job since one's identity cannot be revealed. Irregular family hours and a certain amount of risk are a part of the detective's

Madan started out. "All others are my disciples, they have been trained by me," he says with justifiable pride. But why become a detective when one could do the same work in the IB, CBI or RAW and have job security?

Explains Wadhawan: "These agencies do not recruit directly and one has to undergo a stint with the police. This may not be acceptable to many." Adds Madan: "One needs to butter up a lot of people in the police

launch his own agency. Promotions are performance based. After a few years most detectives prefer to open their own agency and this has boosted their numbers. Madan boasts the proliferation of such 'fly-by-night' operators, who, he says, are often incompetent, ill-equipped and bring the profession into disrepute.

The basic difference between India and the rest of the world is in respect of the licensing system. In Europe and the USA, private investigation is a lucrative business. But, as the work is sensitive, the state imposes restrictions upon the extent of investigative operations.

The same criteria does not apply here. There is no central agency to monitor their work and a draft bill to legitimise and license private detectives (whose annual turnover is reportedly ₹ 400 crore) has been gathering dust since 1984. Madan supports the idea of licensing the agencies, but apprehends large-scale corruption because the power to issue licenses may be vested with the lower-level police officers who might be vulnerable.

Detectives feel it is necessary to cultivate a healthy relationship with law-enforcing agencies. The police can do with a little extra help. As Wadhawan admits, the police "like to get the congratulations and we collect our bills".

But Madan has had unfortunate experiences when he found that in some cases the subjects (culprits) were paying a monthly retainer to the police which leaked out valuable information.

Detective agencies presently employ about 20,000 people all over the country, a large number of them girls. Chanakya was the first one to use women as spies. Many agencies believe that females make good investigators.

Real life detectives are not at all pleased with the manner in which they are portrayed by electronic media. *Karamchand* on TV was a virtual buffoon, makes "a mockery of the profession," says Wadhawan. But the *Old For* is thought of as being much more credible.

The detective profession promises a good future. But anyone crossing the *Jaksamarekha* into this career must bear in mind that only 100 per cent means success, 99 per cent amounts to failure. Anyone interested?



(Above and right), private detective Madan: Master of disguise

look and even work of the detective has changed dramatically over the years. No longer is he a gun-toting, trench-coated prowl-neck. He could look as ordinary as 'your neighbour'. The man next door, for all you know, could actually be a private detective.

Runaway wives, unfaithful husbands, sons and lovers: such was the stuff detective stories were made of. A murder or two, some fraud and thefts provided occasional spice. But, not any more. Today's detectives have their hands full with cases ranging from corporate spying to and computer frauds. A quick

department to be successful. Here one can be one's own boss."

Though still a new profession in India (Madan considers it the best profession for adventure loving youth) it is not very difficult to make a beginning in the field (See box). At the starting position of junior investigator, one earns about ₹ 1,500-2,000 per month. Some agencies also pay case bonuses as well as expenses.

A detective can aspire to reach the position of a senior investigator earning about ₹ 3,500-4,000 per month and, if he feels confident, he can

too. The candidates are screened for four qualities—determination, patience, sharp observation and intelligence quotient.

The training of investigators and practice of identification, civil and criminal investigation, location study, photographic investigation, perfection in use of wireless sets and tape recorders et al.

The fees is roughly ₹ 1500 but meritorious students are exempted. Some agencies also give a stipend during the period. Successful students frequently get absorbed in regular agencies.

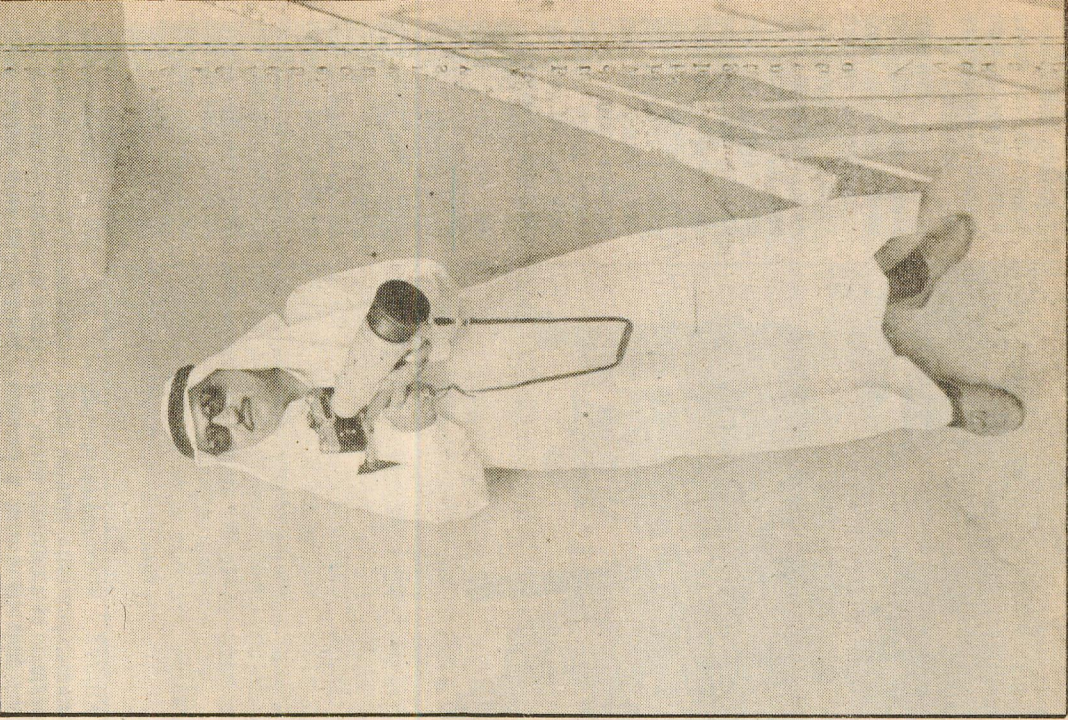
Snoops, sleuths and carrotless Karamchands

How to join the ranks

THE INDIAN Institute of Private Investigation, which claims to be the first and only one of its kind in Asia, conducts a six-month post-graduate programme to cater to practically all fields of investigations—crimes and offences. It operates from Kusal Bazar building in Nehru Place and its eligibility conditions are as follows—

The advertisement for the course appears in the newspapers in April and students who are enrolled start getting their study material by May.

One can also serve as apprentice in a detective agency like Gollath Detectives and Lancers boys and girls as trainees provided they have an aptitude for the profession. There is a six-month course



(1) The successful completion of the High School exam or any other equivalent exam.

(2) It is open to students of all nationalities except of those countries who do not share diplomatic status with India.

(3) The lower age limit is 18 years. There is no upper age limit. Students who pass out and are interested may also join a three-month intensive practical training session at the batch centre. The cream from the batch consequently gets absorbed in the Universal Bureau of Investigation.

Golden days for freelance cameramen, technicians

The arrival of cable TV, and the opening of CNN and BBC bureaux in New Delhi have increased the demand for freelance cameramen and technicians. The competent ones are flooded with work and it's a lucrative career to adopt, says Sandhya Mulchandani

THE AIR is charged with excitement. Never has so much happened to so many in so little time.

Within the span of one short year beginning with Ted Turner's CNN and its coverage of the Gulf war; the signals and the loud and clear, the Doordarshan monopoly as it has existed for the last four decades, is clearly over.

In spite of constant complaints about the quality of its programmes, Doordarshan has managed to hobble along, much maligned but changing little. "Doordarshan, which provided the only outlet for people interested in the visual medium is a sleeping giant. Nothing creative ever came out of it," says an independent producer.

Change came five years ago. Private entrepreneurs, in an attempt to circumvent the bureaucracy surrounding Doordarshan came up with the concept of the video magazines which remained the viable alternative to Doordarshan until cable came along. Video magazines now abound in every special interest subject possible—news, films, sports, entertainment, education and health. This new industry provided the impetus for a lot of young people to take a serious look at the visual medium which in the past meant either the film industry or making audio visuals for companies.

The video magazines were only the beginning. Now with CNN setting up a Delhi bureau, BBC World service making its reconnaissance visits and Star Television flooding major cities, the electronic media is now the centre of activity.

There are some 1.15 lakh cable operators in the country with their numbers in the growing by the hour, and an estimated 40

lakh homes are already hooked to satellite telecasts. With Star TV and BBC now planning to introduce exclusive Hindi channels, the barrage has only just begun. "There is an upsurge of activity," says Nigrah Bahi, Business India Television. "Business is going to counter what appears like a revolution from within as well as from the skies, Doordarshan has cleared some 450 odd programmes which it has held in abeyance for the last 16

months. The sudden upsurge of activity has attracted a new breed of creative and talented people who have risen to the challenge and opportunities that the skies seem to have literally opened for them." Cable networks have gargantuan appetites. They need to be continually fed with programmes, says a programmer. "There is an immense dirth of people who will make programmes to continually feed these networks."

It is just this demand which has opened exciting prospects for new kind of professionals: cameramen, editors, sound recordists, lighting technicians and studio operators. For years, moonlighting has been the rule rather than the exception because of the paucity of the programmes produced. Independent producers and other technicians from Doordarshan itself. While previously most of these technicians came from the film centres of Bombay, Madras or from the Film

and Television Institute at Pune, and learnt on the job, more and more young people are now opting to do courses in journalism, and communications.

While several universities around the country offer courses in communication and journalism, institutions like the Jamia Millia Islamia University and IGNOU (Indira Gandhi Open University) in New Delhi conduct full time degree courses in film and communication. "There is a dearth of Door-

darshan and the independent and working with the camera seems glamorous, it actually involves hard work with long and tiring hours. "The camera work is especially hard," says Nigrah Bahi. "The hours are irregular, the food's bad and you are required to constantly travel to unknown places. The hard work seems to be taking its toll and especially for women. Most women who specialise in camera work opt instead for the less arduous editing tables.

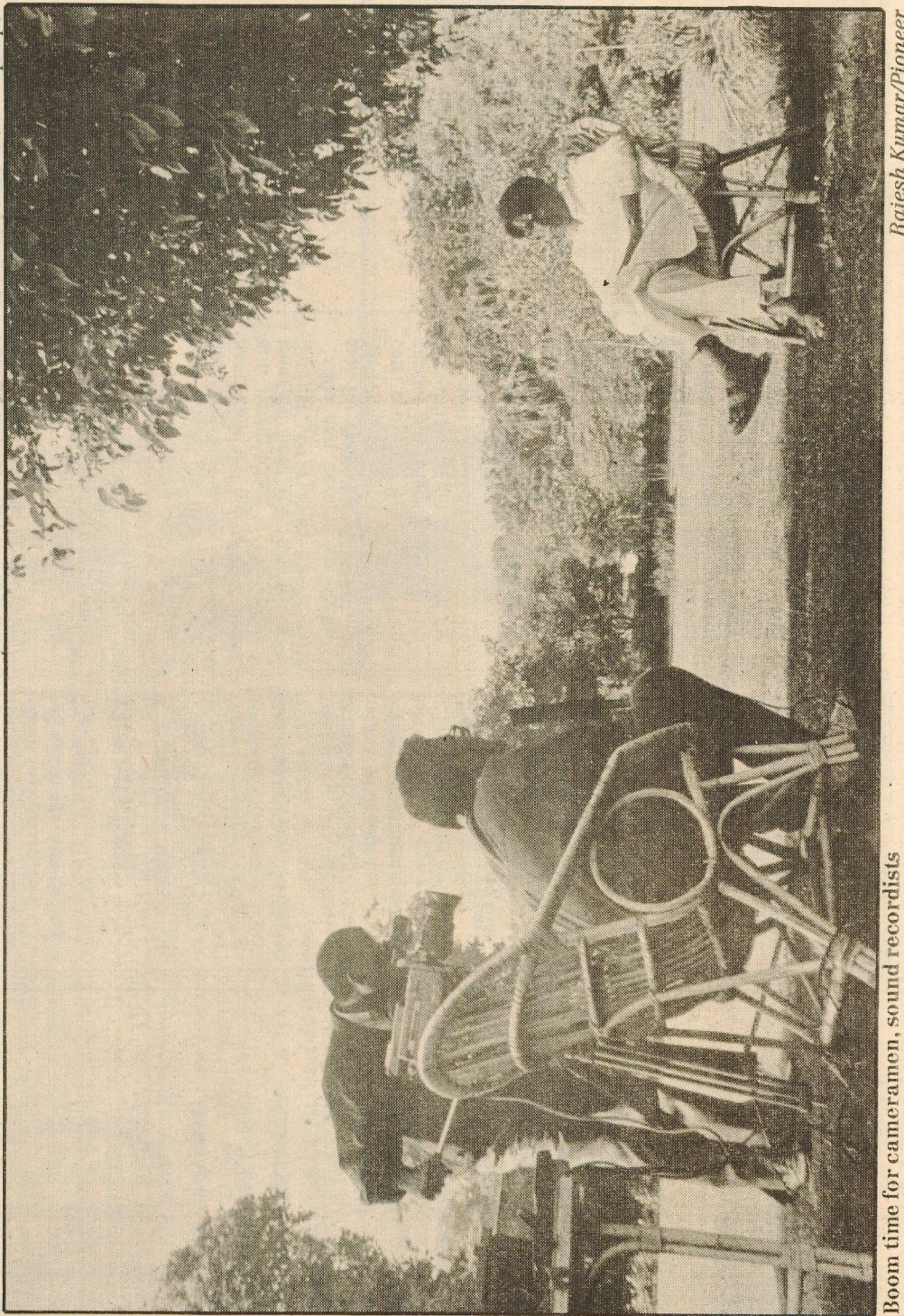
Money of course is an attraction and a very rewarding one at the end of the day. Good cameramen after 3-4 years of training make anything between ₹ 1500 to ₹ 3000 a day. For the talented upmarket cameraman who specialises in advertising films in Bombay, ₹ 10,000 a day is routine. Editors with a sense of rhythm and who are more than mere cut and paste men, earn anything between ₹ 1000 to ₹ 1500 a day.

Others like sound technicians are also equally well paid. The other advantage is that most people who do technical work for either Doordarshan, advertising film makers, and independent producers are all freelancers. With work coming in only sporadically, most producers, with the exception of the video

magazines do not have the money to have technicians on their payroll. "It's a demand and supply situation," says Radhika Kaul, who is an independent producer of video films. Doordarshan was so far the only outlet but now the world seems to be at the doorstep of qualified and competent professionals.

Quality is the buzz word now. Competition is one of the main forces that drives the world wide. With the world literally in the living rooms of millions of Indians every day, Doordarshan and the independent producers who have been idling with mediocrity will have to change with the times. "The answer is not to combat BBC or CNN," says Ashok Khatia, a television producer, "but to give the people the kind of quality programmes they want to see."

With quality comes creativity and talent, especially where the best produced programme will take it all. While viewership battles may not yet have taken the dimensions of western countries, producers will now be competing with some of the world's best produced programmes. It's only the beginning. In this industry which offers instant glamour and gratification, only the sky is the limit for the talented.



Boom time for cameramen, sound recordists

MIT
QUALITY
COMPUTER
EDUCATION