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detective. Madan telephoned the husband to rush to the restaurant — as they entered, the husband exclaimed, "Yes, it is she, alright." But soon his expression changed as he realised there was a strong resemblance between the woman and his wife. A home about to be broken had just been saved, thanks to the understanding private detective. "The husband shed tears of gratitude," says Madan, reclining in his chair. "You can't tell a man by his face — it might be a case of mistaken identity." This might be Holmes speaking to Watson, with his eyes half-closed, a pipe between the lips, and a dreamy gaze directed at the London mists.

It is only with a jolt that one wakes up to the reality — a snug little room, tastefully furnished, in a flat in Hillview Apartments in the heart of Vasant Vihar, where the Goliath detective lives. Starting as a coolie, balloon-seller, cinema gate-keeper, stage artiste and trying his hand at a host of other varied professions, Mr Madan finally took up the job of a private detective, and has the honour of saving 26 innocent persons from the gallows. "It is an urge to explore that keeps a private detective going," says the master sleuth in a drawling Punjabi accent. Having started from scratch, he today owns sixteen branch offices all over India, all

of which only shows the growing requirement of private eyes in our tense, distrustful, anxiety-ridden society, which may employ their services from time to time to check the movements of an erring husband or a misguided child, to save a businessman from blackmail or to leak a rival political party's poll strategy during the elections. "This is all part of the game," the detective confesses before turning to record an important phone call.

**V**ENUS Detectives and Security Services' Delhi office chief Usha Shetty says, "The bulk of our cases do not involve catching errant spouses in the act. Our services are largely sought for solving corporate frauds, to check the credentials of prospective employees and catch executives robbing industrial secrets."

Ms Shetty, basically a sleuth from Bombay, finds Delhi full of 'conservative husbands abnormally suspicious of their wives' movement.' Usha Shetty is a study in contrasts. Petite and alert-eye, she gives the impression of a vulnerable girl from the south — until you shake hands with her. Trained in martial arts, she has a cold, business-like grip and her eyes seem to bore right

# The Indian Poirots

through your head.

The managing director of Venus Detectives is Krishnan Ramanathan, Bombay's most loveable Poirot. Six months back, he launched his Delhi office, and in a remarkably short time, its dark-skinned, heavy-moustached gumshoes have spilled over the Capital's sleazy bylanes of crime.

Says Usha, "We have to live upto our Bombay's image of flawless brainwork. In Bombay,

the crime is far more sophisticated than anywhere else in the country. In Delhi, most cases involve tailing suspected wives and wayward husbands. And our clients sometimes doubt our own sincerity when we give them straight reports. Most of the times the suspicion is in their heads, and we mince no words to tell them the truth and keep their homes from going to pieces.' Could she recall a memorable case? 'We received a call from a

businessman in Bombay," says Usha, tossing a glove in the table-drawer.

"The case was about the leaking of tender details. The idea seemed to be a straight lift from the film 'Trishul'. For every price quoted in the tender by the tycoon, there was somebody who quoted fifty or sixty rupees less. Somebody certainly knew beforehand about the company's tender report. Who was the culprit? The secretary? No, the industrialist assured the sleuths. 'She is above board. I can't suspect her.' 'We, however, shadowed the secretary,' smiles Shetty. 'We posted a shabby-looking man outside her room. We found on the twelfth day that the peon of the secretary would carry the waste carbon papers out of the secretary's wastepaper basket or once-used ones from the table and hand them over to a man, the rival company's spy, who was posing as a poor, kabadi wala.'

**M**R Sawant, another private detective, who is primarily concerned with training and supplying security guards and bodyguards for industrialists and hotels says that detective agencies are an effective employ for retired, mentally and physically agile, army personnel. 'The job

structure', he says, 'varies from army guards for private enterprises to the more specialised work of a security officer.'

No wonder that some retired army personnel have hit upon the idea of offering detective services themselves. Such as Gallant Security Agency largely, a body of ex-service officers. Its chief, a retired officer, shuns any form of publicity, because he says, 'we have started only recently and want to keep a low profile.'

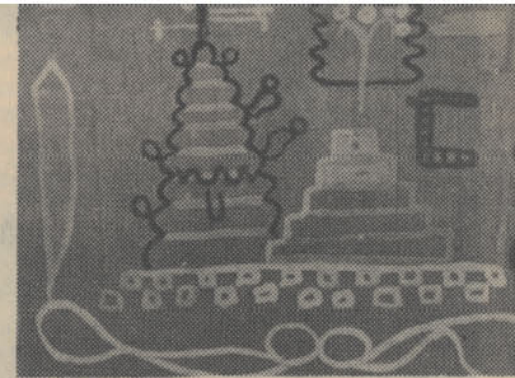
With the ever-darkening corridors of the corporate world, private investigators are a godsend in certain ingeniously committed forgeries and felonies. One of the largest detective agencies in the country, Globe Detectives, knows this all too well. Director of the agency, Vivek Kumar, couldn't be a happier man. There has been a 300 per cent increase in business over the past five years or so and the number of employees has gone up to 9,000, with a turnover of over Rs 2 crore. And all this due to an alarming rise in frauds in business houses, professional rivalries and cut-throat competition to outpace the rivals. Merger of foreign companies with the Indian also takes place after a lot of 'undercover' operations, and private investigators rise to the occasion to make sure the records of both the Indian and the foreign companies are in order.

## For sleuths in the making

**T**HE Indore Christian College is the first academic institution in India to run a one-year diploma course in the 'Art of Private Investigation'. At present, there are twenty students there who are learning the basic science of detection — from reading faces, posing as various professionals, mastering the art of disguise and learning the basics in martial arts, fireweapons and photography.

The toughest lesson, feel the students, is learning patience and concentration. A student, for ex-

ample, may be asked to sit outside a room on a stool, continuously for eight hours to record his observations of all the visitors going in and coming out of the room. After the one-year-course, says R. C. Madan, a visiting professor, students can easily find employment with private detectives in the country and even abroad, as all registered private detectives are well-coordinated with foreign agencies. They may even set up their own private agency after they have acquired enough experience and skill.



● Feb 19-Feb 25. Exhibition of paintings by K. S. and Vanessa Hedwig Smith at Gallery Romain Rolland a.m. to 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. except Sunday

● Feb 19-Feb 25. Exhibition of Cont'e crayons by G Singh at Gallery Espace from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. except

● Feb 19-Feb 23. Polarities — exhibition of recent by Vasundhara Tewari at Shridharani Gallery.

● Feb 19-Feb 23. Exhibition of photographs by Sam at Art Heritage from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

● Feb 19-Feb 25. Chhayaputul — exhibition of shapets at IGNSA from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. except Mor

● Feb 19-Feb 20. Exhibition of watercolours by Gar at the Village Gallery from 10.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.

● Feb 19-Feb 25. VIII Triennale India 1994 from 11 p.m. at Lalit Kala Akademi galleries, National G Modern Art and AIFACS galleries.

### Music

● Feb 23. Hindustani vocal recital by Raja Kale at International Centre at 6.30 p.m.

● Feb 25. Flute recital by Kailash Sharma and vocal Ashwini Bhide at the India International Centre at as part of the Vasantotsav — a programme of H classical music.

### SPIC MACAY FEST 94

● Feb 21. Sikkil sisters, Carmel Convent School, at 1

Compiled by Seema