



Delhi's ace detective, Bhavna Paliwal

JASJEET PLAHA/HT

# The Capital's Miss Marple

Manoj Sharma

**B**HAVNA PALIWAL, 32, came to Delhi in 1998 from a small town in UP with the dream of becoming a journalist. After doing a diploma course in journalism, she joined a Hindi newspaper. She wanted to be an investigative reporter, but soon felt that the salary got was not enough to sustain her in the city.

Going back to her native city was not an option as she had fallen in love with Delhi. There was also no question of taking up a job that did not involve 'the adventures of investigations', and so she decided to join a private detective agency.

"Everyone in my family was aghast at my decision — they felt it was not a job for a woman. But I wanted to live in Delhi and I wanted to be in a profession that involved investigations," says Paliwal.

Eight years on, she is one of the most famous women detectives of the country and now runs her own detective agency, Tejas. The agency also employs a number of woman whom she has personally groomed. "I have never regretted my decision to be a detective. The job involves lots of thrills, but yes, at times, I have found myself in many life-threatening situations."

This feisty woman detective

handles cases that involve all kinds of investigations: corporate, personal, financial and marital — which, she says, form the largest chunk of her cases today. But now she is particularly interested in cases involving women who are in distress. A detective's work, she says, is not as easy as it is made out to be in books and movies.

So what are the qualities that a good woman detective should have? "Any detective — man or woman — should be committed, disciplined, observant and tactful. Confidentiality is the key," she says.

How safe is it for her to operate as a detective in Delhi? "I have not faced any problems. I do not think I would have been as successful in any other city.

When I came to the city nine years back I was a total stranger. But today I have everything, including some fame, which feels nice. People in the city show a lot of respect when they get to know that I am a detective."

Now everyone in her family is happy. "My mother enjoys reading about me and wants to know the stories of my clients. But I cannot share all the interesting stories with her," she laughs. "My mother has moved in with me and has no plans of going back to our home town. She too has become a Delhiite!"

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**BHAVNA PALIWAL**