

# DARE

BECAUSE ENTREPRENEURS DO



## Why Big Retail is in a Mess

### The Truth about Microfinance

Doing Business in Denmark

How BPOs are Managing the Slowdown

Fresh Water Fish Farming

Managing Celebrity Security

Sun Rider, the Solar Boat

Essentials for the Spa Industry

**entrepreneur of the month/**  
Sandip Somany, Hindustan Sanitaryware

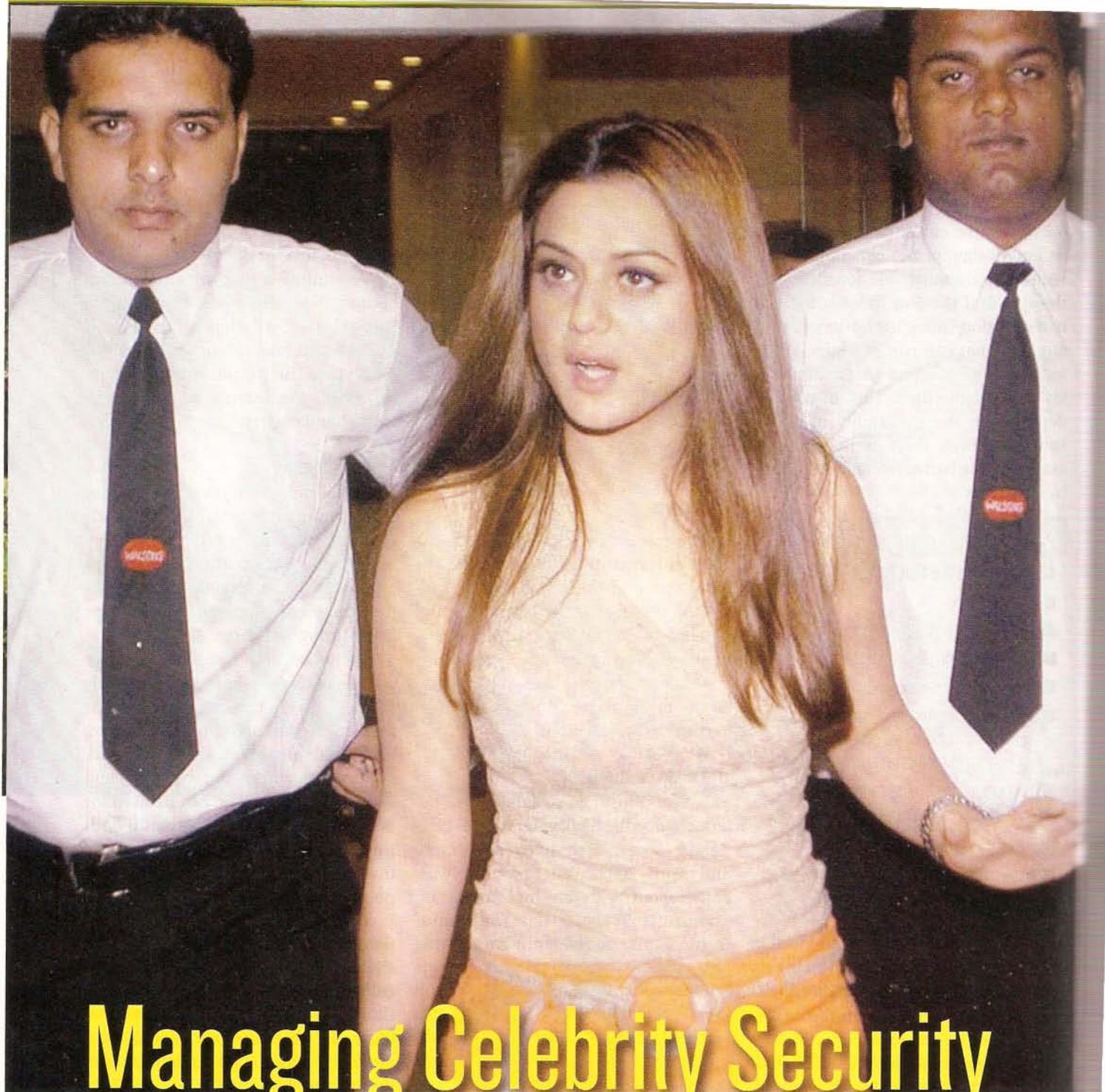
**investor of the month/**  
Subrata Mitra, Accel  
Venetia Kontogouris, Trident Capital

**innovation/**  
A Microscope made from Bamboo  
e-charkha

Mentored by Mother Nature  
Case: Printo Document Services  
Starting a company in an economic drought

INSEAD

The Business School  
for the World®



# Managing Celebrity Security

With celebrities high on the target list of terror outfits, the underworld and stalkers, their security is now a thriving multi-crore business

/Vimarsh Bajpai

**T**he recent attack on the Sri Lankan cricket squad in Pakistan has yet again sent shock waves across the world. It has left security agencies flabbergasted at the vulnerability that stalks celebrities such as film actors, sportspersons, and top corporate and political leaders.

With the government's security apparatus proving inadequate, a host of private security agencies have come up over the last decade to fill

the gap. The demand for private security has increased drastically in the last few years, not only in India but across the world. "The global market for private contract security services is forecast to advance 7.5 percent per annum through 2012 to almost \$200 billion," reports The Freedonia Group, a US-based market research firm.

As Frank Farmer, the protagonist in the 1992 Hollywood romantic

movie *The Bodyguard*, played by Kevin Costner, takes up the challenge of shielding Rachel Marron, a pop star, played by Whitney Houston, he leaves no stone unturned to protect her from a stalker, even though Rachel resists his moves to beef up security. While the film has a romantic angle with the singer and her bodyguard having an affair, celebrity security in real life is very dull behind the scenes.



Walsons Securitas provides private security solutions that also include celebrity security. The firm is present in 180 cities across India and has 12,000 employees on its rolls. The company has partnered with Securitas, the world's largest security solutions company, which has bought a 49 percent stake in Walsons for approximately US\$ 20 million. Securitas has 2,50,000 employees operating in 37 countries. Arjun Walia, 36, started Walsons in 1996 after a brief stint in a multinational organization overseas.

We talk to **Arjun Walia, Founder and Chairman, Walsons Securitas**, to understand more about this business.

**How big is the celebrity security business?**

Private security industry in India is valued at US\$ 2 billion. However, the celebrity security business has not been quantified. Terrorism along with growing unemployment increased personal protection and executive protection. Celebrity protections vary from actors, models, concerts/bands and politicians.

Executive protection professionals share many characteristics with military and law enforcement agencies, though without authority as vested with them.

**What equipment goes into providing security to celebrities?**

The equipment could range from close protection weapons, escort vehicles, GPS, radio sets, night vision devices, low light surveillance cameras, bug and RF detection gears, doorframe and handheld metal detectors, under vehicle surveillance systems, baggage scanners, stun guns, pepper spray, bulletproof jackets, bomb blankets, alarm systems, super zoom surveillance binoculars, micro video and pinhole video cameras, surveillance and eavesdrop-

ping cameras and communication equipment, bulletproof vehicles, vapor analyzers, sound masking jamming and scrambling equipment, etc.

**What preparations are needed before the arrival of a celebrity at an event?**

An in-depth analysis of the advance survey and the vulnerabilities, understanding the detailed program with the organizers, route mapping, sanitization of venue and vehicles, etc. is done. The tabletop exercise allows us to decide upon, provide for and properly execute the planning.

[In addition, there is] liaisoning with police and government officials, fire facility services, promoters, entertainers and ushers.

Choreography of protection, that is, proper positioning/deployment, providing barricades and security rings/concentric rings and theory of protection, in-depth, are followed. Counter-surveillance techniques support the protective effort by watching the watchers.

**How do you ensure that no untoward incident (such as panic, stampede, etc.) takes place during celebrity movement in public?**

Security companies have to ensure it is a foolproof system (check, double-check, cross-check, and ensure nothing to chance) with a combination

of physical security and intelligence gathering. Highly well-defined programs, backup plans, proactive approach, extreme calmness, confidence level, body language, entry-exit defined, crowd management, liaisoning with police and government officials, fire facility services, promoters, entertainers and ushers [are needed].

**Do security personnel get special training to protect celebrities?**

Celebrity security personnel require different skill sets and are specially trained to provide executive protection. A split second can make the difference between life and death, both for the celebrity and the protection specialists. The focus of their training is to anticipate and be proactive rather than reactive. The emphasis is on avoiding trouble or getting caught in traps rather fighting it out. Protection of celebrities is more of a mental exercise.

A protection professional has to continuously keep thinking about what can happen next and how they are going to handle it. Through various tabletop exercises, they are trained to handle different situations. In celebrity security there is no time to think and give instructions, or to coordinate the efforts. This requires a very high level of planning, training and motivation. Training is imparted on crowd management, interpersonal skills, martial arts, fire safety and first aid.

**What are some of the challenges in providing security to celebrities?**

Executive protection is provided to global CEOs, government officials, delegations, politicians, models, stars,

dignitaries, diplomats, religious leaders, etc. The security varies in different segments of celebrities. The challenges faced while providing security to a celebrity would be to handle the media, fans and general public. The skills required are vigilance, sixth sense, body language, proactive approach, calmness and presence of mind. Specialized training is required to handle all kinds of threat perceptions and also for intelligence gathering.

**What is the per-day cost of providing such security? How does it vary?**

The cost of providing such security is very varied and will depend upon how vulnerable the person you were hired to protect is. What perils should you be anticipating? It ranges from a few hundreds rupees per bouncer per day to hundreds of US\$ per protection professional per day, plus boarding, lodging in the same hotel and travel in similar vehicles.

The cost varies for different requirements, such as armed, unarmed, onsite/off-site, vehicles, escorts, ambulances and so on. It also depends on packaged or individual services, event or conventional.

**What sort of people provide the security? What are their backgrounds and age groups? Are they male or female? How long do they last in their roles?**

Security is provided mostly by retired NSG, defense or police personnel. They are generally between 30 to 45 years of age. In addition to these, persons trained in martial arts and close combat are also employed. Protection drivers are people specially trained in defensive and offensive driving. A majority are male; however, when specially required by the celebrity, female security professionals are also provided. Typically, a mix of both young and experienced are required. Experience and qualified people are required to monitor, analyze and initiate responses to ensure that the celebrities avoid getting into a difficult/dangerous situation. Young persons concentrate on celebrity safety to prevent him/her from getting into trouble.

**Where do you find them?**

Trustworthy and professional people are needed for such jobs. Walsons Securitas has an established network, and most recruitments are on referrals by existing staff and employees. Also, professional personal protection personnel are usually from NSG, defense or police backgrounds.

**How do you train them?**

There is a need for persons to be trained as per international standards and best practices. Our training team is headed by Col. Mukesh Lakhanpal, CPP. Throughout the world the Certified Protection Professional (CPP) des-



**Back-end operations typically involve intelligence gathering, route and alternate route selection, intelligence on exit routes, crowd behavior, media response and liaison with government agencies.**

ignation is acknowledged as the security profession's highest recognition of practitioners.

We also have a team of defense officers and junior commissioned officers who have extensive experience in counter-insurgency and terrorism, who impart training. Retired senior police officers, security professionals and experts in martial arts also provide training.

Training is imparted at our centers spread throughout India. Curriculum for this training is based on international standards and procedures for executive protection. Physical fitness,

classroom training, PowerPoint presentations, case studies, demonstrations, role plays and tabletop exercises are used to make the training as realistic and as interesting as possible. In celebrity security there is no time to think; one has to coordinate the security effort and take on-the-spot decisions. As such, practical exercises and mock drills are practiced.

**What sort of people ask for such security?**

Foreign dignitaries visiting India, film stars, industrialists and corporate executives ask for such security. Even top international celebrities who bring in their own security staff require celebrity security because their personal security team cannot operate without the support of local security organizations.

**How close is the liaison with government agencies?**

Walsons Securitas has a team of retired police officers who assist in establishing close liaison with government agencies. Security is a state subject. Local law enforcement agencies are always over-stressed, but they extend their full cooperation as this makes their job easier.

**What kind of back-end operations are involved?**

Back-end operations typically involve intelligence gathering, route and alternate route selection, intelligence on exit routes, crowd behavior, media response and liaison with government agencies. Liaison with event organizers, communication, security arrangements en route and at the destination, vulnerability and threat to the celebrity, arrangement for specialist equipment and vehicles, hotel and airport check-ins, debugging of meeting place, counter-surveillance, handling of electronic and technical equipment, periodic updating of security environment, crisis management, etc. are also required.

**What sort of licenses or clearances are required?**

The Private Security Agencies Regulation Act 2005 lays down the license and other requirements. **DARE**