

CMA-PATTON TALKSHOPPE



SPEAKER: Ms Payal Mohanka

TOPIC: IN THE SHADOWS - Unknown craftsmen of Bengal .

Date: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2007

Time: 5:30 PM

Venue: EASTERN INSTITUTE of
MANAGEMENT, 7th Floor
50, CHOWRINGHEE RD (OPP BIRLA
PLANETARIUM)

PROFILE :

Payal Mohanka (nee Singh) started her career as a journalist with *The Illustrated Weekly of India* and spent over a decade with the magazine covering a wide range of subjects, but her forte was human interest.

In 1995 she was awarded the prestigious Press Fellowship to Wolfson College, Cambridge. She then moved to broadcast journalism, reporting for India Business Report on BBC World Service Television and CNBC India for over seven years. In 2002 she made a documentary on Chandernagor, a former French colony, titled *Little France on the Hooghly* and in 2003 a documentary on Mother Teresa, *From Saint to Sainthood*, which was selected for the Philadelphia Film Festival and screened at the Nehru Centre in London. She has written for *Rediff.Com*, *Indian Abroad* and *The Round Table*, the *Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*.

TOPIC HIGHLIGHTS :

Ms Mohanka will share with us her learnings in the process of writing her recently released book, *IN THE SHADOWS* - Unknown craftsmen of Bengal .

There are villages in West Bengal where the rural economy is hinged on a rather unusual activity. One cluster of craftsmen churns out wigs, another lights... polo balls... boats... shuttlecocks... jeans...

Following the original process that has been passed down the generations, these craftsmen keep alive old family traditions. Their efforts give them a basic livelihood and in some cases a little more. These products have given these otherwise obscure villages an identity, a quiet sense of pride even if the material gains are meagre. The younger generation is keen to take the business forward. Their grit and determination is admirable. For decades they have kept their units in operation. **They have no formal business or management training but what they possess in ample measure is native intelligence and homespun skills.**

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