

## **13th Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards to confer Lifetime Achievement Award on noted Indian film and theatre director Vijaya Mehta**

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- META 2018 jury includes Amal Allana, Lillete Dubey, Neelam Man Singh Chowdhry, Rajat Kapoor, Ranjit Kapoor and Shobha Deepak Singh
- Nominated plays to be showcased at the META Festival in Delhi from April 13-18, 2018
- META partners with Drama School Mumbai (DSM) to present a series of master classes with META nominated stalwarts

**New Delhi, April 3, 2018:** At a media event in the national capital on Tuesday, the Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META) Festival 2018 announced that the **META 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award** will be conferred on the veteran Indian film and theatre director, **Vijaya Mehta**, Founder Member of the theatre group, Rangayan, and a leading figure in the experimental theatre of the 1960s.

The jury for the 13th edition of the Awards was also announced and comprises renowned theatre director and former Chairperson of the National School of Drama **Amal Allana**, popular film and theatre actor and theatre director **Lillete Dubey**, theatre director and professor of theatre at the Punjab University, **Neelam Man Singh Chowdhry**, film maker, actor, theatre director and writer **Rajat Kapoor**, theatre, film and television writer-

director, **Ranjit Kapoor** and Indian cultural impresario, photographer, writer, classical dancer and the director of Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra, **Shobha Deepak Singh**.

The announcements come ahead of the week-long Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META) and Festival to be held from April 13th to 18th, 2018 at New Delhi's Kamani Auditorium and Shri Ram Centre, where the ten-shortlisted plays will be performed for jury members as well as theatre lovers in the Capital. The most comprehensive awards for theatre in India, META will present awards in 13 competitive categories, in addition to the Lifetime Achievement Award. The awards will be presented at the Red-Carpet Awards Night to be held on April 19 to celebrate the best of Indian theatre from the past year.

Over 330 entries were received this year at META, which were viewed by an eminent selection committee, comprising of well-known theatre practitioners. This year's final 10 nominations feature plays in Assamese, Bengali, English, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam and Manipuri as well as a non-verbal movement theatre production. The plays explore subjects as far and wide as gender identity through Indian mythology, the machinations of the entertainment industry and how they treat their female leads, folk literature from Bengal, the balance between the female (prakriti) and male (purusha) energies, the politics of religion and the religion of politics and its division of society, the brutality against women by the Japanese imperialist army during World War II, reinterpreted Greek tragedies, German philosophy revisited and the flamboyant playing style of veteran Colombian goalkeeper, José René Higuita Zapata.

Vijaya Mehta is a noted Indian film and theatre director and actor noted for her association with Parallel Cinema. She is a founder member of the Mumbai-based theatre group, Rangayan with playwright Vijay Tendulkar

and actors Arvind Deshpande and Shreeram Lagoo. She studied theatre with Ebrahim Alkazi in Delhi and with Adi Marzban in Mumbai. She was awarded the 1975 Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for excellence in Direction and in 1986 she won the National Film Award for Best Supporting Actress for her role in Rao Saheb (1986).

In previous years, the META Lifetime Achievement Award has been conferred on several stalwarts of Indian theatre, including the Late Zohra Sehgal, the Late Badal Sarkar, the Late Khaled Chowdhary, Ebrahim Alkazi, Girish Karnard, the Late Heisnam Kanhailal, Ratan Thiyam and Arun Kakade.

In a first, META also announced a series of Masterclasses during the non-performing hours of the festival. The Masterclasses, curated in partnership with the Drama School Mumbai (DSM), will feature META nominated stalwarts in conversation with theatre students, practitioners and enthusiasts. The workshops are an extension of META's endeavour to nurture the world of Indian theatre and build a community of theatre practitioners dedicated to the craft. It is also aimed at enhancing public engagement with theatre and developing an appreciation for the multitude of skills and techniques that are involved in putting together quality theatre productions. Interested participants can register for the workshops on the META website [www.metawards.com](http://www.metawards.com).

The media launch of the META Festival also hosted a topical discussion - **'Do Festivals and cultural platforms benefit the Arts and Theatre?'** that generated a dialogue on the proliferation of art and culture festivals in the country and how they were impacting the arts and cultural fraternity and stakeholders. The panel, moderated by Sanjoy K Roy, included the eminent Indian theatre director, teacher and author, **Anuradha Kapur**, Bharatanatyam dancer, educator, choreographer, arts administrator, author

and the founder director of the Delhi International Arts Festival, **Pratibha Prahlad**, civil servant, published author and art and culture enthusiast, **Sujata Prasad**, theatre artist and presently Director of the Habitat Centre, **Sunit Tandon** and theatre personality and Head of Programmes at the Habitat World, **Vidyun Singh**. The panelists discussed how art and cultural festivals help the evolution of art forms, create new avenues for emerging talent and showcase the diversity and depth of art forms and artistes for the benefit of connoisseurs and loyalists, as well as new audiences.

Promoted by the Mahindra Group as part of its cultural outreach and curated by Teamwork Arts, a pioneering entertainment company, META rewards and recognizes the best productions and performances, along with their makers and facilitators, providing encouragement to our indigenous theatre industry, with an aim to increase not just awareness, but also the appreciation of fine theatre in India.

**Jay Shah, Head, Cultural Outreach, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd**, said, “META remains India’s most definitive platform to recognise theatrical talent. For more than a decade, it has brought together the very best of theatre productions from across the country. There is a multitude of talent in this art form which is the source code of all performing arts and the Mahindra Group is proud to present META each year as an inclusive, empowering, and prestigious canvas.”

**Sanjoy K Roy, MD, Teamwork Arts & Festival Producer**, said, “META is a celebration of the artistic diversity of our Indian stagecraft and every year we strengthen our commitment of providing opportunity and access to the finest talent out there. This year theatre enthusiasts can participate in workshops and masterclasses held by META nominated theatre stalwarts”

META 2018 will give away 14 awards, including the Lifetime Achievement Award, as well as 13 competitive categories - Best Play, Best Director, Best

Stage Design, Best Light Design, Best Innovative Sound Design, Best Costume Design, Best Actor in a Lead Role (Male), Best Actor in a Lead Role (Female), Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Male), Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female), Best Original Script, Best Ensemble and Best Choreographer.

For full list and details of nominations, please visit [www.metawards.com](http://www.metawards.com).

The full schedule of the 13th META Festival is as follows.

### **FESTIVAL SCHEDULE -**

Tickets priced at Rs.100/- only and Rs.200/- are available on [www.metawards.com](http://www.metawards.com) or [www.bookmyshow.com](http://www.bookmyshow.com)

Date	Play	Language	Time	Venue	Duration
13.04.2018	Muktidham	Hindi	8:00 PM	SHRI RAM CENTRE	2 hours (10 min interval)
14.04.2018	Karuppu	Non- verbal	8:00 PM	SHRI RAM CENTRE	1 hour
15.04.2018	Comfort Women: An Untold History	Assamese	6:00 PM	SHRI RAM CENTRE	1 hour 15 minutes
15.04.2018	Higuita: The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick	Malayalam	8:00 PM	SHRIRAM BHARATIYA KALA KENDRA	1 hour, 15 minutes
16.04.2018	Hojang Taret	Manipuri	6:00 PM	SHRI RAM CENTRE	1 hour, 05 minutes

16.04.2018	Nona	Malayalam	8:00 PM	KAMANI AUDITORIUM	2 hours
17.04.2018	Caucasian Chalk Circle	Kannada	6:00 PM	SHRI RAM CENTRE	1 hour, 40 minutes
17.04.2018	Item	Hindi	8:00 PM	KAMANI AUDITORIUM	1 hour, 40 minutes
18.04.2018	Moimonsingha Geetika	Bengali	6:00 PM	SHRI RAM CENTRE	2 hours, 10 minutes (10 min interval)
18.04.2018	Shikhandi: The Story of the In- betweens	English	8:30 PM	KAMANI AUDITORIUM	1 hour, 30 minutes

## NOTES TO EDITORS

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people across 100 countries.

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### **About Teamwork Arts**

For over 25 years, Teamwork Arts has taken India to the world and brought the world to India. In countries such as Australia, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Italy, Israel, Korea, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, UK and USA, Teamwork produces over 25 highly acclaimed performing arts, visual arts and literary festivals across more than 40 cities. Teamwork Arts produces one of the world's largest free literary gatherings, the annual ZEE Jaipur Literature Festival, the Ishara International Puppet Festival and the annual Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META) and Festival in New Delhi, international festivals Shared History in South Africa, Eye on India in the United States of America, India by the Bay in Hong Kong, Confluence - Festival of India in Australia, India@70 2017: Year of Culture in the United Kingdom, and many more.

Website: [www.teamworkarts.com](http://www.teamworkarts.com)

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