

**Strictly Embargoed till 2130 Hours IST on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

*Media Release*

## 13<sup>th</sup> [META Festival](#) concludes with Red Carpet Awards Night

- 13<sup>th</sup> [META Festival](#) week plays to packed audiences in Delhi
- In a first, META for Best Play goes to joint winners - *Nona* and *Item* - which won four and two awards, respectively
- Diversity in themes and excellence in quality appreciated by jury members and audiences alike

**New Delhi, April 19, 2018:** The theatre fraternity came together in the national capital for a red-carpet awards gala at the [13<sup>th</sup> Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards \(META\) Festival](#). Promoted by the [Mahindra Group](#) as part of its cultural outreach programmes, [and curated by pioneering entertainment company Teamwork Arts](#), the [week-long extravaganza](#) came to an end as the best of the year from Indian theatre were awarded the coveted [META](#) at the gala awards night at Kamani Auditorium on Thursday.

The annual awards, which recognise excellence in theatre nationally, celebrate the diversity intrinsic to the rich cultural traditions of India. The [META](#) is India's most comprehensive theatre awards and much revered in the theatre fraternity, recognising both on-stage and off-stage talent across [14 award categories](#), including the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award.

The jury for the 13<sup>th</sup> edition of META comprised renowned theatre director and former Chairperson of the National School of Drama, **Amal Allana**, popular film and theatre actor and 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 cultural impresario, photographer, writer, classical dancer and the director of the Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra, **Shobha Deepak Singh**.

For the first time in META history, two plays – *Nona* and *Item* – bagged the award for **Best Play**. Leading the awards tally, *Nona* bagged a total of four awards including **Best Director** (Jino Joseph), **Best Stage Design** (Jino Joseph) and **Best Light Design** (Sajas Rahman & Abid PT). This is the second victory for Jino Joseph at META who won the 2015 META for Best Director, Best Production and Best Original Script with *Matthi*.

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First time entrant at META, Kshitish Date (Natak Company) won the **Best Play** for *Item* along with co-artiste, Sainath Ganuwad who won the META for **Best Actor in a Lead Role (Male)** for his brilliant and entertaining portrayal of L. Rakesh, the on-stage narrator of the play. The Umbilical Theatre (*Hojang Taret*), also a first time entrant to META walked away with three awards including **Best Sound Design** for H. Anilkumar, **Best Actor in a Lead Role (Female)** for Kh. Sanatombi and **Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female)** for Kh. Nganthoileima. The **Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female)** was also presented to Srishti Shrivastava from *Shikhandi: The Story of the In-Betweens*.

The non-verbal production, *Karuppu* won two awards including **Best Choreography** for Mani Bharati and **Best Costume** awarded to Ruchi Raveendran, who also received a special mention for **Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female)**. *Muktidham* won two awards including **Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Male)** for Kumud Mishra and **Best Original Script** for Abhishek Majumdar, as did *Shikhandi: The Story of the In-Betweens* which also won the META for **Best Ensemble**.

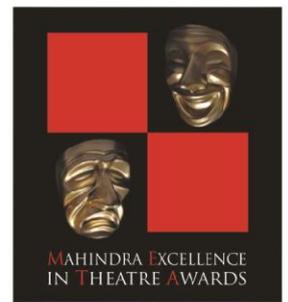
Eminent theatre veteran, **Vijaya Mehta** was conferred the **META Lifetime Achievement Award** for her contribution to Indian theatre. In a message to META and to theatre artistes as well as audiences, she said, *"I am very happy. I love and admire the generation shaping the art world and theatre today. I find them smart, wise and aware - perhaps in a different way from my own generation of the 1950s of the pre and post-Independence period. It is nice to know that young people are recognising and are aware of my work."*

Vijaya Mehta is a renowned Indian film and theatre director and actor well known for her association with the Parallel Cinema movement. She is a founder-member of the Mumbai-based theatre group, Rangayan along with playwright Vijay Tendulkar and actors Arvind Deshpande and Shreeram Lagoo. She studied theatre with Ebrahim Alkazi in Delhi and 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*.

This year's edition of the festival saw over 330 entries sent in for various categories. These were viewed by an eminent selection committee, comprising well-known theatre practitioners. Like every year, this year's shortlisted plays were diverse and exemplified the best of India. For a week in the capital's Shri Ram Centre, Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra and Kamani Auditorium, the META festival staged the final 10 nominations of 2018 featuring plays in Assamese, Bengali, English, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam and Manipuri as well as a non-verbal movement theatre production, with several of these performances running to packed houses.

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In a first, META also featured a series of Masterclasses during the non-performing hours of the festival. These Masterclasses, curated in partnership with the Drama School Mumbai (DSM), were extremely well received and featured 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 towards developing an appreciation of the skills and techniques involved in putting together quality theatre productions.

**Jay Shah, Head, Cultural Outreach, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd**, said, *"The 13<sup>th</sup> META has concluded with all the drama, fanfare and applause it deserves. The 10 best productions from across India vied for the top honours in the nation's capital. With the introduction of Learning@META, we've additionally strengthened our aim to encourage the indigenous theatre industry and to increase not just awareness, but also the appreciation of fine theatre in India. We've had a diverse set of awardees but, at the end, each META participant has been a winner. The Mahindra Group too feels a great sense of victory for being able to establish a platform that defines excellence in Indian Theatre. A Rise moment for all!"*

**Sanjoy K Roy, MD, Teamwork Arts & Festival Producer**, said, *"The journey of META has been one of the most artistically fruitful and soul-satisfying for all of us. META 2018 brought together the finest theatre from across the country. It continues to be a primary platform for new voices and new work across languages and dialects. It's truly heartening to see that the rich theatre traditions of India are alive and vibrant."*

Hosted by the livewire, Vinay Pathak, the scintillating awards night saw the presence of several stalwarts and influencers including Rajat Kapoor, M K Raina, Sushma Seth, Nissar Allana, Lillete Dubey, Salima Raza, Danish Hussain, Oroon Das, Kishwar Desai, Shivani Wazir, Sunit Tandon, Vidyun Singh, Sohaila Kapur, Dadi Pudumjee and many more stars. Performances by The Lyric Ensemble Delhi (LED), Tanushree Shankar's Dance Troupe and Dastangoi by Darain Shahidi further enlivened proceedings.

Along with renowned thespians, veterans from several allied creative fields like literature, comedy and visual art presented the coveted awards to ecstatic awardees and noted personalities like Namita Gokhale, Satish Gupta and Papa CJ were among those who gave away awards.

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Here's the complete list of winners that won hearts and stole the show at the 13<sup>th</sup> META Festival this year:

Category	Winner	Production
Life time Achievement Award	Vijaya Mehta	-
Best Actor in a Lead Role (Male)	Sainath Ganuwad	Item
Best Actor in a Lead Role (Female)	Kh. Sanatombi	Hojang Taret
Special Mention	Ruchi Raveendran	Karuppu
Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Male)	Kumud Mishra	Muktidham
Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female)	Srishti Shrivastava	Shikhandi : The Story of the In-Betweens
<i>(Joint Winners)</i>	Kh. Nganthoileima	Hojang Taret
Best Director	Jino Joseph	Nona
Best Original Script	Abhishek Majumdar	Muktidham
Best Play	Kshitish Date	Item
<i>(Joint Winners)</i>	Jino Joseph	Nona
Best Ensemble	-	Shikhandi : The Story of the In-Betweens
Best Innovative Sound Design	H. Anilkumar	Hojang Taret
Best Costume Design	Ruchi Raveendran	Karuppu
Best Stage Design	Jino Joseph	Nona
Best Light Design	Sajas Rahman & Abid P.T.	Nona
Best Choreography	Mani Bharati	Karuppu

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

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Learn more about Mahindra on [www.mahindra.com](http://www.mahindra.com) / Twitter and Facebook: @MahindraRise

### **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)

**For complete media kit, please visit the media page on the festival website [www.metawards.com](http://www.metawards.com). For media queries and interview requests, please contact:**

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