

## Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META) announces top 10 nominations for 19th edition

Indian theatre's annual awards and festival gala – the Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META) - is set to run from **14<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2024**. Instituted by the Mahindra Group, the Festival announced the top 10 plays nominated across 13 categories which will be staged in the national capital followed by a glittering Red Carpet Awards Night. To celebrate the finest in Indian theatre, the winners will be felicitated on 20th March 2024 at the Kamani Auditorium, New Delhi, with luminaries from the world of theatre present at the occasion. META's plays have always sent out powerful statements through their themes and characterisations; the themes have spanned mythology, gender, identity, rebellion, oppression and exploitation, authoritarianism, grit, personal struggle, adventure, and more. This year too, the entries and the nominated plays explore a range of narratives.

For the 2024 season, the Festival received over **390 entries** from across India representing Maharashtra, Delhi, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Manipur, and Rajasthan. Integrating inclusivity and diversity into the Festival as always, the final 10 nominations feature plays in languages like **Assamese, Bangla, English, Hindi, Hindustani, Malayalam, Marathi**, among others.

The nominated top 10 plays for META 2024 are: *Agnisuta Draupadi, Avalanche, Bhoothangal, Do you know this song?, Gagan Damama Bajyo, Ghanta Ghanta Ghanta Ghanta, Gopal Ure & Co., Hayavadana, Raghunath and Siachen.*

Speaking of META 2024, **Jay Shah, Vice President, Head - Cultural Outreach, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.** said, *“It is a matter of great pride that META, our first Cultural Outreach initiative will soon have its 19th edition. Our vision was to create a national level platform for recognizing and rewarding theatrical excellence and we are grateful to India’s vibrant theatre community for participating with such enthusiasm. We look forward to presenting this year’s 10 best plays and celebrate theatre from all across our country”.*

**Sanjoy Roy, Managing Director of Teamwork Arts,** said, *“As we prepare to host the much awaited landmark 19th edition of META Festival, we are delighted to announce the nomination of outstanding productions representing a rich tapestry of languages and cultures. The diligent work of our discerning Selection Committee underscores Teamwork Arts and the Mahindra Group’s commitment to celebrating diversity and excellence in the performing arts, reaffirming theatre’s timeless significance as a profound form of artistic expression. META 2024 will showcase a diverse array of 10 plays, encompassing languages including English, Marathi, Malayalam, Assamese, Bangla, Hindi, and Hindustani.”*

The Selection Committee, along with the META Secretariat, viewed all the 395 plays submitted to compete. This year, the erudite committee featured Indian film and theatre critic and cultural journalist **Ajit Rai**; Sangeet Natak Akademi Award recipient actor, director, script and screenplay writer **Amitabh Srivastav**; well-known Indian TV, theatre and film actress **Deepika Amin**; eminent journalist and theatre critic **Saraswati Nagarajan**; prominent TV and film actress **Swaroop Ghosh**.

Talking about the talent in Indian theatre industry **Deepika Amin** said, *“It is truly heartening to witness the selection of plays this year, which reflects the remarkable energy, enthusiasm, and dedication of the younger generation. Despite limitations such as modest budgets and minimal resources, they have succeeded in crafting magic through their choreography and compelling storytelling. This exemplifies the essence of theatre: the ability to create something extraordinary from seemingly ordinary elements.”*

Talking about her experience in selecting the top productions **Swaroop Ghosh** said, *“It's truly remarkable to observe the sheer dedication of individuals who, despite facing resource constraints, work tirelessly and quietly to create extraordinary theatre productions. As members of the selection committee, it's both challenging and rewarding to choose the top 10 productions from a vast pool of submissions. The process is inherently competitive, yet it is this very rigor that sets META apart, making it unique and distinct from other platforms.”*

Sharing her views on META **Saraswati Nagarajan** said, *“Two decades ago, the expansive platform that META now provides was but a distant dream. META's emergence as a pioneering platform has indeed been a blessing, offering audiences an unparalleled showcase of Indian theatrical excellence. This platform serves as a vital pillar of support for theatre practitioners, inspiring them to persevere in their creative pursuits. Additionally, META has fostered invaluable opportunities for emerging theatre directors, facilitating their rise to prominence within the industry.”*

Sharing his views on this year's selection process **Amitabh Srivastav** said, *“India boasts a vibrant theatre scene, encompassing a multitude of genres including musical plays, political satires, and social dramas. Through our selection process, we have come to appreciate the rich tapestry of diverse theatrical genres being performed across the nation. This year, our focus has been on*

*selecting the finest productions from the myriad of submissions, irrespective of genre or language, in order to showcase the depth and breadth of India's theatrical talent.”*

Appreciating the platform and the festival **Ajit Rai** said, *“The META Awards and Festival stands as the pinnacle of the Indian theatre industry, akin to the revered Mahakumbh. This year, our endeavor has been to distill the essence of excellence, handpicking the top 10 productions from a vast array of submissions we received.”*

For the full list of nominations, please visit [www.metawards.com](http://www.metawards.com). The entire schedule and jury for the Festival will be announced soon.

#### **NOMINATED PRODUCTIONS:**

- **Agnisuta Draupadi** directed by **Maisnam Joy Metei** and produced by **TAAM Manipur** [Imphal (Manipur), 1 hour 30 mins, Hindi]
- **Avalanche** directed by **Gandharv Dewan** and produced by **The Gathered** [Mumbai (Maharashtra), 1 hour 40 mins, Hindustani]
- **Bhoothangal** directed by **O.T. Shajahan** and produced by **Athlete Kayika Nadakavedhi** [Pallakad (Kerala), 1 hour 20 mins, Malayalam]
- **Do you know this song?** directed by **Mallika Taneja** produced by **Mallika Taneja** [New Delhi, 1 hour 30 mins, Hindi / English]
- **Gagan Damama Bajyo** directed by **Piyush Mishra** and **Hemant Pandey**; produced by **Tamboo Theatre Company** [Mumbai (Maharashtra), 1 hour 40 mins, Hindi]
- **Ghanta Ghanta Ghanta Ghanta Ghanta** directed by **Mohit Takalkar** and produced by **Aasakta Kalamanch** [Pune (Maharashtra), 1 hour 40 mins, Marathi]

- **Gopal Ure & Co.** directed by **Sujan Mukhopadhyay** and produced by **Chetana** [Kolkata (West Bengal), 1 hour 50 mins, Bengali]
- **Hayavadana** directed by **Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry** produced by **Bhoomija** [Bangalore (Karnataka), 1 hour 30 mins, Hindi]
- **Raghnath** directed by **Bidyut Kr. Nath** and produced by **Rangamancha** [Nagaon (Assam), 1 hour 10 mins, Assamese]
- **Siachen** directed by **Makarand Deshpande** produced by **72° East Productions** [Mumbai (Maharashtra), 1 hour 20 mins, Hindi]

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### About Mahindra:

Founded in 1945, the Mahindra Group is one of the largest and most admired multinational federation of companies with 2, 60,000 employees in over 100 countries. It enjoys a leadership position in farm equipment, utility vehicles, information technology and financial services in India and is the world's largest tractor company by volume. It has a strong presence in renewable energy, agriculture, logistics, hospitality and real estate.

The Mahindra Group has a clear focus on leading ESG globally, enabling rural prosperity and enhancing urban living, with a goal to drive positive change in the lives of communities and stakeholders to enable them to Rise.

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### About Teamwork Arts:

Teamwork Arts is a highly versatile production company with roots in the performing arts, social action and the corporate world. For over 30 years, Teamwork Arts has taken India to the world

and brought the world to India, presenting the finest of Indian performers, writers, change makers and visual artistes in the knowledge and arts space in India and abroad. Every year, we produce over 33 festivals in 72 cities and 26 countries in the fields of performing & visual arts and literature. We produce the world's largest literary gathering: the annual Jaipur Literature Festival; JLF international now travels to the US, UK, Canada, Australia, the Maldives, and Europe.

Even amidst the upheaval and unsettling times of 2020 and through 2021, Teamwork Arts successfully launched the digital series, JLF Brave New World and Words Are Bridges, which were viewed by over 4.8 million people in their first season. Through its digital avatar, the Jaipur Literature Festival reached over 27 million viewers in January 2021. Art Matters empowers artistes across India to collaborate by commissioning them to create new works. The digital series Be Inspired was launched in 2021 – a series that crystal gazes into the future with conversations on science, technology, innovation, environment and more. The first on-ground edition of 'Be Inspired - Festival of Ideas' was held in April 2023. **Website:** [www.teamworkarts.com](http://www.teamworkarts.com)

**For more information, please contact:**

**Teamwork Arts:**

**Manash Pratim Deka**

Associate Vice President – Public Relations & Corporate Communications

M: +91 9953970829 | E: [manash@teamworkarts.com](mailto:manash@teamworkarts.com)

**Zimisha Communications:**

**Imtiaz Alam**

M: +919810227818 | E: [imtiaz@zimisha.com](mailto:imtiaz@zimisha.com)

**Santosh Kumar**

M: +919990937676 | E: [santosh@zimisha.com](mailto:santosh@zimisha.com)