

MEDIA RELEASE

Varanasi reverberates with Kabir's poetry Mahindra Kabira Festival begins!

Varanasi, 4 November, 2016: For the next two days, the poetry of Kabir will echo from the many *ghats* of Varanasi, as the first edition of the Mahindra Kabira Festival (MKF) takes place in the holy city. The festival was inaugurated on Friday at the old world Brij Rama Palace which overlooks the sacred Darbhanga Ghat.

MKF is a unique celebration of Varanasi, the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world which encapsulates poet-saint Kabir's philosophy of oneness within diversity. It promises to be an immersive experience as attendees can look forward to imbibing Kabir's world view and the lyrical aspect of his teachings through a programme of poetry, music, talks, heritage walks, crafts, textiles and more. The festival has been curated by the Mahindra Group and Teamwork Arts and will take place from November 4 – 6, 2016.

The inaugural evening saw Varanasi's unique spiritual aura amplified as the melodious verses of the poet-saint filled the air. The venue was packed with guests who had flown in from Mumbai, Delhi, France and several other cities and countries. The evening began with Kabir expert, Shabnam Virmani and members of the Kabir Project performing their soulful rendition of the saint's work. Shabnam's five-stringed *tambura* and her wide repertoire of Kabir's folk songs, along with her collaboration with the Kabir Project comprising Vipul Rikhi and Gopal Singh Chouhan enchanted the audience.

Speaking on the occasion, Jay Shah, Head, Cultural Outreach, Mahindra and Mahindra limited, said, "The dignity of the individual is at the very center of the Core Values of the Mahindra Group. Our value system is a fair representation of Kabir's teachings. It is with this familiarity that we decided to celebrate Kabir through the annual Mahindra Kabira Festival. We are excited to finally be here in Varanasi, in the city of Kabir's birth to launch the first edition of the festival!"

Sanjoy Roy, MD, Teamwork Arts said, "Varanasi is one of the most unique river cities in the world, balancing life and death in a way that no other space can ever do. The festival is real nourishment for the soul for those keen to discover the many secrets that the city and its people have to offer. A truly unique and unforgettable experience"

Schedule for MKF – November 5, 2016

Flautist Atul Shankar and Kabir experts, Shabnam Virmani and Vipul Rikhi will open the Mahindra Kabira Festival's programme on Saturday 5th November with Morning Music at the Darbhanga Ghat from 7:30 am onwards.

This will be followed by a Literature Session at 11:00 am at the Brij Rama Palace with Shabnam Virmani and Vipul Rikhi reading extracts from their forthcoming book on songlines through Bhakti, Sufi and Baul oral traditions. This will be an interactive session followed by a discussion with the audience.

In the evening, patrons can look forward to a Heritage Walk which will commence at 4:00 pm from the Darbhanga Ghat and weave through the gulleys of Varanasi. Evening Music at Assi Ghat will begin at 6:15 pm with the *Aarti* followed by performances from Nathoo Lal Solanki, Vidya Shah, Mir Mukhtiyar Ali and Pt. Rajan Sajan Mishra.

Note: The Literature Session and Heritage Walks have limited audience capacity.

NOTES TO EDITOR

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In 2015, Mahindra & Mahindra was recognized as the Best Company for CSR in India in a study by the Economic Times. In 2014, Mahindra featured on the Forbes Global 2000, a comprehensive listing of the world's largest, most powerful public companies, as measured by revenue, profit, assets and market value. The Mahindra Group also received the Financial Times 'Boldness in Business' Award in the 'Emerging Markets' category in 2013.

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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 produces one of the world's largest free literary gatherings, the annual ZEE Jaipur Literature Festival, international festivals Shared History in South Africa, Eye on India in the United States of America, India by the Bay in Hong Kong, and many more.

Website: <http://www.teamworkarts.com>

For further information on Mahindra Kabira Festival, please visit:

<http://mahindrakabira.com/>

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