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'I am not an entrepreneur, else I won't have that smile on my face'

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CHENNAI: The ballroom at Taj Corommandal was well lit and all set to celebrate the life and work of Padma Bhushan awardee R Thyagarajan, popularly known as RT.

With nearly 300 people in the room greeting each other, all eyes suddenly turned towards the main entrance of the hall, as R Thyagarajan entered.

I am not an entrepreneur: The R Thyagarajan story is a tribute to RT for his contribution as a business icon to the society, on behalf of the entire Shriram Group.



(From L) Ajay Piramal, R Thyagarajan & S Gurumurthy during a book release function in the city on Friday | Ashwin PrasathThe book, launched on Friday, is a compilation of interviews, essays and letters, which describes what kind of a person Thyagarajan was in his early life.

Ajay Piramal, chairman of Shriram Group, persuaded him to launch this book.

"The book talks about what he is good at; RT is what he says and he is what he doesn't too," beamed N Lakshminarayanan, vice-chairman, Cognizant Technology Solutions, who presided the event.

R Seshasayee, chairman, Infosys, said, "It is not his 80th birthday today. But we are celebrating him."

S Gurumurthy, well known commentator on economic and political affairs, called RT “an engaging conversationist”. “He makes his English and Tamil sound the same,” said Gurumurthy, making the entire crowd laugh. “People who are shy like RT should be celebrated over shameless people,” he said.

The first copy of the book was released by Vaghul, former chairman of ICICI Bank, and received by Gopal Srinivasan, chairman of TVS Capital.

Sanlam Group CEO Ian Kirk, who has partnered with RT, was present to grace the event and shared two stories of how he was associated with his partner and what he learnt from him.

“The 79-year-old man supposedly detaches himself from everything, be it wealth, success, failure,” said Ajay Piramal, adding “something typical of RT is the smile on the cover of the book.”

Finally, Thygarajan took over the stage. Making the crowd laugh out loud, he said, “I was ordered to agree to launch a book in my name and I was left with no choice, and my smile on the book cover coincides with the title, ‘I am not an entrepreneur’ because if I was one, I wouldn’t have that smile on my face.” And he laughs.