

# Sixty years for Shanmukhananda

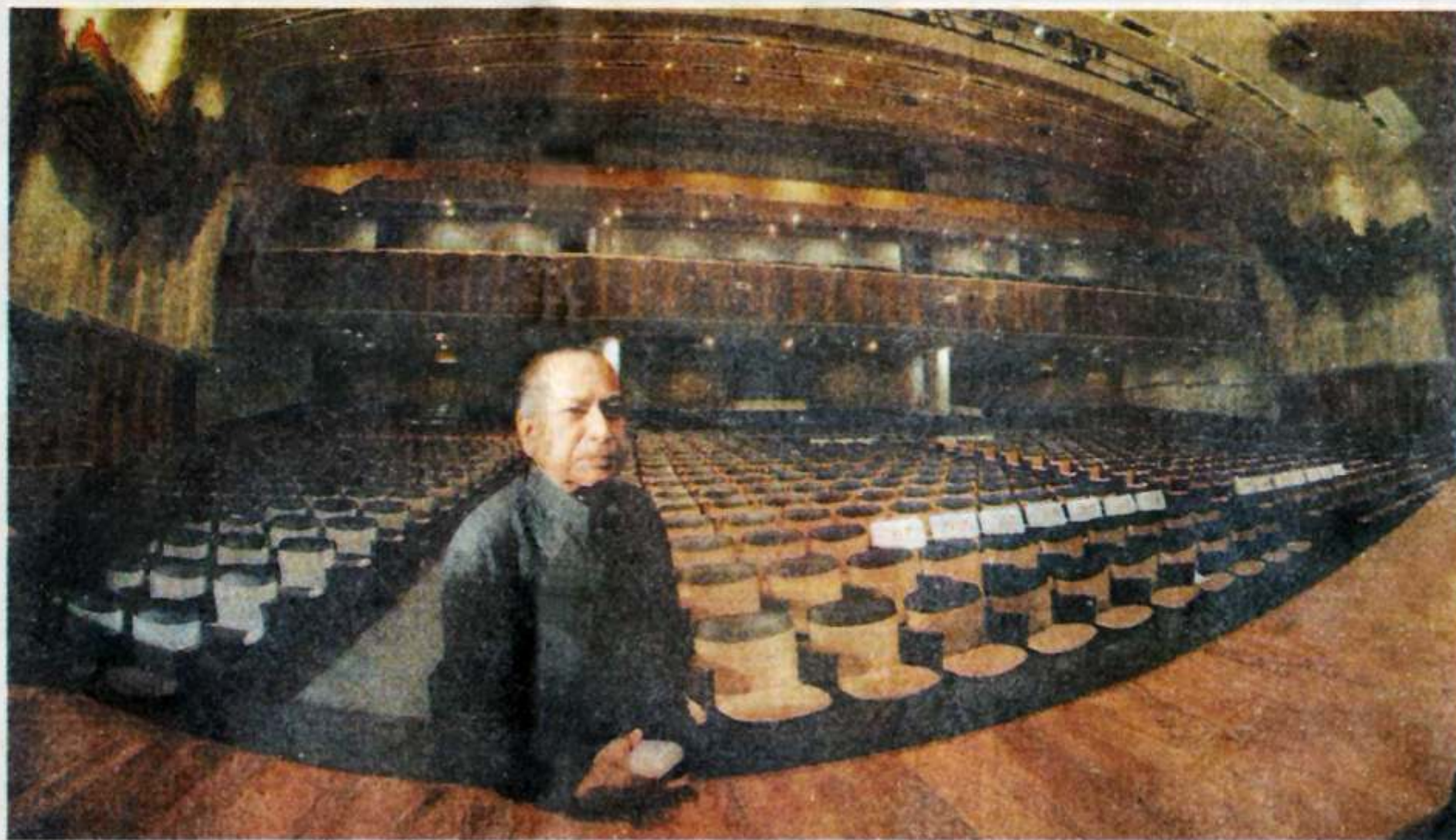
Fifty years since the auditorium's inauguration and sixty years since the Sabha's formation, the Sri Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Sabha & Fine Arts is all set to celebrate life. This Tuesday, they will be conferring awards to Indians from various walks of life, each with one thing in common — high moral values

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ASIA'S largest auditorium, the monstrous 2750-seater Shanmukhananda Hall, stands majestically in the bylanes of Sion East. Ask any passerby, any paan wala and he'll lead you right to its doors. Fifty years since the auditorium's inauguration, the Shanmukhananda Hall is a Central suburb landmark. According to R Sridhar, a trustee and member of the Managing Committee at Sri Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Sabha & Fine Arts, you're not a true resident of Mumbai unless you've attended a concert at the Hall.

This year is the diamond jubilee of the Shanmukhananda Sabha, which was set up in July 1952. "We South Indians have fine arts in our households. We always encourage our children to pursue some form of music or dance. As a hobby, if not professionally," says Amarnath Sury, Hon. Secretary, Sri Shanmukhananda, explaining why it wasn't out of the ordinary for such a Sabha to be formed. The auditorium was built about 10 years later. In the meantime,



Hon. Secretary Amarnath Sury inside the auditorium of the prestigious Shanmukhananda Hall. PIC/ATUL KAMBLE

the Sabha found other venues to host its bi-monthly programs.

When then-Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru commented on Mumbai's lack of a big auditorium, the Sabha took on the challenge. By 1963, the auditorium was up and running. "In 1964, we hosted a Congress adhiveshan which Nehru attended. He died soon after," reveals Sury. The auditorium is still the largest in the city and although it is primarily an institute of fine arts, it continues to host political, commercial and cultural activities.

The Celebrating Life Award ceremony, to be held on July 17 at 6 pm, is

## 60 years, 60 violinists!

Celebrating their diamond jubilee in style, the Shanmukhananda Hall will have 60 violinists on stage this evening. The violinists will be led by A Kanyakumari, a renowned Carnatic violinist from Chennai.

**AT:** July 15, 6 pm, Shanmukhananda Hall, Sion (East)

their way of upholding values. "Values are more important than anything. A person with strong values can shine just as an artiste does," says Sury. The awardees include Mahadeva (a public undertaker from Bengaluru), Jadav Payeng (the Forest Man of Assam), and MC Suresh (an honest lottery ticket vendor from Kerala). "V Shankar, the Chairman, has been scouring the Internet, looking for the most deserving candidates," explains Sury. "Some of them have been written about widely, but many haven't been talked about much." Among other things, the awardees will be winning a cash prize of Rs 2.5 lakh.

On the day of the award ceremony, Shanmukhananda Hall will also be hosting two exhibitions. While one will display a collection of fine arts stamps (courtesy the Postal Department), the other will give you a glimpse into the 60 year-long journey of Shanmukhananda Hall. "We are going to display 72 slides, which will give visitors an insight into the Hall's past," says Sury.

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