

# Sanjay exhorts MPs to propagate tree planting

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NEW DELHI, Aug. 24—Mr Sanjay Gandhi today described members of Parliament as the real leaders of the nation, and said they should lead the masses in all spheres, including tree plantation and family planning.

Mr Gandhi was inaugurating a Vanamahotsava drive near the

MPs' Club, North Avenue. Organised by the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee, the function was attended, among others, by Union Ministers V. C. Shukla, Om Mehta and H. K. L. Bhagat.

At the outset of his brief speech, Mr Gandhi smilingly remarked that he was under the impression that he would be opening a family planning camp, too, in the area. He hoped that before long a camp would be actually started.

In his speech, Mr Shukla said that Indians since time immemorial had held trees in high esteem. But the credit for articulating tree plantation into a grand movement should go to Mr Sanjay Gandhi. He spoke of the need for afforestation to improve the environment.

Mr Om Mehta also congratulated Mr Gandhi and the Youth Congress for taking up tree plantation on an ambitious scale. Planting a tree and then forgetting all about it would not serve any purpose, he said. Once planted, a sapling should be taken care of just like a growing child.

Mr Mehta also urged MPs to take the tree plantation and family planning programmes to their constituencies with as much vigour as they are taken up in the Capital. They should build it up into a strong movement when Parliament adjourns after the monsoon session.

Referring to indiscriminate felling of trees, Mr Mehta called for severe punishment for the offenders. In the Soviet Union, he said, tree felling is regarded a serious offence, and the person who fells a tree is asked to plant double the number.

Mr H. K. L. Bhagat said Delhi had already completed 50 per cent of the planting target for this year. Saplings, he said, are being planted not haphazardly, but in accordance with a scientific plan, chalked out by various organisations.

Mr A. N. Chawla, DFOC president, said in all some 10 lakh trees would be planted in the city this year. Though Vanamahotsava had been an annual feature over the past decade or more, what marked it out this year was the grand involvement of the people in it. This would not have been possible but for Mr Gandhi, he emphasised.

Chief Executive Councillor Radha Raman, thanking the guests, said that under Mr Gandhi's revolutionary five-point programme, the climate for a grand and prosperous future had been created. The programme had spread to all parts of the country and won popular acceptance.