

# Trees, not religion, important: MK

By OUR SPECIAL  
CORRESPONDENT

Chennai, Sept. 23: "I am fond of spiritual leaders who grow trees and not religion," said chief minister and DMK president M. Karunanidhi here on Sunday. Planting saplings to mark the launch of a project to plant 25 million trees by the Isha Foundation, the chief minister said religious feelings if promoted would only instigate annihilation while socially responsible acts such as greening the environment would sustain livelihood.

In the presence of spiritual leader Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, the chief minister said he nurtured affection

towards pontiffs and spiritual leaders who promoted Tamil language and environment.

"I am fond of Hindu pontiff late Kundrakudi Adigal because of his contribution to Tamil language and I have the same amount of affection for junior pontiff of the Kundrakudi mutt. I like Sadhguru because he grows trees," the chief minister said.

Lauding the efforts of Sadhguru and the reach of his spiritual teachings to people living in both cities and villages, Mr Karunanidhi said, "If all saints were like this, the country's growth would be tremendous."

"If we raise trees, they



**GREEN DRIVE:** Chief minister M. Karunanidhi plants a sapling at Anna University to mark the launch of the project of Isha Foundation to plant 2.5 crore saplings in the state. Isha founder Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev and DMK Rajya Sabha member Kanimozhi were present on the occasion - A photograph by N. Sampath

would rear us," he said, adding that each and every person should have the

responsibility to grow trees and pointed out that in monarchy, kings like Ashoka

had taken up the green drive and later in democracy, the government gave importance to it and dedicated even a week for tree plantation.

The chief minister expressed concern over scores of banners and hoardings erected along roadsides. "Unlike metropolises like Delhi and Bangalore which are known for greenery, Chennai has banners lined up instead of trees. These advertisement hoardings and political banners are kept even for a year," he said.

He also asked the officials, field officers and those who obtain and grant stay for hoardings to have concern over environment. "At least hereafter, Chennai should

have green cover," he said and urged the implementing agencies to evince interest in protecting the trees from cattle after planting them.

DMK MP and chief minister's daughter Kanimozhi said religion was created to develop mankind and not for destruction and bloodshed. She emphasised the need to protect environment and expressed concern over its exploitation in the name of growth and economy.

Former CBI director Dr D.R. Kaarthikeyan also spoke at the event.

DMK ministers K.N. Nehru, Parithi Ilamvazhuthi, E.V. Velu and Swaminathan and Chennai Mayor M. Subramanian took part in the function.