

A cause dear to his heart

Ramesh Adige has a different kind of boardroom. It's in the Deer Park at Hauz Khas. This director with Fiat is responsible for giving the park a lease of life

ESWAN DANONIA



odd ball

Neha Seth

AS THE afternoon sun filters through the towering trees of Deer Park, the only sound apart from the drone of insects are the musings of a man who has almost single handedly given this patch of green in Hauz Khas a lease of life.

Criss-crossing through the canopy of green he has personally helped to nurture, Ramesh Adige, Wholetime Director, Fiat India Ltd, is a man with a mission. He recalls, "Almost 17 years ago while taking a random walk through the Deer Park I realised what a treasure trove of natural beauty this was." The glaring signs of neglect made him take on the challenge. "Seeing such potential go to waste made me decide that it was time to act like a responsible citizen and do my bit for my locality."

"Seeing such potential go to waste made me take the decision that it was time to act like a responsible citizen and do my bit for my locality"

After spending many a Sunday morning with a watering hose and a spade, Adige garnered the support of the DDA. "With the help of the supervisor of the park Tirpal Singh Tomar and his team of 50 gardeners, today the park can boast of 6,000 mature trees and 1,50,000 young trees." It was also thanks to Adige's initiative that the park was declared a protected for-

est in 1986. He remarks, "The most important factor in maintaining this park is motivating people and gathering their support."

From tending to the saplings struggling to mature to discouraging miscreants from turning the park into a playground, his personal touch is evident. He says, "I am not a botanist. While working on this park I realised there is so much to learn about nature."

And he knows a lot. Extolling the virtues of the fibre of the Sansvira plant—it can be used to tie-up trailing branches of growing plants—he says 300 varieties of trees are planted every monsoon. "My favourite is the Mousari tree whose fragrance tantalises while its thick canopy provides relief from the sun." New varieties introduced are Poplar Kadam, Dhak, Cassia, Imli, and Peltoforum.

And as Adige takes a last look he can't suppress the smile that lights his face. Away from the corporate boardrooms, this man has found his kind of paradise.