MYSURU: Chief minister Siddaramaiah laid the foundation for the Tourist Plaza and Cauvery Gallery at the Karnataka Exhibition Authority (KEA) grounds on Friday.

The setting up of the Tourist Plaza is expected to give the much-needed boost to tourism in Mysuru region. It will be a one-stop centre for tourists. The plaza, coming up between city’s two popular tourist spots - Mysuru Palace and Mysuru Zoo - will solve parking and vehicle congestion problems in the city as it will offer parking space for vehicles and operate a shuttle service between tourist destinations. The plaza parking spread over 2 acres will accommodate 200 buses and 2,000 cars and also have public amenities like restaurants, ATMs, cloak room, information centre and wi-fi facility. It will be constructed at a cost of Rs 1.69 crore.

Cauvery Gallery will come up at the exhibition grounds on the lines of Ganga Gallery in Allahabad and Brahmaputra Gallery in Guwahati.

The gallery will have attractive exhibits, detailed satellite images, multi-media displays, digital video shows to create awareness among people on the significance of Cauvery river which is the lifeline of South Karnataka. The gallery will be constructed at a cost of Rs 3.5 crore.

After laying the foundation for both the projects chief minister Siddaramaiah said, "River Cauvery is considered as 'Dakshina Ganga'. Cauvery basin extends over an area of 81,155sqkm which is nearly 2.7 percent of the total geographical area of the country. The primary uses of Cauvery are providing water for irrigation, water for household consumption and generation of electricity. After going through the gallery visitors will have an option to test themselves on how much they have learnt about Cauvery. Those who don’t know history cannot create history".

About the Tourist Plaza he said, "The new centre will facilitate increased tourist inflow and create more jobs. Tourism minister R V Deshpande is doing a good job. He is going all out in his efforts to provide basic facilities at all tourist places.” Deshpande, who also spoke occasion, said that the government has released Rs 10 crore to make Mysuru a model tourist destination centre'.