

## **Hanuvantiya Tourist Complex : An Ethereal Unwinding Experience**

**-Shivraj Singh Chouhan**

All work and no play, they say, makes Johan a dull boy. One needs leisurely moments to unwind oneself- preferably in natural surroundings. Failing this our life becomes dull and drab taking a toll on our systems prematurely.

During my last visit to the Sentosa Island in Singapore I was mesmerized by the charm of that wonder of nature. The way that island has been developed as a marvelous tourist spot inspired me to develop one such tourist complex in Madhya Pradesh that would be a dream destination for nature tourism buffs. Immediately the picture of Hanuvantiya conjured up before me. This is one of the many islands that have propped up in the backwaters of the Narmada Sagar dam in Khandwa district. There couldn't have been a better choice given its natural setting beautified by enviably opulent forests and fascinating landscapes. The moment you step into this salubrious ambiance you get the adrenaline flowing.

The limpid water of Narmada, the Lifeline of Madhya Pradesh, that looks charming as a saint's heart has fascinated me right from my childhood. Its very sight uplifts spirits. Hermitages and temples and other sacred places strewn across its mystical landscape have been attracting evolved souls, mendicants as well as household pilgrims since eons; however, there is lack of a leisure destination for weekenders and other adventure and water sports freaks.

Immediately after my return to Bhopal I shared this idea with the officials of MP Tourism Development Corporation (MPSTDC) that appealed to them. The Corporation guys turned to and made short of the work translating the idea into reality within a record time. Now the challenge is to attract the tourists and the footloose to this unique place to unwind themselves. As we know tourism is about marketing. As part of marketing strategy we held a meeting of the cabinet on the beautiful cruise ship Narmada Queen and took several crucial decisions including constitution of a Tourism Cabinet to further boost tourism in the state. We also plan to promote other islands and vast reservoirs as tourism spots. I also dedicated a well facilitated tourism complex there.

In order to popularize Hanuvantiya island a ten-day Jal Mahotsava- a water sports extravaganza is being organized there. Apart from tourists tour and travel companies are also going to participate in the event that would afford them an opportunity to explore prospects and potential of tourism in the unending and unfading tapestry of nature in this picturesque ambience. This water sports-cum cultural grand gala would also offer a rare opportunity to the adventure sports freaks. There would be adventure and other activities including kite flying, volley ball, camp fire, star gazing, cycling, para motoring, parasailing, hot air balloon, bird watching etc.

And of course, there would be gastronomical delights for the foodies in the food zone. The gala event will showcase the kaleidoscopic cultural heritage, customs, local crafts and art, folk music and dances of Madhya Pradesh especially Malwa and Nimar. Hilarious ride on the cruise ship Narmada Queen on the vast expanse of water in the gusty February wind would be an added attraction.

I, for one, can vouch that a visit to Hanumantiya would be a rejuvenating experience to anyone attending the Water Festival dedicated to joi de vivre. So, what are you waiting for? Do prepare to experience an adrenaline rush.