



**KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY**  
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# MV Ganga Vilas

**Published On: 09-01-2023**

**Why is in news?** World's longest river cruise 'Ganga Vilas' to unlock River Cruise tourism in India: Shri Sarbananda Sonowal

The launch of **world's longest river cruise with MV Ganga Vilas** by the Prime Minister on 13 January, 2023 in Varanasi will herald a new age of river cruise tourism for India, said the Union Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and Ayush.

The luxury cruise will cover a distance of **more than 3,200 kms across 27 river systems in 5 states in India and Bangladesh.**

The MV Ganga Vilas cruise is curated to bring out the best of the country to be showcased to the world.

The **51 days cruise is planned with visits to 50 tourist spots** including World Heritage Sights, National Parks, river Ghats, and major cities like Patna in Bihar, Sahibganj in Jharkhand, Kolkata in West Bengal, Dhaka in Bangladesh and Guwahati in Assam.

The MV Ganga Vilas vessel is 62 meters in length, 12 meters in width and comfortably sails with a draft of 1.4 meters.

The ship **follows sustainable principles** at its core as it is equipped with pollution-free mechanisms and noise control technologies.

The expected date of arrival of MV Ganga Vilas in Dibrugarh is on 1st March, 2023.

The itinerary of MV Ganga Vilas has been curated to showcase the rich heritage of India with stop overs in spots of historical, cultural and religious importance.

The need to develop river cruise tourism in the country would **generate employment opportunity** in the hinterland. The government is making capital expenditure to build capacity for the success of river cruise tourism in the country.

The river tourism circuits will be **developed and integrated with the existing tourism circuits** for maximum exposure and rapid development of this sector in the country.

The MV Ganga Vilas cruise is a first-of-its-kind cruise service. With support from the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) under Ministry of Shipping, Ports and Waterways (MoPSW), the success of this service is likely to **enthuse entrepreneurs to explore river cruise** in other parts of the country.

The **global River cruise market has grown at ~5%** over the last few years and is expected to constitute **~37% of cruise market by 2027.**

**Europe** has been driving growth with **approx. 60% share of river cruise vessels** in the world.

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In India, **8 river cruise vessels** are operational between Kolkata and Varanasi while cruise movement is also operation on National Waterways 2 (Brahmaputra).

Tourism activities like river rafting, camping, sightseeing, kayaking and so on are operation in many spots in the country. The construction of 10 passengers terminals across NW2 are going on which will further bolster the prospect of river cruise.

At present, four river cruise vessels are operational in NW2 while it is operating in limited capacity in NW3 (West Coast Canal), NW8, NW 4, NW 87, NW 97, and NW 5.

As the capital expenditure is pumped to build capacity in the inland waterways, the river cruise is set to grow further with systematic forward and backward linkage for the economy, especially across the banks of the rivers.