

World's longest river cruise with MV Ganga Vilas

January 10, 2023

In news– The Prime Minister of India will launch the **world's longest river cruise, Ganga Vilas, on 13 January 2023 in Varanasi.**

About river cruise-

- 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 51 days cruise is planned with visits to 50 tourist spots including World Heritage Sites,** 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.
- It has three decks, 18 suites on board with a capacity of 36 tourists, with all the amenities to provide a memorable and luxurious experience for the tourists.
- 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. From the famous "Ganga Arti" in Varanasi.
- It will stop at Sarnath, a place of great reverence for Buddhism.
- It will also **cover Mayong, known for its Tantric craft, and Majuli, the largest river island and hub of Vaishnavite cultural in Assam.**
- The cruise will also traverse through the biodiversity rich World Heritage Sites of Sunderbans in Bay of Bengal delta, famous for Royal Bengal Tigers, as well as Kaziranga National Park, famous for one horn rhino.

- **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.

Note:

- 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. 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.