

# PM Flags Off World's Longest River Cruise, Trip Costs 20 Lakhs: 10 Facts

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**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi today flagged off MV Ganga Vilas, the world's longest river cruise, in Uttar Pradesh's Varanasi through video conferencing. 32 Swiss tourists will take the maiden journey to reach Dibrugarh in Assam via Bangladesh.

## Here's your 10-point guide to this big story:

1. The PM inaugurated a 'Tent City', developed on the lines of similar setups in Gujarat's Kutch and Rajasthan, on the banks of the Ganga in Varanasi. Over 200 tents will offer tourists a panoramic view of the famed ghats of the holy city on the other side of the river along with live classical music, 'aarti' in the evening, and yoga sessions. He also laid the foundation for [several inland waterways projects](#), worth over ₹ 1,000 crore.
2. "With this cruise, many places of eastern India will now figure in world tourism map... What can be more unfortunate that since Independence the banks of the Ganga did not develop and thousands of people living along the Ganges had to migrate for job," the PM said.
3. MV Ganga Vilas is the first cruise vessel to be made in India. It will travel 3,200 km in 51 days. The 32 tourists from Switzerland, who will take the first journey, were welcomed at the Varanasi port with garlands and tunes of shehnai. They will visit various religious and historical places in Varanasi before setting out on the cruise.
4. The cruise's Director Raj Singh told news agency PTI that this five-star moving hotel has 18 suites with the capacity of 36 tourists. Apart from this, it has accommodation for 40 crew members. The modernist ship is

62 meters in length and 12 meters wide and requires a draft of 1.4 meters.

5. It will take tourists across 27 river systems and will cruise through various prominent destinations. According to a statement from Uttar Pradesh Tourism Minister Jaiveer Singh issued in Lucknow, the cruise will cover 50 tourist destinations including world heritage sites, national parks, river ghats, and major cities like Patna in Bihar, Shahiganj in Jharkhand, Kolkata in West Bengal, Dhaka in Bangladesh, and Guwahati in Assam.
6. The cruise has also been fitted with facilities such as spa, salon, and gym. It will cost ₹ 25,000 to ₹ 50,000 a day, with the total cost for the 51-day journey totalling to around ₹ 20 lakh for each passenger, Raj Singh said. The cruise is equipped with a pollution-free system and noise control technology, he added.
7. There is a Sewage Treatment Plant on this cruise so that no sewage flows into the Ganges, as well as a filtration plant which purifies the Ganga water for bathing and other purposes, the cruise director said.
8. "The journey will give the foreign tourists an opportunity to embark upon an experiential voyage and indulge in the art, culture, history, and spirituality of India and Bangladesh," Union Minister for Port Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal told news agency ANI.
9. Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav has criticised the initiative. In a tweet in Hindi with a photograph of the cruise, Mr Yadav said, "Now will the BJP take away the jobs of the sailors as well? BJP's policy of earning money by making religious places tourist sites is condemnable. People from all over the world come to experience the spiritual splendour of Kashi, not for luxury. BJP will no longer be able to cover the darkness of real issues with external glare."
10. "India has everything that you can imagine. It has a lot beyond your imagination. India cannot be defined in words. It can only be experienced from the heart," PM Modi said in his message for tourists.