

14– 01 – 2023

News: Modi flags off world's longest river cruise from Varanasi to Dibrugarh

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday flagged off the world's longest river cruise — MV Ganga Vilas — and inaugurated the tent city at Varanasi.

MV Ganga Vilas – World's Longest River Cruise

- The cruise will be managed by private operators, the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), under the Ministry of Shipping, Ports and Waterways (MoPSW) has supported the project.
- It will explore forty historic sites on the banks of the river Ganga including, Mahabodhi temple, Hazarduari Palace, Katra Masjid, Bodh Gaya, Chandanagar church, Char Bangla Temple and more.
- Besides connecting National Waterway 1 (NW-1) which includes Ganga and National Waterway 2 (NW-2) on Brahmaputra, the cruise will cross 27 river systems.
- The Ganga–Bhagirathi–Hooghly River system between Haldia (Sagar) and Allahabad (1620 km) was declared as NW-1 in 1986.
- 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.

Significance

- The sector would generate employment opportunities in the hinterland.
- The project will boost river cruise tourism and bring about a new age of tourism for India. The cruise has been curated to showcase the best of India to the world.
- The journey will give foreign tourists an opportunity to embark upon an experiential voyage and indulge in the art, culture, history, and spirituality of India and Bangladesh.

Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)

- Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) was created by Union Government on 27th October 1986 for development and regulation of inland waterways for shipping and navigation.
- IWAI is created under Inland Waterways Authority of India Act, 1985 with its headquarters situated in Noida.
- A total of 106 water bodies with a minimum length of 25km (16mile) were declared as National Waterways.

- These have been classified into 3 categories based on financial viability and location as well as into 8 clusters based on locations.
- In first phase, 8 National Waterway (NW) of category – 1 that are considered most viable will be developed (3 are in functional stage).
- NW-1: Allahabad – Haldia (1620km) Ganga- Bhagirathi- Hugli rivers are utilized
- NW-2: Sadiya – Dhubri Brahmaputra (891)
- NW-3: Kollam – Kozhikode (205) west coast, Chambakkara, Udyogamandalam canals.
- The World's longest river cruise, MV Ganga Vilas has been launched with the support of Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI).