



Glimpses of River Cruise on Ganga

## River Cruise on Ganga

Despite the rich history, culture and tradition of West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, no passenger vessel plied on the Ganga between Kolkata and Varanasi between 1936 and 2009. It was in October 2009 that the RV Bengal Pandaw (GRT 900) belonging to the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company (who also operate Pandaw River Cruises on the Irrawaddy river in Burma, Mekong river in Vietnam and Cambodia and Rajang river in Borneo, Malaysia), undertook its maiden journey on the Ganga between Kolkata and Varanasi and traversed the distance in twelve days including the time taken to visit tourist places along the route.

Pandaw Cruises have successfully completed six voyages between Kolkata to Varanasi till January 2010 and will be undertaking four more voyages called Slowly on the Ganges by 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2010. They will be undertaking another ten trips on the Ganges between October 2010 and March 2011 and have plans to introduce another river vessel next year.

The itinerary includes visits to monuments of colonial Kolkata, visit to former French colony of Chandernagore, Plassey, Hazarduari Palace, Bihar School of Yoga at Munger, State Museum at Patna apart from Bodh Gaya and Nalanda and trips to Sarnath and Varanasi. Sightings of fresh water river dolphins in the Ganga and an amazing variety of wild life in the diara area of Ganga also enchant the tourists.

M/s Vivada Inland Waterways Limited started day cruising at the behest of West Bengal Government in the year 2000 and are now operating several river cruise products Sunderban Eco cruises, Heritage Trail, Europe on Ganges, Ganga Sagar Mela and City Cruises among others. They have put West Bengal on international River Cruise map.

At present, Vivada Inland Waterways Limited is operating three Tourist vessels for its river cruises. These are M.V.Paramhansa, (GRT 1159) which has a carrying capacity of 70 tourists and has facilities for day and night staying; M.V.Ahailya (GRT 91) and M.V.Millennium (GRT 40) which offer day river cruising facilities and have the capacity to seat 120 and 40 tourists respectively.



M.V. Paramhansa