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## Latest Pop Among Indian Vacationers: Holiday On A Cruise

Cruise vacation, which was once considered a preserve for the affluent, has now become an achievable reality for the Indian vacationers.

LACHMI DEB ROY | 11 APRIL 2019



### IN THE RIVER SO DEEP

The Ganga cruise is luxury redefined



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Stay away from the prow, sit facing out and keep an eye on any oddness in the water. The advice for the lower decks is in the face and important unless the sole intention of your cruise holiday in the Sunderbans is to become tiger lunch. The Royal Bengals of this mangrove morass, bisected by rivers and estuaries, are the world's sole swimming stripes and they are known to knock over fisherman from his boat with force equivalent of a 200-kg torpedo. Unsuspecting vacationers are no exception.

Or else, sip your stout and sunset slowly on the upper deck without having to worry about hungry Richard Parkers jumping out of the shadows as your cruise-liner meanders through a 3,000-km course from Calcutta to Dhaka. This cruise, run by Exotic Heritage Group, is a first of its kind between the two neighbours straddling the Ganga-Brahmaputra delta. It will call in at heritage sites Barisal, Chandpur (famous for its hilsa), and Narayanganj.



The inaugural run is sometime this year, but the special cruise *Ganga Villa* will take private cruisers from 2020. "The Rs 30-crore ship is theme-based, inspired by Indian textiles, with 18 suites for a maximum 36 cruisers. River cruises are gaining traction among the high- and middle-income groups and in recent years we have had a spike in bookings," says company managing director Raj Singh. It's the company's fourth river cruise.

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