



PACKAGE TOURS

GALAXY Holidays
quality at home & abroad

Taj Caseina, 2nd Floor, 25 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka 1212
Tel: 9886055, 9885871 Fax: (880-2) 8815551
E-mail: holidays@galaxybd.com

THAILAND

DHAKA TUESDAY JANUARY 27, 2009



CONTIC EXPERIENCE PART-1

Sailing down the Jamuna

THE boat sat there on the still water at Aricha Ghat. From the high bank, it looked quaint and rather ugly. We stood there nonplussed and wondered whether we had wasted our time coming so early on this winter morning to the Jamuna, and whether the ride was worth it. It looked like a long, low and rotting country boat. Very raw. A long pole had shot up into the sky from the middle of the bamboo canopy.

We have seen its similar ones carrying goods and earthen pots and never paid our attention for more than a few seconds. And now we were here.

Tentatively we walked down the bank, crossed the last hurdle of the plank ladder and then we

took a deep breath. This is the most beautiful boat we had ever boarded. Welcome to Contic's unique creation "B613", a five-star treat on water.

The immaculately polished floor made of thick boards reflected the diffused morning light. Wooden deck chairs were strewn around small tables. A huge chessboard lay there invitingly. In the corner was a large bed, rather you could call it a huge square divan decked with cushions. In the corner waited the food corner. The jugs full of juice and lime water looked welcoming as were the coffee and tea. The food corner attendant poured us welcome drinks in thick crude glasses.

There was this narrow



corridor running inside the boat. On both sides were the cabins -- six in all with twin-bed arrangement. For a boat that is 93 feet long, six cabins provide lavish comfort and style. Each cabin has a window. You look out and see the gentle Jamuna lapping. An earthen table lamp

sits on a compact table. A small stool helps you to sit and use laptop. At the end of the corridor are four clean toilets. For six cabins not a bad facility.

Beyond the toilets is the kitchen. The crews were busy preparing breakfast. We saw a square hole in the roof and a

ladder to climb to the rooftop.

We sat in the chilly wind on the roof and watched the life pixilated by thick mists. Small country boats powered by diesel engines purred by. The passengers wrapped themselves up tightly in pink and green shawls. Nobody took notice of us having breakfast of paratha, alu bhaji and omelets sufficiently stuffed with tomatoes.

A *khalashi* pulled the anchor. And then the engine gave out a 132hp deep rumble. Slowly the boat pulled away from the shore. The captain of the boat lifted a big bronze horn to his mouth and blew a high-pitched whistle. We were sailing on the Jamuna now.

The more we explored the

boat, the more impressed we were. A French man, Yves Marre, a former crew with Air France, an adventurer, a navigator and an aviator, came to Bangladesh on a boat all the way from France and gifted the boat to an NGO to turn it into a floating hospital. Yves fell in love with the country, married here and stayed back to set up his own company, Contic - short for Confluence of Technology, Ideas and Culture. He studies country boats and builds them, giving finer touches to the facilities but retaining the original features. And he makes business in tourism. We were now on one of his boats.

Story: INAM AHMED
Photo: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN



SAILING THE RIVERS ON "B613"

Full-day Cruise:

We will start at 8.00 am from Dhaka and go to Aricha Ghat or Jamuna Bridge at approximately 11.00 am. The B613 sails from Aricha Ghat or Jamuna Bridge to the confluence of rivers like the Jamuna and Padma. We will return to Aricha Ghat or Jamuna Bridge at 5.00 pm and arrive at the pickup point at approximately 7.00 pm.

2-Day Cruise:

We will start the first day from Aricha and sail downstream on the Padma. We shall meet the river Jamuna further down. Old-fashioned dredges are at work at this confluence, picking up the silt to be carried to Dhaka for construction work. Later on we will sail upstream on the Brahmaputra and we shall reach Nogarbari / Kalyanpur char (Pabna) before sunset.

We shall spend the night on board by this place with the possibility for the ones who like to disembark and walk discovering the area and the bazaar.

The day after, we shall ply along the banks of the Jamuna, seeing chars and villages on both sides of the river, till we reach the Jumuna bridge. We shall embark here and take the drive down to Dhaka (approx 3 hours).

Contic

House 23, Road 121, Gulshan 1
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Email: wasamadoja@gmail.com
Info@contic.com

Tel: (+88 02) 8814823, 8814824,
(+88 02) 9860047, 9860434, 9860436

Regular Tours

Day Trips: (Minimum 8 pax)

Per person: USD 85

Overnights: (Minimum 6 pax)

Per person: USD 210 (2 days / 1 night)