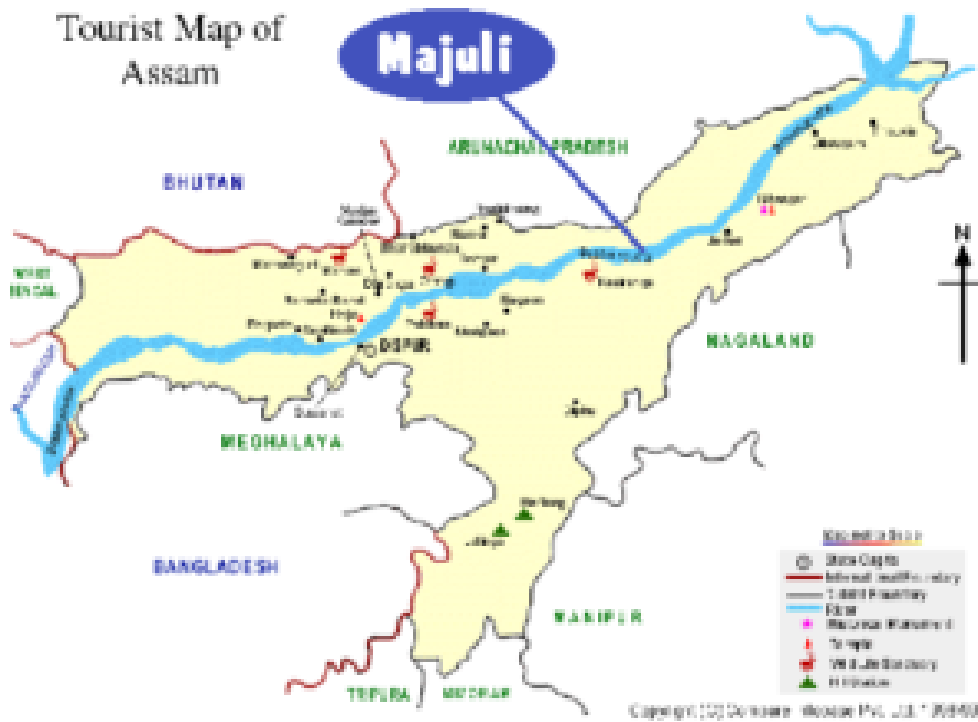


Majuli Island

February 17, 2021

Majuli Island

- The Guinness World Records has officially designated Assam's Majuli as the largest river island in the world.
- It is situated in the Brahmaputra River. The river island covering an area of around 880 sqkm has toppled the previous record held by Brazil's Marajo island in the Amazon river.
- Majuli is the largest freshWater mid-river deltaic island in the world.
- It is situated in the upper reaches of the river Brahmaputra in Assam within the latitude of 26°45' N – 27°12' N & longitude of 93°39' E – 94°35' E with mean height of 84.5 Mt. above MSL.
- This landmass, with a population of 1.6 Lakhs, majority being tribals, has a very rich heritage and has been the abode of Assamese Vaishnavite culture with tremendous options for spiritual and Eco-tourism.
- The island is a biodiversity hotspot and has rich ecology with rare breeds of flora and fauna.



History and Culture of Majuli Island

- Originally, the island was a long, narrow piece of land called Majoli (land in the middle of two parallel rivers) that had the Brahmaputra flowing in the north and the Burhi Dihing flowing in the south until they met at Lakhu.
- It was once known as Ratnapur and was the capital of the powerful Chutia kingdom.
- Frequent earthquakes in the period 1661–1696 set the stage for a catastrophic flood in 1750 that continued for 15 days, which is mentioned in historical texts and reflected in folklore.
- As a result of this flood, part of the Brahmaputra discharged southward into what was the Burhidihing's lower channel and Mājuli island was formed.
- The Burhidihing's point of confluence moved 190 km east and the southern channel which was the Burhidihing became the Burhi Xuti. The northern channel, which was previously the Brahmaputra, became the Luit Xuti. In due course, the flow in the Luit Xuti decreased, and it came to be known as the Kerkota Xuti; and the Burhi Xuti

expanded via erosion to become the main Brahmaputra River.

- The locals speak in Assamese and Missing language mainly. A few speak in the Deori language as well.
- Mājuli has been the cultural capital of Assamese civilisation since the 16th century; based on written records describing the visit of Srimanta Sankardeva – a 16th-century social reformer. Sankardeva, a pioneer of the medieval-age neo-Vaishnavite movement, preached a monotheist form of Hinduism called Vaishnavism and established monasteries and hermitages known as satra on the islet.
- The island soon became the leading center of Vaishnavism with the establishment of these satras. After the arrival of the British, Majuli was under the rule of the British until India gained independence in 1947. It is as of 2016 the world's biggest river island.