



AWESOME



ASSAM





Welcome to Assam

The moment you mention the word Assam, a different kind of feeling comes to your mind. Yes, most people on this planet start their day with a cup of tea. A series of images – green tea estates, golden paddy fields, the mighty Red River, lofty blue hills, the one-horned rhinoceros, golden silk fabrics, the sound of the siphung, the rhythm of the bihu dance, the Mother Goddess – start floating in front of your eyes.

Human footprints on this land have been traced back to some 35,000 to 40,000 years ago, the Early Stone Age. Human immigration through thousands of years has made it a virtual treasure-house for students of Anthropology. The melting pot that Assam is today, owes this great confluence of ethnic groups to such diverse races, cultures and traditions that have come to live together in a small geographical area bound by hills and mountains on all sides, with the mighty Brahmaputra flowing majestically through it. No wonder Siu-kapha, founder of the Ahom kingdom as also one who pioneered the common Assamese identity, had, on his arrival from beyond the Patkai mountains in 1228 exclaimed – Yes, here it is, the Land of Gold!

Today, Assam is one of the most vibrant states of the country. More importantly, it is India's Gateway to South-east Asia, and South-east Asia's entry-point to India. Welcome!

A scenic landscape at dusk or dawn. The sky is a mix of deep blue, purple, and orange. In the foreground, a paved road curves through a field with several trees. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains. The text "AWESOME ASSAM" is overlaid in the center in a large, white, sans-serif font.

AWESOME ASSAM





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There is something special about Assam. Something mystical, something charming, something nostalgic, with a veil of some well-guarded secrets evoking curiosity every now and then, in every mind. In brief, it is a Paradise Unexplored.

Visiting Assam should be in the priority list of every person who comes to India from abroad. Visiting Assam should be on the check-list of every Indian who is either already fond of traveling, or planning to travel and see the country. Wildlife, mountains, natural beauty, rivers, villages, tea estates, temples, monasteries, archeological sites, festivals, river islands – there is no end to it. Assam in fact is more than a mini-India. In reality is a mini-Asia, and of course the meeting point of India and South-east Asia.

The people of Assam are known for their hospitability. They play the most melodious music, sing the sweetest songs. They weave golden silk, they prepare the most delicious food. A visit to Assam is bound to bring the tourist back here again and again. As they say, you cross the Brahmaputra once, and you will have to come back and cross it six times more.

Welcome. Swagatam. *Atithi devo bhava.*

”



Shri Himanta Biswa Sarma,
Minister Tourism, Finance, Education, Health etc,
Assam





Awesome Assam

Assam was known by different names in the ancient times. In both Mahabharata and Ramayana, the two great Indian epics, it was referred to as **Pragjyotisha** – the Eastern light, or Land of the Eastern light. The first century Periplus of the Erythraean Sea and the second century Geography written by Ptolemy appear to call it **Kirrhadia** after its Kirata population. Kautilya's Arthashastra referred to it by several names, including **Para-Lauhitya**, meaning Land on the banks of the Red River Lohit. The fourth century AD Allahabad pillar inscription mentioned it as **Kamarupa**, and so also the puranas. The present-day name Assam on the other hand has two theories: (i) *A-sama* in Sanskrit meaning 'peerless' or 'incomparable,' and (ii) *A-cham* in the Tai language meaning 'undefeated' or 'unconquered.'



Land of gold

Assam is India's most beautiful place after Kashmir, said 19th century monk-philosopher Swami Vivekananda. Had he explored the essence of Assam – it included much of present-day Northeast and parts of Bangladesh then – he could have discovered why the state means unparalleled or incomparable, with Kashmir or anywhere else. The Brahmaputra, an international river that comes down from Tibet in China and flows out to Bangladesh to meet the sea there, is known by several other names, the most significant being Luit – the Red River.

Assam's asymmetry is evident from its ethnicity. On the banks of the Brahmaputra and the Barak live over 31 million people – over 75 % of them are literate – who speak different tongues, with Assamese, English, Bengali and Bodo being four official languages of the state. The people, language, customs, culture, craft and cuisine here change every 50km. From a village (Borkola) of localized Sikhs to Afghans in southern Assam and Chinese in eastern Assam's Makum town, many Asian communities have

settled down across its 78,438 sq km area.

The population is an intermixture of various racial stocks such as Mongoloid, Indo-Burmese, Indo-Iranian and Aryan. Each group has its distinct cultural traits and way of living. Diverse tribes have their own language though Assamese is the lingua franca. The Bodo, Rabha, Tiwa, Deori, Mishng, Sonowal Kachari, Thengal Kachari, Karbi and Dimasa tribes have an autonomous council each. A large number of people also have their roots in East Bengal (now Bangladesh) and Chotanagpur plateau in central India. The greater Assamese society is an exotic tapestry of all these races evolved through a long assimilative process.

Occupying 2.39% of India's landmass, Assam is the most vibrant of eight states comprising the Northeast. Bounded by these states, West Bengal, Bhutan and Bangladesh, its topographical asymmetry is underscored by the Barail hill range sandwiched between two valleys – Brahmaputra and Barak – named after the dominant rivers.





The Brahmaputra, the Barak and their 120 tributaries ensure a fertile land dotted with more than 3,500 wetlands, 800 expansive tea estates and 25 major wildlife that are home to numerous rare species of flora and fauna.

While Assam has been known by numerous names in the past, the present name is said to have derived from the Ahoms who arrived from

northern Myanmar in the early 13th century, with *a-cham* in their original Tai language meaning 'undefeated' or 'unconquered.' Some also attribute it to the Sanskrit word *a-sama*, meaning unequal or unparalleled. And when Siu-ka-pha, the founder of the Ahom kingdom arrived here in 1228, he exclaimed: Mun-dung Shun Kham! – meaning The land of gold.



Cultural convergence

Communities from across Asia have made Assam their home. If Sufi saint Hazrat Shah Miran arrived from Baghdad – to become Ajan Faqir – and composed Jikir, a genre of devotional songs, Sikhs from Punjab settled down in central Assam's Borkola 200 years ago to become Assamese Sikhs. The several Tai communities migrated from present-day Myanmar while tea cultivation in the mid-1800s brought in two sets of people – Adivasis from central India and the Chinese, some of whom stayed back at Makum in eastern Assam. All of them are today proud to call themselves Assamese.

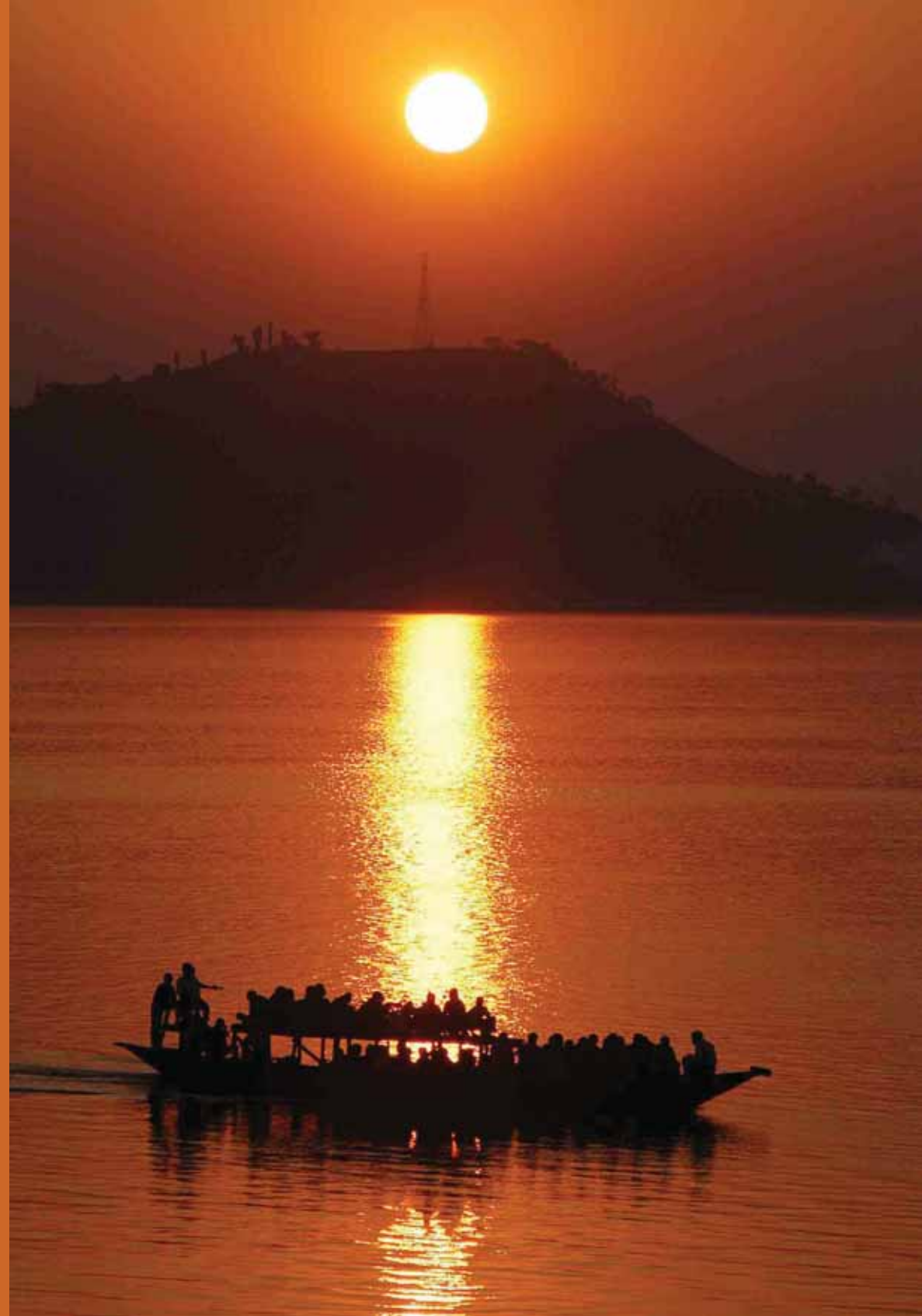
Italian connection

The British left their imprint on Assam, but Margherita town in eastern Assam, known for its collieries, wears an Italian name. While the Assam Railway & Trading Company had engaged three Italian engineers – one named Chevalier Roberto Paganini (who had earlier already become famous for construction of a railway in Sardinia) and two others whose names aren't known but also had the same surname – for implementing the Dibru-Sadiya Railway project in Assam, it were Benjamin Piercy and Dr Berry John White, both directors of the Company, who named the coal town and the last railway station there as Margherita in honour of the Queen of Italy Margherita Maria Teresa Giovanna di Savoia.



River fever

Brahmaputra inspires awe and induces thrill. Along with tributaries such as Jia Bhoroli – popular for angling – the upper reaches of the river challenge rafters. A ride on country boats or luxury cruises heightens the adventure while festivals ensure boat racing in Guwahati, Hajo, Sualkuchi and Barpeta. Brahmaputra is good for spotting the sihu or Gangetic dolphin, but the best place to see them at play is Kukurmara, a small village on the banks of tributary Kulsi located 45km west of Guwahati. That stretch of Kulsi has more than 30 dolphins.







The Red River

Among the largest rivers on earth in terms of discharge and sediment, Brahmaputra is intrinsic to the socio-cultural life in Assam. Brahmaputra means Son of Brahma, the Hindu god of creation, and mythology makes it one of the very few masculine rivers on earth. It originates in the glacial womb of the Kailash Range of the Himalayas, south of Rake Kanggyen Tso lake in south-west Tibet, at an elevation of 5300 metres, travels 1625 km of its 2880 km in China, 918 km in India and 337 km in Bangladesh.

Old Sanskrit literature calls the river Lauhitya meaning Red River, while the name Brahmaputra is also believed to have been derived from the Bodo tribal term Bhullum-Buthur meaning 'making a gurgling sound'.

The nomenclature of Brahmaputra, fed by over 100 tributaries, however begins near Sadiya town in eastern Assam where three rivers – Siang, Dibang and Lohit – meet after flowing down the hills of adjoining Arunachal Pradesh, and ends at Dhubri in western Assam as it enters Bangladesh.

Brahmaputra has been a waterway since time immemorial. While the British introduced steamers on it way back in 1841 and first connected Guwahati and later Dibrugarh with Kolkata through then East Bengal, and continued even after Partition, until it suffered a major setback following the India-Pakistan war of 1965. The Brahmaputra was declared National Waterway No 2 in 1988.

India and Bangladesh have a Bilateral Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT) for operation of inland vessels on the river protocol routes between different river ports of both countries. This protocol between the two countries allows movement of vessels between the river ports of Haldia and Kolkata (West Bengal), Dhubri, Pandu (Guwahati), Silghat, Dibrugarh, and Karimganj (Assam) and Bangladesh's Narayanganj, Khulna, Mongla, Sirajganj and Ashuganj.

The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) has recently developed a ship repair facility at Pandu (Guwahati), and launched



a Ro-Ro ferry service between Dhubri and Hatsingimari. While the ship repair facility is capable of handling vessels up to 60 metres in length, the Ro-Ro facility has cut down travel distance between the two banks from 220 km to 30 km.

The Brahmaputra has also been at the core of Assam's folklore, inspiring literature, art and music often for leaving behind a wave of destruction during the monsoon months.

The most celebrated odes to the river are by balladeer Bhupen Hazarika.

Hindus consider the Brahmaputra holy. They believe an Ashokastami (March-April) dip in it cleanses their bodies and souls of sins. But for ecologists worldwide, Brahmaputra is more than divine for being the sensitive border between two key biodiversity hotspots – Himalayan Hotspot and Indo-Burma Hotspot.



One river, many names

No river on earth probably has so many names as the Brahmaputra has. While it is known as Mutsung Tsangpo close to its source in Tibet, it is later called Moghung Tsangpo, Yarlung Tsangpo and often just Tsangpo before it enters India. Old British travelers heard the Tibetans also call it Narichu Sangpu, Tanjoo Khampa, Erechoomboo and Tamyak Kombo too. A Japanese traveler records it as Martsan-Gi-Chu and Kobeichu, while a Swedish explorer found people in Tibet also calling it Sangchen, Tsangpo-Chimbo and Yere-Tsanpo. As it enters India, it is called Siang and Dihang in Arunahal Pradesh, with Arup Kumar Dutta, the finest Indian biographer of the river saying people in the hills once also called it Shyama, Sema, Senglai and S'Yem.

In Assam, it is known as Lohit, Luit, Bar-Luit, Burha-Luit, SiriLuit and Bor-Noi, while the Tai and Bodo people once called it Lao-Tu or Ti-Lao, and the Singpho and Mishimi people Taluk. The Ahoms had named it Nam-dao-phi, while ancient Indian scriptures had many names like Lauhitya, Hiranyo, Mandakini, Hridini, Khatai, Brahmi, Karkaya and Diyame.

Peep into the Past

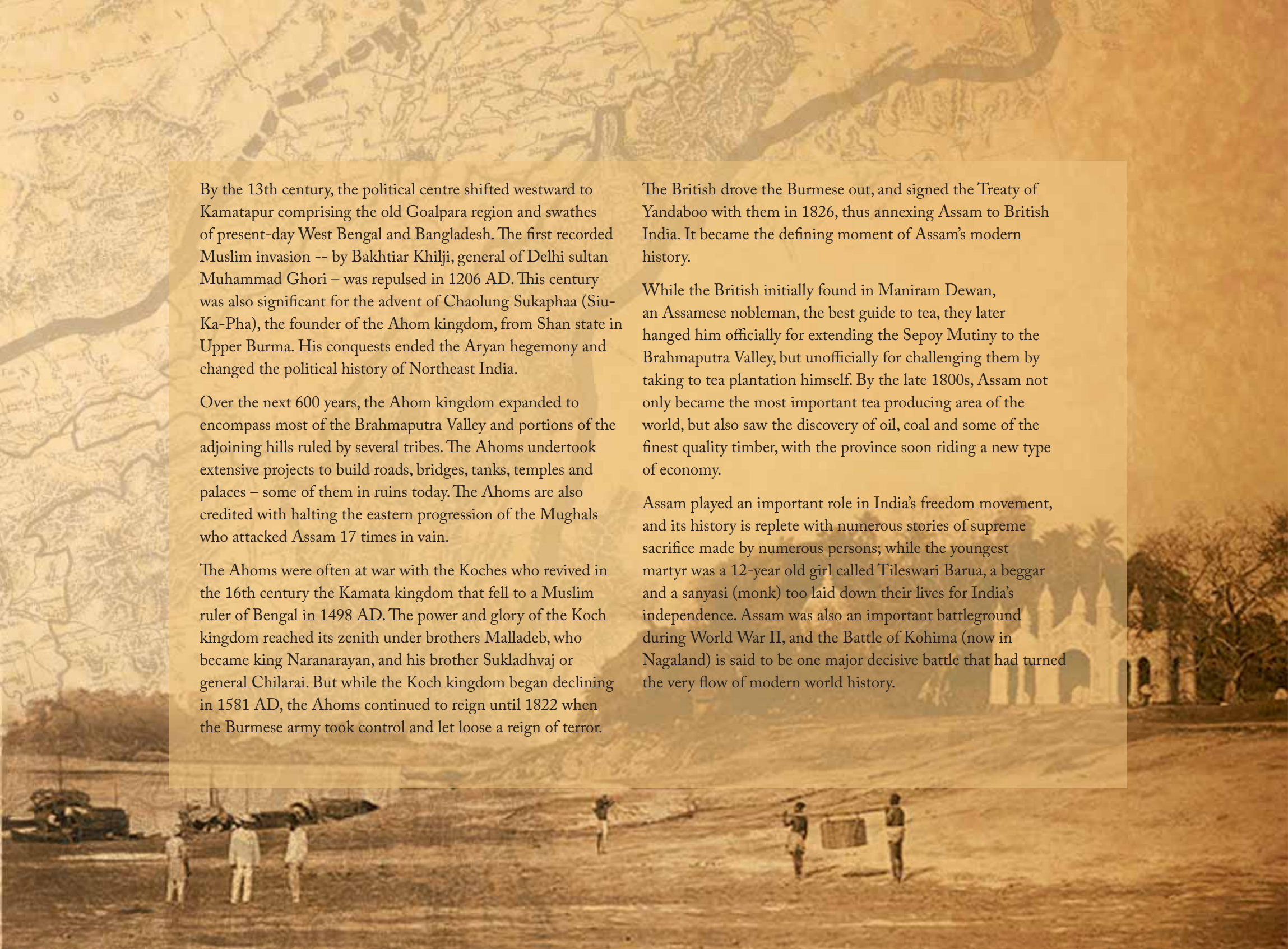
Megalithic relics and stone imprints across undivided (pre-1947) Assam point to an ancient culture. Assam finds mention in ancient scriptures as Pragjyotishpura meaning 'Land of Oriental Astrology' and Kamarupa, where the Hindu love-god Kama is believed to have been reborn after being burnt to ashes by an enraged Shiva.

The earliest ruler of Kamarupa was a 'demon' named Mahiranga. Another 'demon' named Narakasura – he established Kamakhya Temple – took over and named his capital Pragjyotishpura. Narakasura's powerful son Bhagadatta made it to the pages of the epic *Mahabharata*. Assam's recorded history, though, began with Puya Varman, who founded the Varman dynasty in 4 AD. The most illustrious king of the Varman dynasty was Kumar Bhaskar Varman (594–640 AD), the bachelor-king who transformed Kamarupa into a major political power by forging an alliance with Harshavardhan, and his empire extended from Burma to Bhutan and the Bay of Bengal.

It was during during Bhaskar Varman's reign – himself a great scholar and writer – that the Chinese scholar and pilgrim Hiuen Tsang visited Assam. In his account *Si-yu-ki*, Hiuen Tsang said the Varman kingdom was 1,700 miles in circumference and its capital Pragjyotishpura was some six square miles. Since Kumar Bhaskar Varman did not have an heir, a kin ushered in the Salastambha dynasty that ruled for 350 years and moved the capital to Harupeswara (now in Tezpur town). Tyag Simha, the last Salastambha king died childless. His successor Brahma Pala started the Pala dynasty.

The fall of the Pala dynasty divided the Brahmaputra valley into several principalities. The Chutiyas established themselves in the areas east of Subansiri and Disang rivers, while the Kacharis, believed to have descended from Pandava prince Bheem, took control of the southern bank of the Brahmaputra. A dozen feudal lords known as Baro-Bhuyans controlled small kingdoms west of the Chutiya and Kachari territories.





By the 13th century, the political centre shifted westward to Kamatapur comprising the old Goalpara region and swathes of present-day West Bengal and Bangladesh. The first recorded Muslim invasion -- by Bakhtiar Khilji, general of Delhi sultan Muhammad Ghorī – was repulsed in 1206 AD. This century was also significant for the advent of Chaolung Sukaphaa (Siu-Ka-Pha), the founder of the Ahom kingdom, from Shan state in Upper Burma. His conquests ended the Aryan hegemony and changed the political history of Northeast India.

Over the next 600 years, the Ahom kingdom expanded to encompass most of the Brahmaputra Valley and portions of the adjoining hills ruled by several tribes. The Ahoms undertook extensive projects to build roads, bridges, tanks, temples and palaces – some of them in ruins today. The Ahoms are also credited with halting the eastern progression of the Mughals who attacked Assam 17 times in vain.

The Ahoms were often at war with the Koches who revived in the 16th century the Kamata kingdom that fell to a Muslim ruler of Bengal in 1498 AD. The power and glory of the Koch kingdom reached its zenith under brothers Malladeb, who became king Naranarayan, and his brother Sukladhvaj or general Chilarai. But while the Koch kingdom began declining in 1581 AD, the Ahoms continued to reign until 1822 when the Burmese army took control and let loose a reign of terror.

The British drove the Burmese out, and signed the Treaty of Yandaboo with them in 1826, thus annexing Assam to British India. It became the defining moment of Assam's modern history.

While the British initially found in Maniram Dewan, an Assamese nobleman, the best guide to tea, they later hanged him officially for extending the Sepoy Mutiny to the Brahmaputra Valley, but unofficially for challenging them by taking to tea plantation himself. By the late 1800s, Assam not only became the most important tea producing area of the world, but also saw the discovery of oil, coal and some of the finest quality timber, with the province soon riding a new type of economy.

Assam played an important role in India's freedom movement, and its history is replete with numerous stories of supreme sacrifice made by numerous persons; while the youngest martyr was a 12-year old girl called Tileswari Barua, a beggar and a sanyasi (monk) too laid down their lives for India's independence. Assam was also an important battleground during World War II, and the Battle of Kohima (now in Nagaland) is said to be one major decisive battle that had turned the very flow of modern world history.







Gateway Guwahati

Guwahati is not just the capital city of Assam. It is also the most important communication and commercial hub of the entire North-eastern Region, and key to India's Act East Policy. Long ago, they say, it was a *haat* or marketplace for buying and selling of betelnuts; Yes, *guwa* in Assamese means betelnuts, and *haat* a market. Some others say it is a cluster of *hatis* – a *hati* is a village in ancient Assamese language – that grew a lot of betel palms. Yet

some others refer to the villages that had many *gubas* – *guba*: cave – in the surrounding hills, the most sacred being the Kamakhya temple whose sanctum sanctorum is itself a cave one has to walk down in darkness to have a glimpse of the yoni symbol of the Mother Goddess.

Guwahati is also arguably the second oldest continuously inhabited city in India, having withstood numerous invasions and natural calamities like earthquakes and floods that had

probably moved the river Brahmaputra from the south of the city to the north about 2000 years ago. Guwahati was the scene where the Battle of Saraighat – the biggest naval battle on a river – was fought, in which the Assamese inflicted the most crushing defeat on the Moghuls in March 1671.

Among one of India's fastest-growing cities, and an investment destination for major global brands, Guwahati provides a window to a mart of over 60 million people comprising eight states of North-east India, in addition to adjoining countries like Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. The city's strategic location makes it the focal point of India's Act East Policy that envisages the Northeast as a bridge between Southeast Asia and the rest of India. It is also an emerging healthcare and educational destination, apart from being the take-off point for tourists at various nooks and corners of Northeastern India.

Guwahati has the majestic Brahmaputra flowing through it, where tourists and visitors enjoy luxury cruises, listening to the poetry of the Red River that also paints the sky red as the sun sets on it every day, as if celebrating the glory of this historic city blessed by Mother Goddess Kamakhya atop Nilachal, the Blue Hill.

The Lokpriya Gopinath Bardoloi International Airport in Guwahati is the region's biggest air hub, while the city is well-connected with all major cities of the country by railway trains. Luxury buses ply from Guwahati to capital cities of all other Northeastern states, while one can also sail up the river to Tezpur, Kaziranga, Jorhat, Majuli and Dibrugarh.





Temple City

Guwahati being an ancient city, is also often referred to as the Temple City of the East. The Kamakhya shrine atop the Nilachal Hill is the most important seat of Tantra and Shakti worship and the abode of the Mother Goddess, and attracts thousands of devotees every day. It peaks during the week-long





Ambubachi Mela in June when Mother Earth is believed to observe her annual menstrual cycle. Further up, in the same Nilachal Hill, on the Brahma-parbat peak is the Bhubaneswari temple, from where one gets the most beautiful view of Guwahati city with the Red River flowing past.

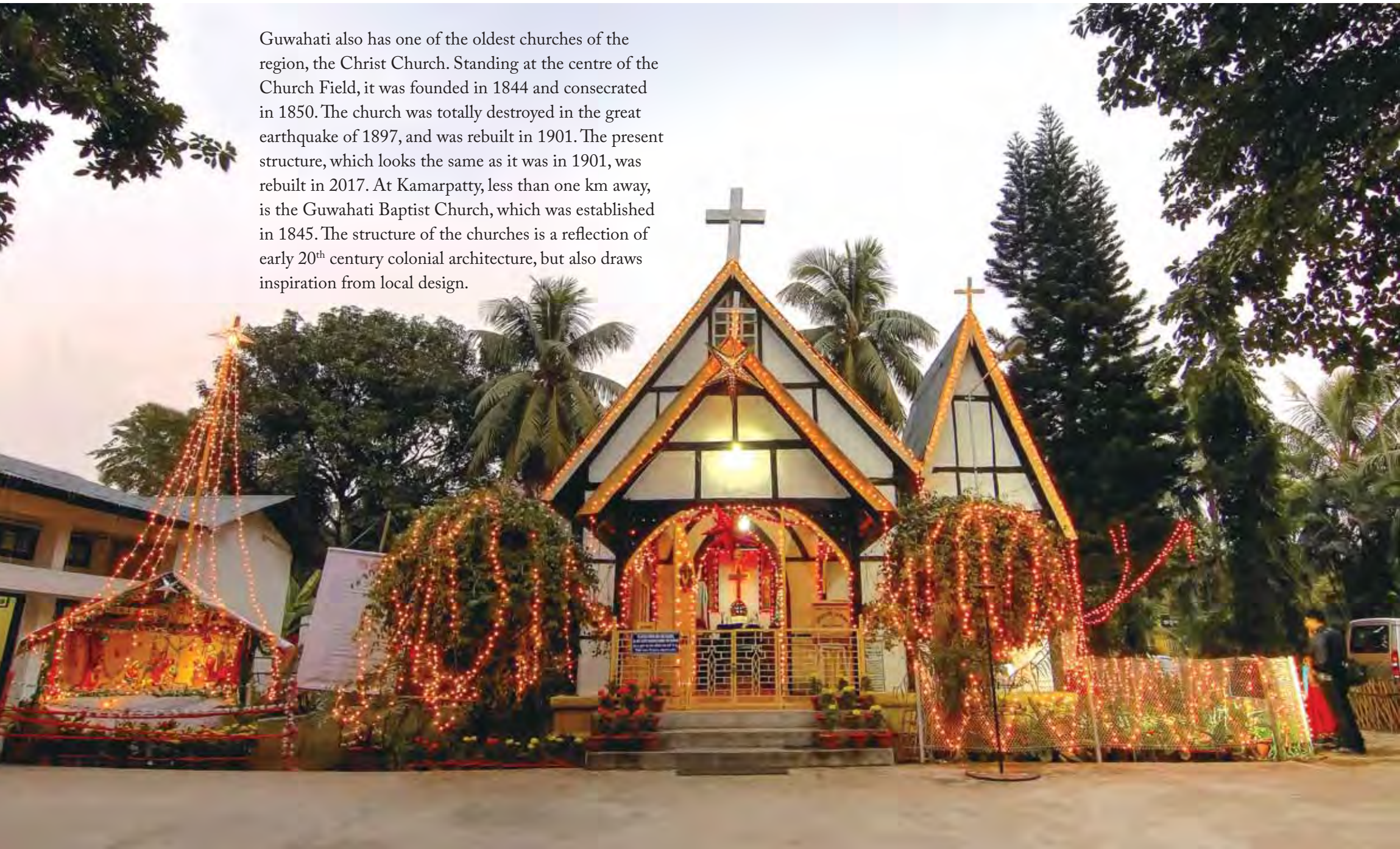
On the Chitrachal Hill is located Navagraha – temple of the nine planets – which is also centre for the study of astronomy and astrology since time immemorial. Close to it, down in the plains, are the Ugratara and Chatrakar temples. In the heart of the Brahmaputra, on the Peacock Island is the Umananda Temple dedicated to the worship of Shiva, while Basisthashram in the Sandhyachal Hills in south of the city was where sage Vasistha had engaged in a long meditation beside the three streams – Sandhya, Lalita and Kanta. On the south bank of the Brahmaputra, in the heart of the city are located the Sukreswar, Janardan and Baneswar temples, while on the north bank are located Aswaklanta, Rudreswar, Manikarneswar and Dirgheswari temples.

On the National Highway by-pass, at Betkuchi is the Tirupati Balaji Temple, also called Purva Tirupati, a magnificent shrine is dedicated to Lord Venkateswara. The temple has a very unique architectural design, while the main idol weighs about 4 tonnes. In the adjoining portions to the main temple are several other temples that are dedicated to other deities like Ganesha, Padmavathi and Garuda.

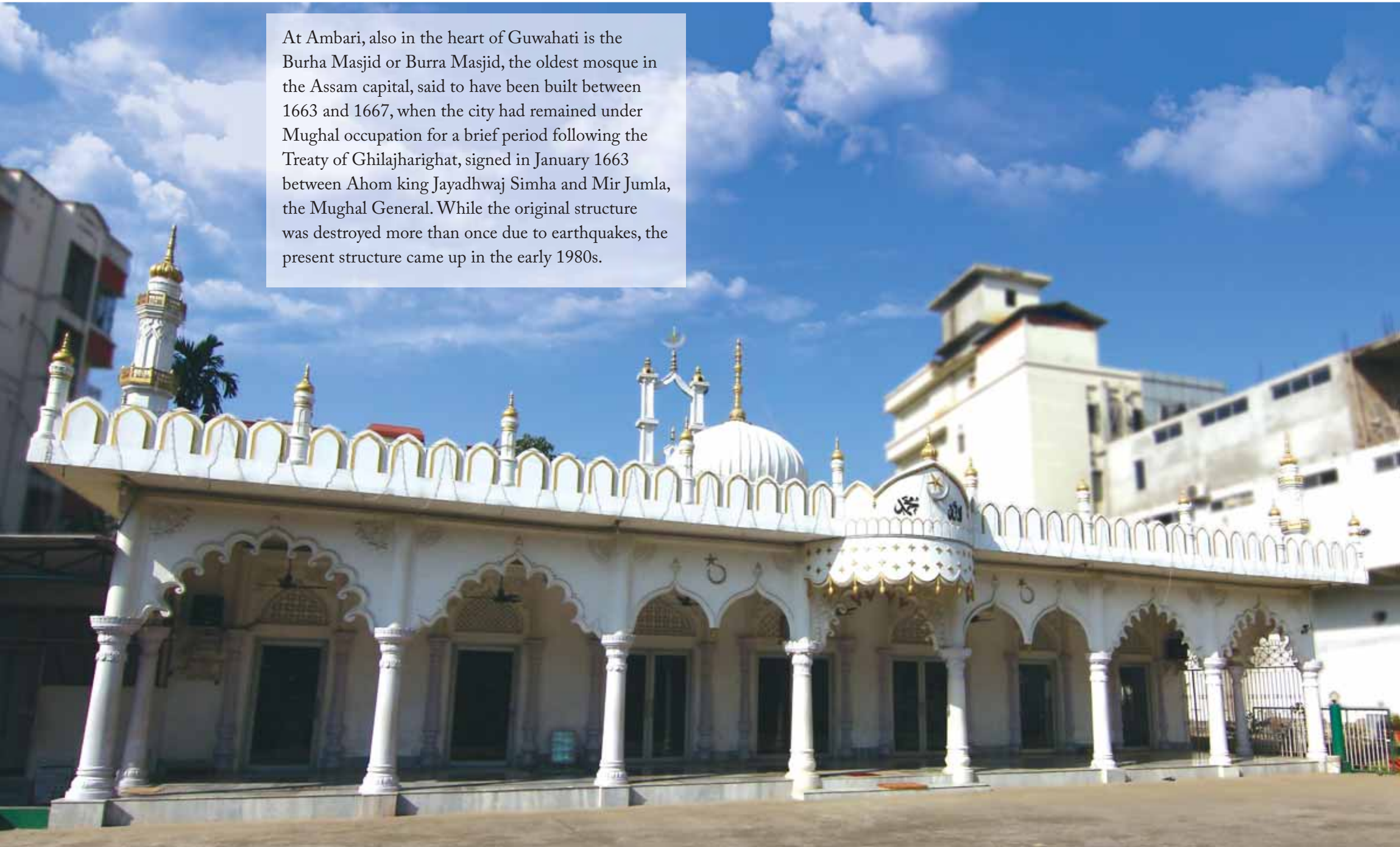




Guwahati also has one of the oldest churches of the region, the Christ Church. Standing at the centre of the Church Field, it was founded in 1844 and consecrated in 1850. The church was totally destroyed in the great earthquake of 1897, and was rebuilt in 1901. The present structure, which looks the same as it was in 1901, was rebuilt in 2017. At Kamarpatty, less than one km away, is the Guwahati Baptist Church, which was established in 1845. The structure of the churches is a reflection of early 20th century colonial architecture, but also draws inspiration from local design.



At Ambari, also in the heart of Guwahati is the Burha Masjid or Burra Masjid, the oldest mosque in the Assam capital, said to have been built between 1663 and 1667, when the city had remained under Mughal occupation for a brief period following the Treaty of Ghilajharighat, signed in January 1663 between Ahom king Jayadhwaj Simha and Mir Jumla, the Mughal General. While the original structure was destroyed more than once due to earthquakes, the present structure came up in the early 1980s.







Smallest Island

If Majuli, on the Brahmaputra, is world's largest inhabited river island, then Umananda, also on the same mighty river, is definitely the smallest inhabited river island on earth. In Guwahati, Umananda is referred to as Bhasmachal and Bhasmakoot in Yogini-tantra, an ancient Hindu scripture, and houses the Umananda Temple, with Hindu mythology saying Lord Shiva had created it for the pleasure of his wife Uma or Parvati. Close to it is yet another tiny rock-island called Urvashi-kunda, famous for several rock carvings that include images of Surya, Uma-Maheswara, Hari-Hara and Ganesh, and Dasavatara – the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu. A pillar is provided at the highest point of the tiny island to help boats navigate safely during the rainy season when Urvashi gets submerged.





Wildlife Preserves

Assam, with more than 70% of the world's population of one-horned rhinos, is the herbivore's ultimate address. The bulk of these rhinos – 2,329 as per the 2013 census – are in Kaziranga National Park, the epicentre of two biodiversity hotspots straddling Northeast India.

The other wildlife preserves in the Northeast cater to a set of rare animals, birds, reptiles and amphibians besides harbouring 50% of India's butterfly species. Together, they occupy 36.67% of Assam's landmass. The major parks accessible to tourists from October to April are listed here.



Kaziranga National Park

Established in 1905, the 858.98 sq km Kaziranga is the most popular address of the one-horned rhinoceros and has the highest concentration of the world's Royal Bengal tigers. It is also home to nine of 14 primate species found across South Asia, the purest breed of Asiatic water buffalo and one of the largest herds of Asian elephants. About 190 km from Guwahati, Kaziranga is a unique mix of grasslands, wetlands and forestlands, and has the mighty Brahmaputra flowing through it. Also UNESCO World Heritage Site and a Tiger Reserve, it is a birdwatcher's paradise too offering a range of quality accommodation and add-on activities such as hill trekking.



State Symbols

The Indian rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) is aptly the State Animal in its best home on earth – Assam. The white-winged wood duck (*Asarcornis scutulata*), one of the largest species of ducks somewhat similar to the Muscovy duck, is Assam's State Bird. The State Tree is the tall hollong (*Dipterocarpus macrocarpus*) that sustains the hoolock gibbon, the only ape in South Asia, and Bengal slow loris, the only nocturnal primate in Northeast India. The State Flower is a seasonal orchid kapou (*Rhynchostylis gigantean*) or foxtail that is harbinger of the springtime Bihu, the State Festival. The river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica gangetica*), on the other hand, is the State Aquatic Animal.







Manas National Park

The 500 sq km Manas has many identities – World Heritage Site, Tiger Reserve, Elephant Reserve and Biosphere Reserve – and is contiguous to 1057-sq km Royal Manas National Park of Bhutan. About 150 km northwest of Guwahati, it derives its name from river Manas flowing through it. Vegetation varying from river-nurtured grasslands and swamps to sub-Himalayan mountain forests makes it home to the Royal Bengal tiger, leopard and clouded leopard, wild water buffalo, elephant, rhino, red panda and the highly endangered roofed turtle, hispid hare and pygmy hog.

Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park

The smallest of Assam's national parks, the 78.8 sq km Orang is a microcosm of Kaziranga, across river Brahmaputra. The one-horned rhino and Royal Bengal tiger are the lead animals here, while it is also home to the elephant, leopard, barking deer, swamp deer, hog deer, wild boar, porcupine besides primates, reptiles and 50 species of fish. About 140 km from Guwahati, Orang is rich in vegetation and is also a birdwatcher's paradise.



Nameri National Park

About 220 km from Guwahati, Nameri is a sub-Himalayan expanse of semi-evergreen and moist deciduous forests which is home to Royal Bengal tigers, Asian elephants, Himalayan black bears, Asiatic wild dogs, sloth bears, sambars and Indian gant squirrels among others. Close to the Pakke Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh, and not far away from Sonai-Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary in Assam, it is an important elephant corridor. Rafting and angling are popular on the swift-flowing Kameng that becomes Jia-Bhoroli in the Assam plains.





Atlas Moth

The atlas moth (Attacus atlas) found in Nameri National Park is considered the world's largest moth with a wing span of 25-30 cm and a wing surface area of more than 400 sq cm. Male atlas moths are smaller than the females, have more tapered wings and larger, bushier antennae.

A lush, green tropical forest with a dirt path leading through it. The forest is dense with various types of trees and plants, including tall trees with thin trunks and large, vibrant green ferns in the foreground. The path is narrow and appears to be made of dirt, winding through the undergrowth. The overall scene is a vibrant, natural landscape.

Forest Etiquette

For safaris, visitors need to be accompanied by a guide authorized by the park/sanctuary management, avoid bright clothes (white, black and red in particular), drive within the speed limit of 20 km per hour, grant right of way to animals, maintain silence, stick only to specified routes, leave the park before sunset. They should not carry pets, transistors, audio systems or musical instruments and not use a horn/whistle inside the park, not use mobile phones, not disembark from the vehicle or move on foot, not smoke or light fires, and not throw litter.



Dibru-Saikhowa National Park

The 340 sq km Dibru-Saikhowa National Park is essentially an island formed by rivers Brahmaputra and Dibru, and is located 40 km east of Dibrugarh town. Home to tigers, leopards, elephants and Asiatic water buffaloes, its prime attraction is a herd of feral horses that have a World War II connection. The park's semi-evergreen, deciduous and swamp forests provide refuge to many herbivores and carnivores besides Gangetic river dolphin, eight species of turtles and 382 species of birds in the Important Bird Area.



Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary

About 38 km from Guwahati, Pabitora has the world's highest concentration of rhinos (100 as per the 2012 census). It is a microcosm of Kaziranga, so much so that it is often referred to as national park's showroom ideal for visitors to Guwahati with little time to spare. One can choose to travel to and from Guwahati and explore the sanctuary on elephant back in less than a day or stay overnight at the forest and tourist bungalows.

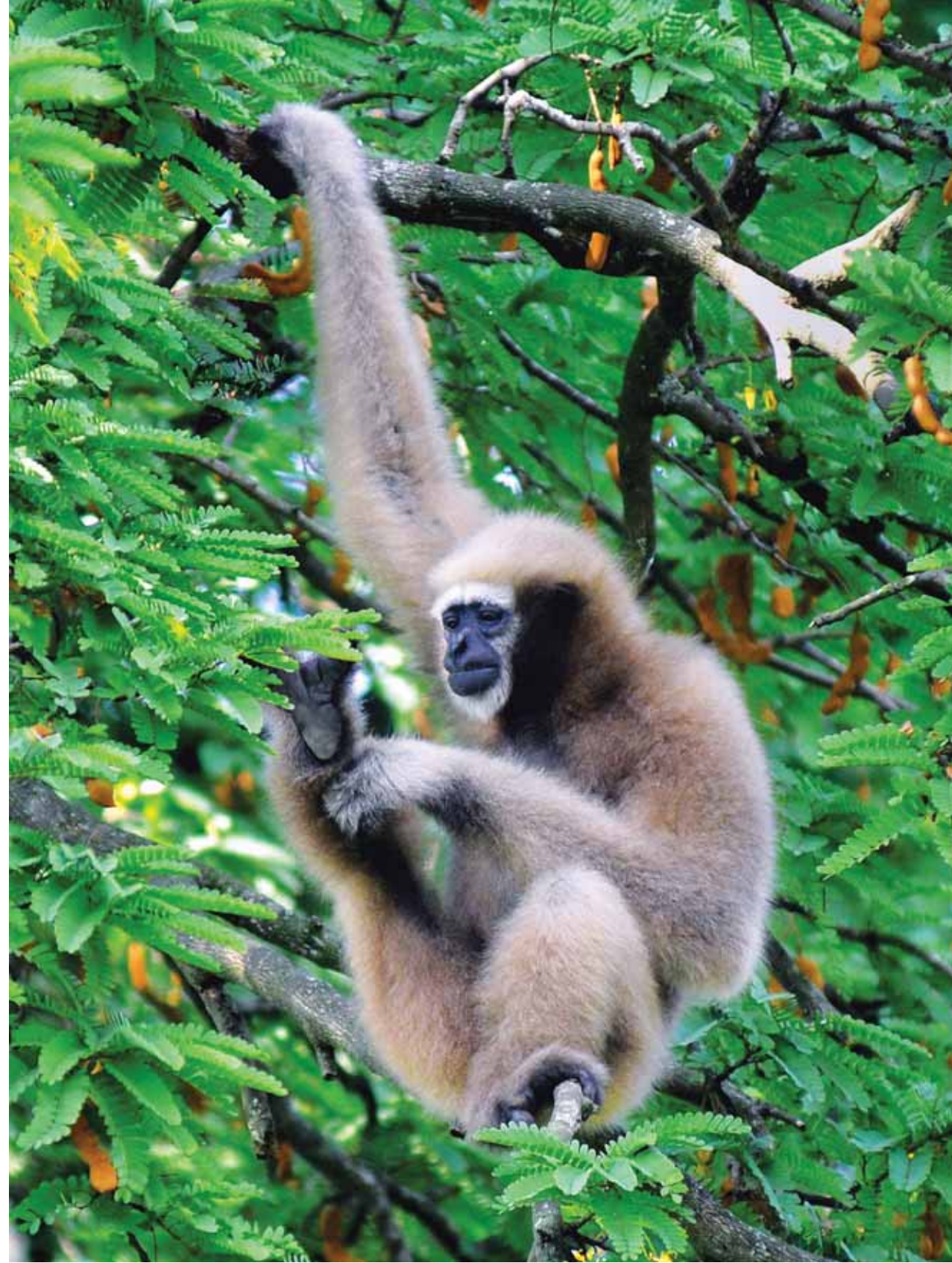


Hollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary

This 21 sq km sanctuary, which is about 20 km from central Assam's Jorhat town, derives its name from the tall hollong (*Dipterocarpus macrocarpus*) – the State Tree – and the hoolock gibbon, India's only ape. It is a semi-evergreen forest with wet evergreen patches amidst tea gardens and human settlements. Hollongapar houses the largest and most vulnerable number of hoolock gibbons besides the Bengal slow loris, the only nocturnal primate in Northeast India.

Dehing-Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary

Assam's only rainforest, the 111 sq km Dehing-Patkai is an important elephant habitat spread across Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts. Often referred to as Amazon of the East, the virgin forest 80 km from Dibrugarh, derives its name from river Dehing and the Patkai mountain range that stretches deep inside Arunachal Pradesh. It receives 4,000mm rainfall annually. Dehing-Patkai has one of the largest species of reptiles besides more than 30 species of butterflies.





Chakrasila Wildlife Sanctuary

The 45 sq km Chakrasila WLS in Dhubri district, about 220 km from Guwahati, is the best known sanctuary of western Assam and is the second home of the golden langur off the Himalayan foothills. Chakrasila comprises of a hilly tract sandwiched between two wetlands – Dheer Beel and Diplai Beel – that are integral to its fragile ecosystem. Sal trees dominate the semi-evergreen and deciduous canopy of this sanctuary that offers shelter to the Indian flying fox, Asiatic jackal, Bengal fox, Chinese pangolin, short-nosed fruit bat and Indian false vampire besides 23 species of reptiles including crocodiles and turtles.



Other wildlife sanctuaries

Garampani and Nambor are two adjoining sanctuaries in Karbi Anglong district, close to Kaziranga National Park. Garampani's USP is its hot water spring. To their south is the higher-altitude Barail Wildlife Sanctuary known for the brown hill tortoise and Asian leaf turtle. Close to Kaliabor in central Assam is Burha Chapori, a sandbar sanctuary created by the Brahmaputra. The remaining sanctuaries are Laokhowa, Bornadi, Sonai-Rupai, Panidehing, Bherjan-Borajan-Padumoni, East Karbi Anglong, Marat Longri, Amchang, North Karbi Anglong (proposed) and Bordoibam Beelmukh

Guwahati: Wildlife City

Guwahati is arguably one city on this planet that has the highest number of wildlife species within its urban confines. The city has a wildlife sanctuary – the 79 sq km Amchang – within it, as also the 4.1 sq km Deepor Beel Bird Sanctuary that is part of the 40 sq km Deepor Beel, a Ramsar Site. While Amchang WLS is home to at least 50 wild elephants and 44 species of mammals and 250 avian species, besides varied numbers of reptiles and amphibians, ornithologists have recorded at least 219 bird species in Deepor Beel. Guwahati also has a significant leopard population, though the fact remains that their number has been dwindling in recent years. The city also has over 150 Greater adjutant storks, a highly endangered bird species of the world.



National Parks & Wildlife Sanctuaries in Assam

Name	Area (sq km)	Fauna	Nearest point
Kaziranga NP	858.98	Rhino, tiger, elephant, water buffalo, Bengal florican	Jorhat (airport), Furkating (railhead)
Manas NP	500	Tiger, elephant, golden langur, pygmy hog, hispid hare	Guwahati (airport), Barpeta Road (railhead)
Rajiv Gandhi Orang NP	78.8	Rhino, tiger, otter, white-winged wood duck	Tezpur (airport), Mangaldoi
Nameri NP	212	Tiger, elephant, great pied hornbill, golden mahseer	Tezpur (airport), Rangapara (railhead)
Dibru-Saikhowa NP	340	Feral horse, wild buffalo, elephant, Gangetic dolphin	Dibrugarh (airport), Tinsukia (railhead)
Pabitora WLS	38.81	Rhino, leopard, barking deer, civet cat, kingfisher	Guwahati (airport, railhead)
Hollongapar Gibbon WLS	858.98	Hoolock gibbon, slow loris, stump-tailed macaque	Jorhat (airport), Mariani (railhead)
Dehing Patkai WLS	111.19	Tiger, elephant, hornbill	Tinsukia (railhead), Dibgoi
Chakrasila WLS	45.57	Golden langur, gaur, sambhar, flying fox	Guwahati (airport), Kokrajhar (railhead)
Bura Chapori WLS	44.06	Tiger, elephant, aquatic birds	Tezpur (airport)
Borail WLS	326.24	Serow, Himalayan black bear, brown hill tortoise	Silchar (airport, railhead)
Nambor-Doigrung WLS	6.05	Tiger, lesser cats, sambhar, gaur	Jorhat (airport), Diphu (railhead)
Garampani WLS	37	Elephant, tiger, stump-tailed macaque	Jorhat (airport), Diphu (railhead)
Laokhowa WLS	70	Tiger, wild buffalo, elephant	Nagaon (railhead)
Bornadi WLS	26	Hispid hare, pygmy hog, dhole, tiger	Mangaldoi
Panidihing WLS	34	Red-crested pochard, adjutant stork, bar-headed goose	Sivasagar
Sonai-Rupai WLS	220	Tiger, elephant, gaur, dhole, white-winged wood duck	Tezpur (airport)
Bhergaon-Borajan - Padumoni WLS	7.2	Hoolock gibbon, slow loris, rhesus macaque, leopard	Tinsukia (railhead)
East Karbi Anglong WLS	222	Tiger, elephant, gaur, hoolock gibbon, wreathed hornbill	Diphu (railhead)
Marat Longri WLS	451	Tiger, leopard, gaur, elephant	Diphu (railhead)
Amchang WLS	79	Leopard, elephant, gaur, slow loris	Guwahati (airport, railhead)
Deepor Beel WLS	4	Pheasant-tailed jacana, whistling teal	Guwahati (airport, railhead)
Bordoibam-Beelmukh WLS (proposed)	11	Kingfisher, white wagtail, black-headed oriole	North Lakhimpur
North Karbi Anglong WLS (proposed)	96	Tiger, lesser cats, elephant, gaur, bear, hoolock gibbon	Diphu (railhead)





The Tea Story

Two out of every three persons in the world, they say, wake up to a cup of tea. And every second person in the world invariably sips tea made in Assam. No wonder Assam and Tea are synonymous to each other. While one of the first things that the British looked for in Assam was tea bushes, it was Maniram Dutta Barbhandar Barua – later known as Maniram Dewan –, an Assamese nobleman, who in 1823 put Robert Bruce, an employee of the East India Company, in touch with Beesa Gam, the Singpho chief near present-day Margherita who was already growing tea in his backyard. As Robert Bruce died in 1824, his younger brother Charles Alexander Bruce, who carried forward the task of collecting tea seeds and several hundred saplings to David Scott in Guwahati as well as Dr N Wallich, Superintendent of the Kolkata Botanical Gardens. The rest is history.

Today Assam accounts for more than 55 per cent of India's total tea production, and the strong Assam tea, grown on the rolling plains by the Brahmaputra, is famous for its smooth malty flavour. A taste attributed to the region's rich loamy soil, unique climate and liberal rainfall, Assam is also the largest contiguous tea-growing area in the world. Assam Tea

has a distinctive rich, deep-amber colour and is known for its rich, full-bodied cup. It is also unique for its brisk, strong and malty character, making it a perfect tea to wake up to.

With more than 800 major plantations and 60,000 small estates spread across 3,50,000 hectares, Assam has the world's largest concentration of tea plantations and employs over 18% of the state's workforce. Assam tea also accounts for 80% of the country's tea export.

From the first consignment of tea (350 pounds) sold in London in January 1839, Assam tea has come a long way, with the major credit going to the Tocklai

Experimental Station established in 1911 in Jorhat. The oldest and largest research centre of its kind, Tocklai has turned tea into pills and toffees too to cater to those not in the tea-drinking club. But brand Assam has invariably been the distinctive black teas (crush tear and curl or CTC). The state also produces a small quantity of distinctive organic orthodox tea that was granted GI status in 2007. The bulk of Assam's teas are sold through the Guwahati Tea Auction Centre. A special logo assigned by Tea Board of India separates Assam Tea from others in the international market.





Heritage Amid Tea Bushes

Assam's 800-plus tea estates are dotted with hundreds of heritage bungalows built during the British era. Though not all of them offer tourists and visitors facilities to stay, some of the best such heritage properties available for tourists include the Burra Sahib's Bungalow, Mistry Sahib's Bungalow, Banyan Grove, Thengal Manor, Chameli Memsab Bungalow, Purni-bheti Bungalow (all in Jorhat), the Mancotta Chang Bungalow (Dibrugarh), and the Balipara Bungalow and Wild Mahseer (both near Tezpur), to name a few. While the Burra Sahib's Bungalow also has close to it the Kaziranga Golf Course, the Cinnamora Tea Estate that owns the Chameli Memsab Bungalow is the first-ever tea estate started by an Indian – Maniram Dewan – an Assamese nobleman, in 1843, who was later hanged by the British.



Tea-tee

In 1829, India became the first country outside Great Britain to have a golf course. The country offers many world-class greens today, laid at Himalayan heights, in desert, military cantonments by forests and lakes and in urban areas. But Assam's 'tea-tees' – golf courses in tea estates – are in a class of their own.

There are some 20 tea-tees, natural and almost all with nine holes. Within 200 km of each other, these golf courses prepared essentially to enhance the lifestyle of British planters transport one to the grandeur of the Raj days. Today, they are helping the estates package them as exotic holiday destinations where tee-putt is as exhilarating as the teapot.

Besides classical clubhouses for post-golf sessions, some of these estates have airstrips for tourists to arrive and take off in chartered aircraft. Professional golfers swore by the 18-hole Digboi Golf Course that Digboi Refinery lords over in eastern Assam's Digboi town until the Kaziranga Golf Resort came up in the middle of a tea estate in Jorhat.

Designed by one of India's leading golf course architect, the resort has a challenging 18-hole, par-71 golf course that is the first of its kind. The club house is the heritage Burra Sahib's Bungalow. The resort also offers a golf academy with professional coaching and a well-equipped golf pro shop.

THE PUTTEAING GREENS

Golf course	District	Nearest airport/airstrip
Bishnauth	Biswanath	Salonibari (Tezpur), LGBI (Guwahati)
Gymkhana Club		
Borsola	Sonitpur	Salonibari/LGBI
East Boro Club	Sonitpur	Salonibari/LGBI
Mangaloi Polo & Golf Club	Darrang	Salonibari/LGBI
Thakurbari Club	Sonitpur	Salonibari/LGBI
North Lakhimpur Planters' Club	Lakhimpur	Lilabari (Lakhimpur)
Misa Planters' Club	Nagaon	LGBI
Jorhat Gymkhana Club	Jorhat	Rowriah (Jorhat)
Seleng District Club	Sivasagar	Rowriah
Sonari Gymkhana Club	Charaideu	Rowriah
Tingrai Golf Club	Tinsukia	Mohanbari (Dibrugarh)
Samdang Golf Club	Tinsukia	Mohanbari
Kanjikoah Golf Club	Tinsukia	Mohanbari/Panitola/Doomdooma
Dibrugarh & District Planters' Club	Dibrugarh	Mohanbari/Chabua
Margherita Golf Club	Dibrugarh	Mohanbari
Naharkatiya Golf Club	Dibrugarh	Mohanbari
Moran Golf Club	Dibrugarh	Rowriah/Moran
Zaloni Golf Club	Dibrugarh	Mohanbari
Dhunseri Golf & Polo Club	Golaghat	Rowriah/Behora Tea Estate
Kaziranga Golf Resort	Jorhat	Rowriah
Narengi Golf Club*	Kamrup (M)	LGBI
Digboi Golf Club**	Tinsukia	Mohanbari/Chabua

[In an army cantonment; ** Run by Digboi Oil Refinery]*



Oilfields Outdoor

Assam is one state that holds with pride the record of having been the world's second place where oil was struck. While tea grew naturally in the backyard of the local people, the British began commercial plantation in 1835, set up the first company – the Assam Company – in 1839, with the Assamese people also taking to it under the leadership of Maniram Dewan, who was later hanged by the British for extending the Sepoy Mutiny to Assam. A few years prior to that, there was simultaneous discovery of oil and coal too – both in 1828 – though oil was formally first struck in the Makum area in 1867, which led to establishment of India's first oil refinery, first at Margherita in 1893, which was later shifted to Digboi in 1901.

Today Assam has four oil refineries – at Digboi (1901), Guwahati (1962), Bongaigaon (1974) and Numaligarh (1999), all in the public sector, with a total refining capacity of 7 million metric tons per annum. Interestingly, all these four places are also tourist destinations in their own right.

Digboi, the birthplace of India's oil industry, is in itself a tourists' paradise. The 120-year old oil town is in fact a unique case of co-existence of nature and industry. The Digboi forest division comprises of as many as 15 reserved forests, which are home to over 200 wild elephants, many of whom are frequent visitors to the Digboi refinery township. A visit to Digboi can actually put one in eye contact with

jumbos from inside any of the numerous heritage bungalows that the town boasts of.

Within Digboi, the Oil Centenary Museum commemorates 100 years of the world's second oldest oil refinery, which has on display, among other items, several vintage machines and equipments, dioramas, photographs, documents and office paraphernalia, as also musical instruments, patented light fixtures, uniforms, medical equipments, etc. Outside it stands majestically Discovery Well No 1, India's first commercial oil well, where oil was first struck in October 1889. This well kept producing for over half a century, until it was abandoned in 1932. On display outside, one can also see the replica of a petrol filling station of the Burmah Oil Company era, with a four-cylinder charming Ford Perfect car dating back to the 1940s!

Likewise, Numaligarh Refinery has a wonderful Butterfly Valley, a sprawling 30-acre land surrounded by small hillocks and located just adjacent to the enchanting Deopahar hills, half-an-hour's drive from Kaziranga. It is home to a large variety of butterflies that have found it one of the safest places in the region. While the Butterfly Valley is replete with varied flora and fauna and has about 60,000 plants endemic to North-eastern India, lepidopterists have so far listed at least 75 species of butterflies here that belong to five broad butterfly families.







For Adventure-lovers Only

Assam is fast emerging as a favourite destination for those who love adventure. While motorcycling tours have become very popular with a number of groups from different parts of India and abroad arriving every year, mountaing biking from Assam to different locations in the adjoining states of North-eastern India is being organized increasingly in the past few years.

The Singhason Hill in Karbi Anglong district and the hills of adjoining Dima Hasao district are ideal for mountaineering and rock-climbing. Some 50 km east of Guwahati is Elephant Rocks (in Morigaon district) that offers ample scope for rock-climbing. Guwahati too has rock-climbing destinations such as the 80-ft Rohini Bhuyan Memorial Rockfield located inside the Assam State Zoo, Bhubaneswari above Kamakhya Temple and Dirgheswari in North Guwahati.

The Brahmaputra and some of its turbulent tributaries such as the Manas and Kopili dare adventurers with their swift current and fiery rapids. But rafting is most organised at Jia-Bhoroli, also a Brahmaputra tributary, while sailing down the Brahmaputra from Sadiya to

Dhubri – a distance of 890 km – is the new challenge that is attracting a lot of adventure-lovers.

Assam has a rich tradition of boat racing on the Brahmaputra as well as in other rivers. The most popular boat race events are held in Barpeta, Hajo, Sualkuchi, Kukurmara, and Guwahati.

With the rivers in Assam home to numerous fish varieties, angling too is a popular sport. The Jiya-bhoroli angling festival held in November as the Kameng river enters the Assam plains to become Jiya-bhoroli near Bhalukpong, about 15 km north of Tezpur, is by far the oldest and most popular such event dating back to the British days. The Jiya-bhoroli is one of the few rivers in India which is home to golden mahseer, a fierce game fish.

Adventure in Assam however is incomplete without trekking through the deep forests, the thickest in India. Hiking through the famed Kaziranga, Manas and Dibru-Saikhowa – all National Parks – can be an unforgettable experience.







History Beckons

Sivasagar, about 360 km east of Guwahati, is one city that is dotted with numerous monuments of historical importance. The 18th century Rang-ghar, said to be Asia's first amphitheatre, in the heart of Sivasagar exemplifies the best of Ahom architecture. The octagonal, two-storey structure stands on exotic material — jaggery, black gram,

elephant grass, limestone, snail ooze, filtered lime powder, long fish bones, mustard oil, incense, and of course bricks and big stones. Members of the royalty watched buffalo and elephant fights, duels and sporting events from the upper storey while commoners enjoyed them sitting on earthen mounds that once surrounded the Rang-ghar.



Close to it is the Talatal Ghar or ‘underground palace’, the largest of the Ahom monuments. The irregularly shaped palace had seven storeys, three of them underground with two secret tunnels – one of them 16 km long – for use as escape routes during enemy attacks. The underground chambers were sealed after the 1950 earthquake, but visitors can view the remnants of the upper storeys. Fifteen km away is another palace – the multi-storeyed Kareng Ghar – at Garhgaon, a fort-town that was the Ahom capital for about 400 years before it shifted to Rangpur, present-day Sivasagar.

Sivasagar is also surrounded by a number of temples and medieval tanks – the latter locally called *sagar* (sea). While the Shiva-dol in the heart of the city is said to be the tallest Shiva temple in India, the Sivasagar tank beside it is the largest man-made tank on earth. An indigenous technology helps maintain the water level of the Sivasagar tank even during severe dry seasons, and is thus home to several species of birds. While the Joysagar and Rudrasagar tanks are also equally amazing, other important temples worth seeing while in Sivasagar are the Joy-dol, Vishnu-dol and Devi-dol.





Pyramids, Their Own

Thirty km from Sivasagar is Charaideo, a destination surrounded by tea estates, where one can see several *moids* – earthen pyramids – where lie in peace several Ahom kings including Siu-ka-phaa, who had founded the Ahom kingdom in 1228. Charaideo incidentally was also the first capital of the Ahom kingdom. Each *moidam* comprises a massive underground vault with one or more chambers having domical superstructure and covered by a hemispherical earthen mound. At the top of the mound a small open pavilion called *chow-chali*, while an octagonal dwarf wall encloses whole *moids*. A couple of *moids* are also seen in Jorhat, the last capital of the Ahoms.



Relics From The Past

Suryapahar: About 136 km west of Guwahati is a unique archaeological site on a hillock with Hindu, Buddhist and Jain relics standing together. The site has hundreds of ancient engraved Shiva lingas of various sizes, a series of Buddhist stupas, and a few sculptures associated with the Jain religion. Remains of planned houses and artistic bricks at Suryapahar have confirmed the long-held belief that a civilization thrived here centuries ago.

Deoparbat: Close to Kaziranga National Park, Deoparbat is a hillock housing stone carvings and ruins of temples belonging to the 8th and 9th centuries. The main Shiva temple here was destroyed in a major earthquake in 1897. The archaeological site adjoins the Deopahar Reserve Forest and is close to Garampani Wildlife Sanctuary on National Highway 39. Home to hoolock gibbons and golden langurs, the sanctuary derives its name from a hot spring.



Dah Parbatia: In the outskirts of Tezpur, about 175 km northeast of Guwahati is Dah Parbatia, a 4th century temple displaying the oldest specimen of sculptural and iconoclastic art of Assam. A rectangular stone doorway adorned with carvings of Hindu deities is what remains of this site.

Ambari excavations: In the heart of Guwahati is Ambari, a locality where an excavation site, discovered accidentally while digging the foundation for a Reserve Bank of India building in 1969, tells numerous stories of two distinct cultural periods, ranging from the 7th to 12th century AD and 13th to 17th century AD respectively. While a number of stone images of Vishnu, Durga, Suryya, Agni, Nandi and other Hindu gods and goddesses were found here, Ambari is also believed to be the site of a ceramic industry dominated by kaolin ware, red ware and buff ware, apart from a Chinese celadon ware and green glazed ware.







Pilgrims' Progress

Assam has always been a favourite destination for people of all faiths. While Kamarupa – as Assam was known in olden days – is said to be the original home of the Mother Goddess, the Kamakhya Temple atop the Nilachal Hill in the heart of Guwahati is Her prime abode. This temple is also said to be the most important centre for the worship of shakti and practice of tantra, and draws several lakh people during the week-long Ambubachi Mela in June every year, apart from hundreds of daily visitors. The Nilachal Hill also has a number of other temples like Bhubaneswari, Bagalamukhi, Bhairavi, Chhinnamasta, Dhumawati and Matangi – all among a list of one hundred names that the Mother Goddess is known as.

About 25 km from Guwahati is

the temple town of Hajo, a place known for inter-faith co-existence not found anywhere else in the world. While the Hayagriva-Madhava temple atop the Manikut hill in Hajo is revered as a Vishnu shrine, it has several other Hindu temples around – Kedar and Kamaleswar temples atop Madanachal, Kameswar temple atop Gokarna hill, and Poa-Mecca, a unique Islam shrine atop the Garudachal hill nearby. More interestingly, the idol in the Hayagriva-Madhava temple is considered as that of Mahamuni Gautam Buddha by the Buddhists, and large number of them, particularly from Bhutan, visits this shrine every year.

Poa-Mecca on the other hand is a 16th century mosque as well as the mazaar of Giasuddin Auilya, a Sufi preacher who is believed





to have come all the way from Persia to set up the first mosque in Assam. While people believe that a visit to Poa-Mecca is equal to one-fourth of a pilgrimage to Mecca proper, people of other faiths too offer prayers here.

Most significant however is the fact that every year, when the idols of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara are taken out in a procession from the Hayagriva-Madhava temple to the banks of the Brahmaputra and around the town, a contingent of Muslim inhabitants of the area have to turn up in their finest silk kurta-pyjamas and lead the 15-km long procession.

Barpeta, about 140 km west of Guwahati, is a famous centre of Vaishnavite sattriya culture, with both Srimanta Sankaradeva – the 16th century saint-reformer – and his principal disciple Madhavadeva

spending several crucial years of their lives together here. The Barpeta Satra was founded by Madhavadeva in 1583, and is today an important centre of art and culture. While fakuwa or holi is the most important festival here, women however do not enter the Satra's sanctum sanctorum.

In Dhubri, about 290 km west of Guwahati on the other hand is the Gurudwara Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib, a Sikh shrine established by the ninth Sikh guru in 1670, the oldest of them in Assam. The place where the Sikh gurudwara was established incidentally was the same spot where Guru Nanak, founder of Sikhism, had met and stayed for some days with Srimanta Sankaradeva, the great Vaishnavite saint-reformer of Assam way back in 1505. Thirty km short of Dhubri from Guwahati is the Mahamaya Temple, another

very significant shakti peeth of Assam to which hundreds of devotees flock every day.

Buddhist votive stupas of 300 AD vintage, cut out of granite on a hill named Suryapahar in Goalpara, about 130 km west of Guwahati, on the other hand point to Assam having been a hotbed of Buddhism. Suryapahar also sports Hindu and Jain relics, underscoring the coexistence of different religious beliefs.

Bardowa or Batadrava in central Assam, on the outskirts of Nagaon town, is one very important centre of Vaishnavite culture. It was at Alipukhuri, a village close to Bardowa where Srimanta Sankaradeva was born in 1449, and it was from here that the great saint-reformer had launched his Vaishnavite movement towards the end of the 15th century. The saint set up the first naam-ghar and

satra at Bardowa, from where the concept spread to all over.

As one travels to upper Assam, one has to stop over at Silghat, once a busy port town when steamers plied on the Brahmaputra, where stands atop a hillock another Kamakhya Temple, built by the 32nd Ahom king Susenpha or Pramatta Simha in 1746. Across the Brahmaputra, in Tezpur town is the ancient Maha-Bhairav Temple, believed to have been originally built by the mythical king Bana of the Asura dynasty. Close to it is the Bhairavi Temple, and a few kilometers away the Haleswar Devalaya.

Within Kaziranga is the Kako-gosanir than – a temple dedicated to the Mother Goddess, while about an hour's drive to the east is the Negheriting Shiva-dol, a 9th century stone temple.





Tourists also drive about 120 km from Kaziranga to see the Deopani Temple on National Highway 2, on the way offering prayers at the two Buddha Vihars in Silonijaan and Balipathar.

The most important shrine in Jorhat on the other hand is the Dhekiakhowa Bor-Namghar, established in 1461 by Madhavadeva, the principal disciple of Srimanta Sankaradeva, the famous 16th century saint-reformer of Assam. The main earthen lamp inside the sanctum sanctorum there was first lit in 1461, and has since continued to burn,

with devotees traditionally offering mustard oil to keep it on.

About 22 km from Sivasagar, at Soraguri Chapori near Disangmukh, where the Disang meets the Brahmaputra, is situated Ajan Peer's dargah, the final resting place of Shah Milan, a Sufi poet and saint who came all the way from Baghdad to be remembered in Assam as Ajan Peer or Ajan Faqir. Ajan Peer not only mastered the Assamese language but also contributed immensely to enrich Assamese literature with *zikir* songs that are inseparable part of culture here.





Island of Faith

Majuli, with an area of 525 sq km in the heart of the mighty Brahmaputra, is said to be the largest inhabited river island in the world. It is also where Assam's spiritual centre-pieces – Vaishnavite monasteries or *satras* – are situated. About 350 km from Guwahati, Majuli is reached by large boats that ply from Nimatighat near Jorhat, and the Vaishnavite monasteries here are not just religious centres, but are hubs of art, culture, dance, music, drama, theatre and literature, apart from philosophical discourses.

While 16th century saint-reformer Srimanta Sankaradeva began his journey from his native place Batadrava, it was in Majuli that he also met Madhavadeva, who joined him as his principal disciple and the duo began setting up *satras* first in the island and then in different parts of the Brahmaputra Valley.



The *satras* in Majuli – Dakhinpaat, Auni-ati, Garamur, Kamalabari, Bengena-ati, Samaguri, to name a few – are treasure-houses of art and culture. The Sattriya music developed by Srimanta Sankaradeva is today recognized as one of the several forms of Indian Classical Music, and so also the Sattriya dances. A visitor to any of the *satras* can not only witness various dance performances and *bhaona* plays, but also listen to music that sing the glory of Krishna.

Raas-Leela, held in November, is by far the largest festival in Majuli, while different *satras* also organize other festivals of dance, music and *bhaona*. Young monks – *bhakats*, as they are called – learn various crafts including making musical instruments and dance and *bhaona* costumes, while mask-making of Samaguri Satra is globally famous. With rich collection of manuscripts, artefacts and other items from the past, each *satra* is also a kind of museum.

Majuli is also home to the Mishing community – a colourful Scheduled Tribe – whose villages comprising of typical elevated bamboo-platform houses complete with granaries and weaving looms reverberate with the traditional Oinitom songs sung to the *pempa*, *dhol* and *gunggang*. Ali-ai-lvigang is the most important festival of the Mishing community, celebrated in February-March.

Home to over 95 resident bird species, Majuli also attracts at least 18 species of migratory birds during winter, while the villagers here very passionately protect several stork colonies, apart from ensuring that nobody scares away or kills any migratory or resident bird.











Sikh Village

The composite Assamese identity has contributions of so many ethnic and linguistic communities professing different faiths that the Sikhs of Punjab too have become inseparable from this intrinsically woven canvas. Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab had in 1820 dispatched a 500-strong contingent of Sikh soldiers to Assam at the request of Ahom king Chandrakanta Simha to help fight the invading Burmese. While most of them died fighting the invaders, those who survived settled down first near Chaparmukh and then spread to Barkola, about 120 km east of Guwahati to assimilate with the local people and become a part the Assamese society.





Spring in The Air

Bihu is undoubtedly the most important identity of Assam, and when Bihu comes, everything else seems to come to a standstill in the state.

While Bihu is a generic term for three distinct festivals dictated by the traditional agricultural cycle, the Assamese have three bihus, of which Rongali Bihu – the New Year festival in mid-April – is the most colourful. Though elders play a solemn role to mark the start of a farm season, Rongali Bihu is essentially a celebration of spring by the youth, and it showcases the best of folk music and dances with occasional erotic overtones. The mid-January Magh or Bhogali Bihu is the harvesting festival marked by feasting on rice-based delicacies. The mid-

October Kati or Kongali Bihu however is a low-key affair marked with only prayers and traditional lamps for a better harvest.

Bihu cuts across caste, creed and ethnicity. No wonder the Bodo community celebrate their Baisagu around the same time, the Dimasa community celebrates Busu, the Rabha community Baikho and the Deori community Bohagiya Bisu, to name a few. Every community has its own traditional musical instrument, and so also various delicacies prepared primarily from rice. People also offer hand-woven gamochas and other cloths to their dear and near ones during the various forms of the spring festival that last not less than seven days.





Magical Mayong

Assam, once upon a time was also described as a land of magic and occult where people would be turned into lambs never to go back to where they came from. That definitely was perhaps a metaphorical way of saying that the land was so enchanting that most visitors over the ages have chosen to make Assam their home. No wonder, the demography of Assam is one of the most varied in the entire country.

Less than an hour's drive from Guwahati is a place called Mayong, a village that literally weaves magic. Blessed with a magical ambience, Mayong is an occult village where live at least 100 practicing wizards and witch-doctors – *oja* or *bej* in local parlance – who have a spell for every ailment or misfortune, and can literally beat the ghosts out of the possessed.

Remains of some old temples on the hillocks around Mayong are probably a pointer to its *tantric* or black magic past. Mayong, which is close to Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, has four important temples – the Kechaikhaiti shrine of Burha Mayong, the Narashinha Ashram of Hiloikhunda, the Ganesh temple of Hatimuria and the Shiva Mandir of Kachashila. It also has a community museum showcasing numerous objects relating to ancient magic literature and relics.



Silk Sualkuchi

Those who have read Rumpelstiltskin thought only the miller's daughter in Germany could spin gold. In Sualkuchi, a village about 25 km from Guwahati, several thousand men and women work round-the-clock on their looms to produce *muga* – the exclusive golden silk yarn available only in Assam – and *paat* silks. While sericulture is said to have flourished here as

early as in the 4th century BC with the place then called Swarnakuchi or golden zone, the credit for establishing the present-day weaving industry in Sualkuchi about 370 years ago goes to Momai Tamuli Barbaruah, a powerful officer of the Ahom kingdom, whose son Lachit had risen to the rank of a Barphukan – General – and inflicted the most crushing defeat on the



Mughals in the Battle of Saraighat in 1671.

Sualkuchi's artisans work on three Assam silks – golden-hued *muga* (derived from the worm *Antheraea assama*), silvery-creamy *paat* (derived from *Bombyx mori*), and the warm-as-wool *eri* or *endi* (from *Attacus ricini*). A handful of them also work on *mejangkori*, a very rare Assam silk variety derived from *Litsea citrate*.

Life in Sualkuchi revolves around the never-ending tick-a-tack-tick music of at least five looms in each of some 4,000 households. This rhythm induces about four million square metres of silk fabric worth Rs 800 million every year. This translates into more than 101 metric tonnes of *muga*, 820 tons of *eri* and 12 tons of *paat*. The yarns are made from worms reared on 19,300 hectares of mulberry and other eco-sensitive plants across Assam. No wonder, Sualkuchi is often called Manchester of the East!



Salute the Hero

In the middle of the Brahmaputra, in Guwahati, stands a 35-foot high statue of Lachit Borphukan, the greatest hero of Assam History, who is credited with having inflicted the most crushing defeat on the mighty Mughals. It was March 1671, and the Battle of Saraighat, fought on the Brahmaputra just below the Nilachal Hill. While the Moghul Army led by General Mir Jumla had defeated the Ahoms, occupied Guwahati and marched up to capital Garhgaon and beyond in 1662, newly-appointed General Lachit Barphukan recovered Guwahati in November 1667. The Mughals however soon returned after Emperor Aurangzeb assigned Ram Singh of Amber to capture Guwahati, and the Assamese suffered a major disaster when over 10,000 of Barphukan's soldiers were killed in the Battle of Alaboi on the north bank of the Brahmaputra on August 5, 1669. Barphukan then drew up a fresh strategy and began considering a proposal to negotiate. But even as Ram Singh began to reciprocate, Aurangzeb sent him a caustic message saying he (Ram Singh) was sent to fight and not to make friends with the Assamese. This shook Ram Singh, and he finally began sailing up the Brahmaputra with the intention of making the last and direct attack on Guwahati. The Barphukan was running high fever on the day Ram Singh's ships approached Guwahati. But then he was one not to step back, and boarded a boat with six other war vessels to lead from the front a combined attack

with his army and navy in unison. The Assamese attack was so fierce and well-conducted that the Mughals could not simply withstand. The suddenness of the event threw the entire Mughal fleet out of gear and it retreated with such panic that the Mughal Army could not be recalled to order. Over 4,000 Mughal soldiers were killed, and Aurangzeb had to serve a recall order on Ram Singh, which was soon followed by a demotion notice too.

While historian SK Bhuyan described the Battle of Saraighat as Assam's Trafalgar, perhaps the best tribute to Lachit Barphukan and his men came from none other than Ram Singh, "Every Assamese soldier is expert in rowing boats, shooting arrows, in digging trenches and in wielding guns and canons. I have not seen such specimens of versatility in any other part of India." And about Barphukan, he wrote, "Glory to the King. Glory to the Commander. Glory to the country. One single individual leads all the forces. Even I, Ram Singh, being personally in the spot, have not been able to find any loophole and an opportunity." General SK Sinha, former Governor of Assam and Jammu & Kashmir, on his part described the Battle of Saraighat as "the greatest naval battle fought on a river." No wonder a Barphukan's statue also stands majestically at the entrance of the National Defense Academy at Khadakvasala too!



Mini Khajuraho

About 40 km north of Guwahati is Madan Kamdev, atop the Dewangiri Hills, ruins of some 20 temples, among which the basement of one temple is still intact. The complex, declared protected by Archaeological Survey of India, is strewn with numerous carved slabs of stone, fragments of stone pillars and their capital bases, chiseled stone blocks of walls, many having floral designs on them. Archaeologists say Madan Kamdev was built between the 11th and 12th centuries. The complex has some erotic sculptures, and the sanctum sanctorum of the temple has the male and female deities in amorous embrace, making locals believe it was dedicated to Kamdev, the god of love.

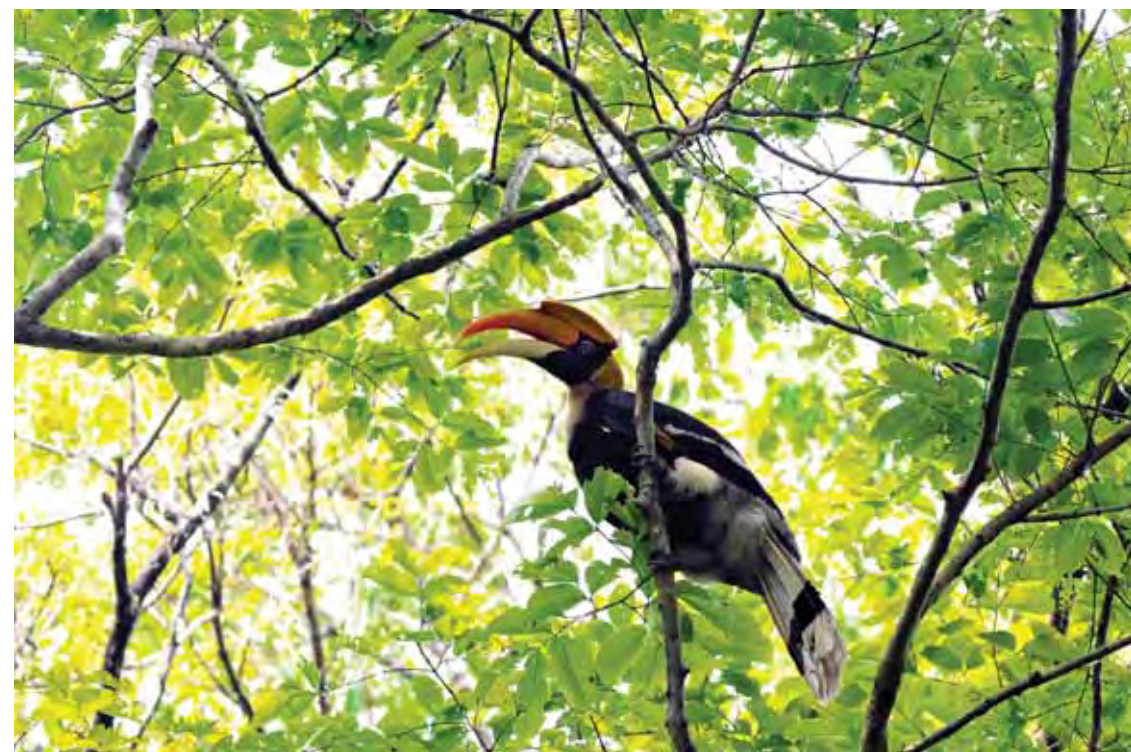






Silk Street

The stretch from Panbazar to Kamarpatty in Guwahati is lined with a number of Assamese silk outlets that sell exquisite saris, *mekhela-chador* and dress material sourced mainly from Sualkuchi. A cluster of handloom and handicraft outlets, private and government-owned, in the Ambari area also sell indigenous silks besides craft work from across the Northeastern region.





Rain Rain, Come Again

Assam's only rain-forest Dehing-Patkai – covering an area of about 111 sq km – is about 80 km from Dibrugarh. But then it is closer from Tinsukia, Digboi, Margherita and Jeypore, and is a Wildlife Sanctuary that is famous for Assam Valley Tropical Wet Evergreen Forests bordering Arunachal Pradesh. The sanctuary and rain-forest is also part of the Dehing-Patkai Elephant Reserve. Dehing-Patkai, which is home to the Hoolock Gibbon, the only ape found in India, also has a number of mammals like Chinese pangolin, Flying fox, Slow loris, Stump-tailed macaque, Assamese macaque, Rhesus macaque, Capped langur, Himalayan black bear, Hog-badger, Jungle cat, Leopard cat, Fishing cat, Marbled cat, Clouded leopard, Leopard, Tiger, Wild pig, Sambar, Barking deer, Gaur, Serow, Malayan giant squirrel, Porcupine and Pig-tailed macaque.

Also home to several bird species like Lesser Adjutant Stork, White Winged Wood duck, White-backed Vulture, Slender-billed Vulture, White-checked Hill Partridge, Khaleej Pheasant, Grey Peacock-Pheasant, Rufus necked Hornbill, Wreathed Hornbill, Great Pied Hornbill, Beautiful Nuthatch, Black-browed Leaf Wabler, Green Imperial Pigeon, and Purple wood or Pale capped Pigeon etc, Dehing-Patkai also has reptiles like the Rock python, King cobra, Asian leaf turtle and Monitor Lizard.



Silent Prayers for Valiant Souls

Assam has two major cemeteries where lie in peace as many as 686 brave soldiers who had lost their lives in different places in Assam and present-day Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh fighting the invading Japanese forces in the World War II. While the Guwahati War Cemetery originally had 497 graves, eleven graves that belonged to Japanese soldiers, were dug and flown back to their native country as recently in 2012. The Guwahati War Cemetery is unique in that it was the only cemetery where heroes of both sides – the victors and the vanquished – were buried side by side within one campus, till 2012.

The Guwahati War Cemetery was started during the Second World War for burials from the several military hospitals posted in the area. Later, other graves were brought in by the Army Graves Service from Amari Bari Military Cemetery, Sylhet Military Cemetery, Mohachara Cemetery, Nowgong Civil Cemetery and Gauhati Civil Cemetery, where permanent maintenance could not be assured. Further graves were also brought to the cemetery for the same reason from isolated sites in present-day Mizoram, and from civil cemeteries in Badarpur, Coochbehar, Darjeeling, Dhubri, Dibrugarh, Dinjan, Kakapahar, Lebong, Lumding, Shillong and Silchar, in 1952.

Of the 486 graves of Commonwealth servicemen in the Guwahati War Cemetery, 316 belong to soldiers from the United Kingdom, 136 Indians, four each from Canada and Australia, and one from New Zealand. It also has 24 Chinese war graves, while 25 of the burials continue to remain unidentified. It also has two non-war graves.

While Assam was an operational area of the Burma Campaign during the World War II, Digboi, India's oldest oilfields and refinery, which is close to the Burmese (now Myanmar) border and on the road to Ledo, was on the lines of communication, and a military hospital was established there. Soon the Digboi War Cemetery was started for burials from the hospital, and by the time the War ended, it contained 70 burials. Later, the Army Graves Service brought in more graves from burial grounds in Panitola, Jorhat, Margherita, Tinsukia and Ledo, where permanent maintenance could not be assured, and one also from the US Military Cemetery at Shingvuoityang in Burma (Myanmar). The cemetery now contains 197 Commonwealth and 3 non-Commonwealth (1 Italian, 1 American and 1 Belgian) burials of the World War II.







Hills are Calling

Assam's three hill districts – Karbi Anglong, West Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao – together comprise a different heaven on earth. While the Karbis are the most numerous people in both Karbi Anglong and the newly-created West Karbi Anglong districts, Dima Hasao is home to several tribes like Dimasa, Zeme, Hmar, Kuki, Biate, Vaiphe, Rongmei, Khelma, Hrangkhoh and Khasi-Pnar or Jaintia.

Diphu, headquarter of Karbi Anglong, is a beautiful place with colourful people, and a visit to any of the several villages surrounding it provides a glimpse into the life and culture of the Karbi community. While every traditional Karbi village has a bachelors' dormitory called Jirkedam, a typical institution where unmarried young men learn the basics of social work and community participation. Rongker and Hacha are two important festivals of the Karbis, the former held at the beginning of the New Year with prayers for a good harvest and protecting the village community from diseases and natural calamities. Hacha on the other hand is their post-harvest festival, which is marked

with community feasting, singing, dancing and merry-making. Karbi women on the other hand are wizards on their looms and weave wonderful dresses like the *pinicamflak*, *jar-ek*, *wanpo* and *khanjari*.

Places to visit include Diphu, the Buddha Vihars at Balipathar and Silonijan, the Deopani Mandir at Deopani near Bokajan, and the Kakochang waterfall (close to Kaziranga National Park). Singhason, the highest peak in Karbi Anglong is a major trekking hotspot. On the outskirts of Diphu is a botanical garden, adjoining which is a new 451-sq km wildlife sanctuary called Marat Longri. An important component of Dhansiri-Lungding Elephant Reserve, Marat Longri Wildlife Sanctuary is home to tigers, elephants, leopards, barking deer, wild pigs, porcupines, slow loris, pangolins, banded kraits, rock pythons, monitor lizards, brown hill tortoise, and several species of hilly and woodland birds. The Taralansgo Youth Festival held in February showcases the best of Karbi music, dance and cuisine.



Chorus of Silent Hymns

Dima Hasao emerges from the heart of Assam like a chorus of silent hymns and rise up to the sky like crescendo of music. Haflong, the headquarter town of Dima Hasao district, is Assam's only hill station of its kind. With an elevation of 966 metres above sea level, Haflong has numerous tourist spots in and around it, with Jatinga, the village where birds commit suicide during certain weeks of the year, being the most famous. Watching the sun rise from behind the Borail mountain is a must, while those who love adventure even trek to the 1866-metre Thumjang peak and 1748-metre Hempeupet peak in the majestic mountain range. The Borail mountain and Borail Wildlife Sanctuary are home to tigers, leopards, elephants, barking deer, hoolock gibbons, black bear, wild dogs, wild buffaloes, mithuns, several tortoise and bird species, and of course several species of reptiles.

At Maibang, once capital of the Kachari kingdom, about 50 km from Haflong is the ancient monolithic stone temple by the Mahur river, while at Panimoor, about 120 km from Halong, the Kopili river turns into a thrilling waterfall. The Dimasa people take a holy dip here on Maghi Purnima in mid-January. In the extreme east of the district is Garampani, a picturesque town famous for its hot springs and captivating waterfalls. Traveling to Dima Hasao is in itself an experience particularly by train as one travels through several tunnels and lofty bridges. The winding road journey through the green and blue mountain too is always interesting, with several rivers including the Dehangi, Diyung, Jatinga, Jenam, Mahur and Langting singing songs for the passers-by.







Let the Birds Fly

About nine km from Haflong, on the spur of an offshoot of the main Borail range, is Jatinga, a village known the world over for its mysterious phenomenon of birds committing suicide under particular weather conditions in some months of the year. It occurs on dark moonless nights from September and November, when the breeze blows from south to north and the sky is moderately foggy and there is a slight drizzle. Birds flying over or past Jatinga come down towards any powerful light, some dying after hitting the hard ground, others trapped and killed by people. Well-known ornithologists like Salim Ali and S Sengupta did try to get to the bottom of Jatinga's bird suicide mystery. But no single hypothesis comprehensively explains why birds use a well-defined strip – 1.5 km long and 200 m wide – of the Jatinga Ridge to dash to their deaths. Awareness campaigns have brought down the number of bird casualties in Jatinga, whose oranges and pineapples are said to be the sweetest.





Barak beckons

Assam's southern part, aptly called Barak Valley because of the river Barak, is another place that has remained largely undiscovered. While one can fly, or take a train or drive through the tunnels of the Borail mountains to Silchar, 20 km outside the town is Khaspur Fort, capital of the Kachari kings in the 17th century. Among the ruins of Khaspur, tourists find the Sun Gate and Lion Gate most attractive. Also on the outskirts of Silchar is the Sri Kancha Kanti Devi Temple, built in 1806, dedicated to a goddess who is a combine of Kali and Durga. In Bhuvan Hills is the Maniharan Tunnel, once said to have been a favourite place of Lord Krishna, while underneath the tunnel flows the Triveni river.

Seventy km west of Silchar, on the Indo-Bangladesh border, is Malegarh, where Indian troops belonging to 34 Native Infantry Regiment fought a pitched battle with British soldiers on December 18, 1957. Altogether 26 Indian sepoy who laid down their lives revolting against the British are buried here. At Badarpur, 30 km from Silchar is the remains of a Mughal-era fort on the bank of the Barak river.



Youngest Martyr

Assam takes pride in the fact that the youngest person to have attained martyrdom while taking part in India's freedom movement was from here. It was on September 20, 1942, responding to Mahatma Gandhi's Quit India call that hundreds of people marched to hoist the tricolor atop police stations and other government buildings. While 57-year old Bhogeswari Phukanani laid down her life at Barhampur in Nagaon, Mukunda Kakati and 14-year old Kanaklata Barua took a bullet on her body at Gohpur the same day. The worst was in Dhekiajuli, 130 km from Guwahati, where at least 15 persons had laid down their lives for their motherland, the youngest of them being the 12-year old Tileswari Barua. Believe it or not, a nameless beggar and a nameless *sanyasi* too had attained martyrdom at Dhekiajuli on that day.

Ryots Revolt

Assam's role in India's freedom movement is not yet fully documented. While the revolt began within less than two years of Assam's annexation to British India in February 1826, the first martyrs were Piyali Phukan and Jeuram Dulia Barua, both hanged on March 25, 1830. Since then more than 200 persons made the supreme sacrifice till India attained Independence, the most significant incident being the death of over 140 people when British troops opened fire on revolting ryots in Patharughat, a village in Darrang, about 65 km from Guwahati, on January 28, 1894. Similar incidents also took place at Rangiya, Phulaguri and a few other places.





Culture Centre

At Panjabari in Guwahati is located Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra, a sprawling cultural complex, conceived as a grand exposition of life and culture of the people of Assam, of its diverse ethnic groups and sub-groups which have created the cultural mosaic which is the essence of the state, in all its beauty and splendor. Named after the great 16th century saint-reformer-artist Srimanta Sankaradeva, the Kalakshetra has museums, light-and-sound shows, live programmes of dance, music, songs, traditional plays, puppetry, and poetry, apart from an art gallery, a huge library and a botanical garden, an open-air theatre, and a children's park.





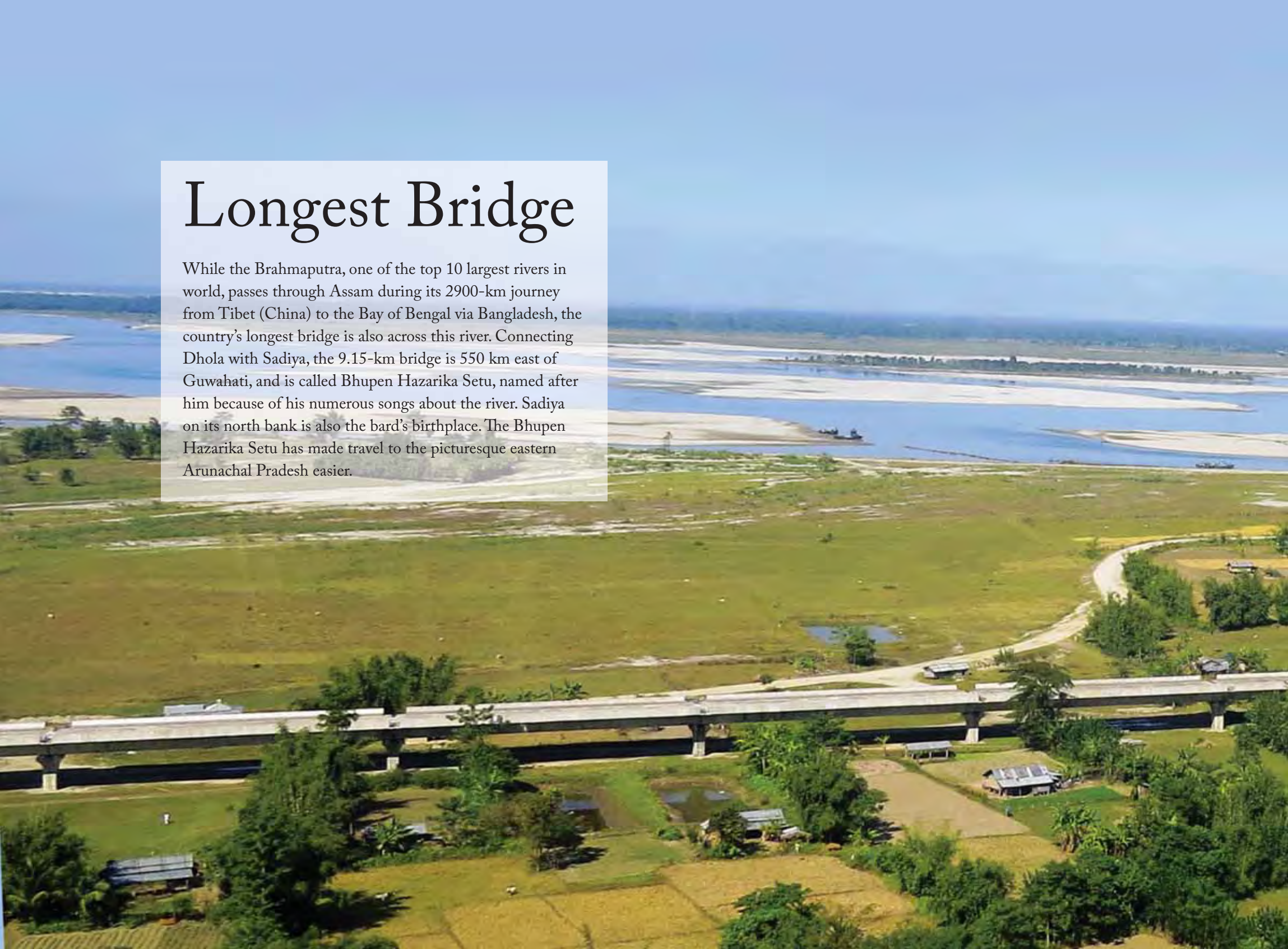


On the Red River

Sailing on the Brahmaputra – the Red River – is always a memorable experience. While one can take a regular passenger vessel to travel between Guwahati and North Guwahati, Jorhat and Majuli, Dibrugarh and Dhemaji or Dhubri and Hatsingimari, sailing on the mighty river on one of the several luxury cruise vessels is always a memorable experience. These vessels sail right through the middle of Kaziranga National Park, apart from touching the Majuli island and several towns in the 890-km journey of the Brahmaputra in Assam.

Longest Bridge

While the Brahmaputra, one of the top 10 largest rivers in world, passes through Assam during its 2900-km journey from Tibet (China) to the Bay of Bengal via Bangladesh, the country's longest bridge is also across this river. Connecting Dholai with Sadiya, the 9.15-km bridge is 550 km east of Guwahati, and is called Bhupen Hazarika Setu, named after him because of his numerous songs about the river. Sadiya on its north bank is also the bard's birthplace. The Bhupen Hazarika Setu has made travel to the picturesque eastern Arunachal Pradesh easier.









Last Song

Assam's most familiar name spread over the 20th and 21st century is Bhupen Hazarika (1926-2011), the man with a golden voice often described as the last of the living balladeers of the world. He wrote poems, composed lyrics, sang songs, wrote and directed films, scored music, acted in them, edited magazines, and above all made known to the world beautiful music of this part of the country. His works – poetry, lyrics, films, essays, editorials, travelogues – all were marked by the message humanity and universal brotherhood. While his final resting place - Bhupen Hazarika Samadhi-kshetra – at Jalukbari in Guwahati – is today a place of pilgrimage, the Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra (at Panjabari) has a museum that exclusively preserves and showcases various objects associated with the life and work of the great legend.



Useful Information

WHEN TO COME

The weather in Assam, particularly across the low lying areas of the Brahmaputra Valley and Barak Valley, stays temperate with a maximum of 35°-38°C in summer and a minimum of 6°-8°C in winters. One can experience a significant fall in the temperature during the winters over the hilly terrains. The summers are wet and humid - afternoon thunder showers are a common occurrence during monsoons - and early morning fog in the winters. The best time to visit is between September and April, when the weather is pleasant, rainfall is moderate and the paddy fields look bountiful. The national parks and sanctuaries are closed for monsoons between June and September.

Bihu, the iconic festival of Assam is celebrated thrice round the year in response to welcome the major seasonal changes. However, Rongali Bihu is most lavishly celebrated during the month of April to usher in the Assamese New Year, which makes it a perfect time for visiting.

TIME ZONE

Indian Standard Time (IST) is 5 1/2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time and 10 1/2 hours ahead of US Eastern Standard Time. IST is 4 1/2 hours behind Australian Eastern Standard Time, 3 1/2 hours behind Japanese Standard Time and 1 1/2 hours behind Thai Standard Time. Despite its vast geographical territory, India has just one time zone and no daylight saving time in summer.

BEFORE COMING TO INDIA

There are a few things you need to take care of before travelling to India

Passport

Foreign travellers to India must always have a passport with them. You should ensure its validity for the entire period of stay. If your passport is lost or stolen, you should immediately contact the embassy or consulate of your country.

Visa

The tourist visa is normally given for six months. The 15 day single/double entry visa is issued only to bona fide transit passengers. Tourist groups of not less than four people ,travelling under the auspices of a recognized travel agency, may be considered for a collective tourist visa.

A visa is given for a period for which the passport is valid. So, if the validity of the passport runs out before the visa expires, the visa is not issued. The visa is valid for 180 days from the date of entry into India, unless specified otherwise.

Visa Extension

The 180 day tourist visa is supposedly non-extendable but can be extended for another 15 days in case of emergencies. A valid onward ticket must, however, be produced as proof of the intention to depart India's shores. The 15 days extension on the 6 month visa is issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, the local state government and the Foreigner's Regional Registration Office (FRRO). The FRRO office is open on weekdays, 9.30 am to 1.30 pm and 2 pm to 4 pm.

FRRO OFFICES

New Delhi

East Block B, Level-II
Sector-1, R.K. Puram
Ph: (011) 26711443/384

Kolkata

237 Acharya Jagadish
Chandra Bose Road
Kolkata-700020
Ph: (033) 22837034

Mumbai

Annexe-II, Crawford Market
(Near Police Commissioner's Office)
Ph: (022) 22621169/0046

Guwahati Regional Passport Office

Ph: (0361) 2260101, 2264841

STD CODES

Bokakhat	03776	Karimganj	03843
Dhubri	03662	Majuli	03775
Dibrugarh	0373	Mangaldoi	03713
Digboi	03751	Majuli	03775
Diphu	03671	Mangaldoi	03713
Goalpara	03663	Mariani	03771
Golaghat	03774	Nagaon	03624
Guwahati	0361	Nalbari	03624
Hailakandi	03844	North Lakhimpur	03752
Hajo	03664	Sibsagar	03772
Haflong	03673	Silchar	03842
Jorhat	0376	Tezpur	03712
		Tinsukia	0374

ASSAM TOURISM OFFICES

Guwahati

Directorate of Tourism

Government of Assam
Station Road
Guwahati 781001
Ph: (0361) 2547102, Fax: (0361) 2542748
Email: directortourism1@gmail.com
Website: www.directortourism.assam.gov.in

Assam Tourism Development Corporation Ltd.

Asom Paryatan Bhawan
AK Azad Road, Paltan Bazar
Guwahati- 781001
Ph: (0361) 2633654, 2738620
Email: mdatcguw1@dataone.in
www.assamtourismonline.com

Tourist Information Office

Lokapriya GNB International Airport

Borjhar, Guwahati

Tourist Information Counter

Guwahati Railway Station

Delhi

Tourist Information Office
B-1 Baba Kharak Singh Marg
Emporia Complex
Ph: (011) 23345897

Kolkata

Tourist Information Office
Assam House
8, Russel Street
Ph: (033) 22295094

Siliguri

Tourist Information Office
Pradhan Nagar
Hill Cart Road

MONEY

The Indian currency is called the Rupee, and is available in denominations of 2000, 500, 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, 2, 1. All major international credit cards including Visa, Amex, Mastercard, Diners Club are used.

Banks are open from 10 AM to 3:30 PM, Monday to Friday, and 10 AM to 1 PM on Saturdays; most of them remain closed on Sundays and national holidays.

All big towns and cities are dotted with ATM's (automated teller machines). However, when travelling to remote areas it is advisable to carry cash.

HEALTH

For travel health, it is advisable to be careful about the food and carry your own mineral water. Guard against sun-stroke and dehydration especially if you are travelling during the summer months. It would be useful to keep a packet of Electrol or any oral rehydration salts along with you and at the first sign of any kind of fatigue or dehydration to mix its contents in water and keep sipping it frequently. Malaria is a problem in India during the rainy season. So, if you are coming at that time of the year, do consult your doctor for precautionary anti-malaria medication, and use mosquito repellent ointment.

Foreign Exchange can be purchased in Guwahati at:

Standard Chartered Bank,
GNB Road
Ph: (0361) 2540597

State Bank of India
Panbazar
Ph: 9435190900

Other Banks in Guwahati:

Allahabad Bank
Fancy Bazar
Ph: (0361) 2543229

Bank of Baroda
Fancy Bazar
Ph: (0361) 2540476

Bank of India
Kamarpatty
Ph: (0361) 2540480

Central Bank of India
Panbazar
Ph: (0361) 2540483

Canara Bank
Fancy Bazar
Ph: (0361) 2540495

Indian Overseas Bank
Panbazar
Ph: (0361) 2522562

Punjab National Bank
Ph: (0361) 2529962

Punjab and Sind Bank
Fancy Bazaar
Ph: (0361) 2540490

State Bank of India
Airport Branch
Ph: (0361) 2840253

UCO Bank
Fancy Bazar
Ph: (0361) 2540515

Union Bank of India
Fancy Bazar
Ph: (0361) 2544727

United Bank of India
Hem Baruah Road
Ph: (0361) 2546267

Vijaya Bank
Fancy Bazar
Ph: (0361) 2541123

HOSPITALS IN GUWAHATI

Guwahati Medical College
Bhangagarh
Ph: (0361) 2529457, 2528417

Mahendra Mohan
Choudhury Hospital
Panbazar
Ph: (0361) 2543996/2529561

Institute of Neurological Science and GNRC Heart Institute
Ph: (0361) 2567195, 2567198

Red Cross Hospital
Chandmari
Ph: (0361) 2665114

B. Baruah Cancer Hospital
Birubari
Ph: (0361) 2472789

Chatribari Christian Hospital
Chatribari
Ph: (0361) 2540325

Downtown Hospital
G S Road, Dispur
Ph: (0361) 2331003

International Hospital
Christian Basti
Ph: (0361) 2342560/2342561

Railway Hospital
Ph: (0361) 2570432, 2570492

Sankardeva Netralaya
Beltola
Ph: (0361) 2303382

COMMUNICATIONS

Pre-paid SIM cards from local network service providers are easily available throughout the state. Internet cafes, present in abundance, in Guwahati and in several small towns keep the state connected to the world over the world wide web. The main post offices (open from 10:30 AM to 3 PM on weekdays) provide a wide range of facilities, including fax and a courier service, which operates under the brand name EMS-Speed Post.

Guwahati's prime post office is:

General Post Office
Meghdoot Building
Panbazar
Ph: (0361) 2541294

ARRIVING BY AIR

Guwahati's Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport is well-connected to the major cities in India. Taxi services including prepaid services and radio cabs are available at the airport for transfer to the city. There are also airports for Silchar, Dibrugarh, Jorhat and Tezpur which run flights to Kolkata and the other parts of the northeastern region.

Major airlines operating in the region:

Air India
City (0361) 2266266, 2265492,
2264420
Airport (0361) 2840221, 2840279

Jet Airways
City (0361) 2633252, 2633257
Airport (0361) 2840130/31

Indigo Airlines
City (0361) 2843596
Airport (0361) 2843457

For more information contact:

www.airindia.com
www.jetkonnnect.com
www.jetairways.com
www.goindigo.in

ARRIVING BY RAIL

The three major routes of North East Frontier Railways connect Assam to nodal stations in the rest of the country. Guwahati, Assam's largest railway station, is served by direct trains to New Delhi (Rajdhani, 27 hours), Kolkata (Saraighat Express, 17 hours), Mumbai (Dadar Express, 54 hrs) and Bangalore (Bangalore Express, 60 hrs). There are also direct trains from these cities to Dibrugarh, which is a further 12 hours from Guwahati.

The toll numbers for enquiry of train timings and schedules are below:

Enquiry: 131/133

Reservation: (0361) 2541799

Train status: (0361) 2540330/136

A computerised railway reservation office is located in front of Guwahati Railway Station. It is open from 8 am to 8 PM from Monday to Friday. On weekends and Holidays, it open from 8 am to 2 PM.

For latest information on train schedule and booking status, log on to: www.indianrail.gov.in

For booking tickets on the internet, log on to: www.irctc.com

MOVING BY ROAD

The Assam State Transport Corporation (phone: 0361-2547941) along with several private companies operates a large network of buses connecting Guwahati with Tezpur, Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Tinsukhia, Silchar, Dimapur, Kohima, Imphal, Aizawl and Itanagar.

MAJOR TOUR OPERATORS

Assam Holidays

Guwahati

T: 0361-2466045

M: 9678005056, 9678011056, 9678010056, 9435105056

E: info@assamholidays.com

W: www.assamholidays.com

Astha Nature's Tours & Travels

Abhayapuri

Ph no: +91 99578 72766, 98642 44443

Email: asthantt@gmail.com

Website: www.asthanaturestours.com

Beach Vacation

Guwahati

Ph: +91-361-2412594, +91-94351-00025

E-mail: beachvacation06@gmail.com

Website: www.beachvacation.co.in

Brahmaputra Jungle Resort (Tours & Travel Division)

Guwahati

Ph: +91-97060-99377, +91-97060-99380, +91-94351-44084

E-mail : brahmaputradesort@yahoo.com

Website : www.brahmaputradesort.com

Brahmaputra Cruise Pvt. Ltd.

Guwahati

Phone/Fax : +91-361-2734769

Cell: +91-94355-58005

Email : info@brahmaputrarivercruises.com

Website : www.brahmaputrarivercruises.com

C.N. Travels

Guwahati

Ph: +91-361-2510383, 80113-32276, 98640-60204

Email: cntoursntravels@hotmail.com

Web: www.cntravels.co.in

Destination Northeast

Guwahati

Mobile No: +91-94350-19554

E-mail: sachinrialto.11@gmail.com

Website: www.hotelrialto.in

D'trenz Tours

Guwahati
Ph:+91-98543-25877, +91-97070-87378, +91-361-2733114
E-mail: dtrenznortheast@gmail.com
Website: www.dtrenztours.com

East India Travel Co.

Guwahati
Phone: +91 361 2410403; Mobile: +91 9864732022
E-mail: tours@eastindiatravel.in
Website: www.eastindiatravel.in

Exotic Escapes Inc.

Guwahati
Tel: +91-361-2340147, +91-361-2132607
Cell:+91-98640-45457
+91-98643-26057
+91-95080-52444
Email - exoticescapes.inc@gmail.com, info@exoticescapes.in
Website - www.exoticescapes.in

Fastrack Travels

Guwahati
Tel/fax: +91-361-2510633
Mob: +91-99571-87792
E mail: fastracktravels@gmail.com
Web: www.travelfastrack.com

Flamingo Travels & Adventures (A) Pvt. Ltd.

Guwahati
Phone:+91-361-2454669,
Fax:+91-361-2454669
Cell:+91-98640-47900, +91-94351-97651
E-mail: info@flamingotravels.com
flamingoadventures@gmail.com
Website: www.flamingotravels.com

Holiday Air Travels

Sibsagar
Mobile No: +91 9435056033
Tel: +91 3772 220340, Fax: +91 3772 232053
Website: www.holidayairtravels.co.in

Huge Commercial Tours & Travels

Guwahati
Tel: +91-361-2234220
Mobile: +91-94351-08482
Email: naushad.aries@gmail.com
Web: www.hoteldepot.in, www.hugecarrentals.com

Jungle Travels India

Guwahati
Tel: +91-9207042330 -31, +91 361 2667871, 72, 73
E-Mail: info@jungletravels.in
Websites: www.jungletravelsindia.com

Kamakshi Tours

Guwahati
Email : kamakshitours.tvls@yahoo.in, contact@kamakshitours.com
Website : www.kamakshitours.com

Kaziranga Holidays

Guwahati
Phone & Fax :+91-361-2664444
Mobile No :+91-97060-44755
E-mail :info@kazirangaholidays.com
kazirangaholidays@yahoo.com
Website: www.kazirangaholidays.com

Koyeli Tours & Travels

Guwahati
Landlines: +91-361-2206789, +91-361-2206666
+91-361-2206789
Tele Fax: +91-361-2203654
E-mail: info@koyelitravels.in, koyelitravels@gmail.com
Website: www.koyelitravels.in
www.kaziranga.co.in

K V Holidays

Guwahati
Landlines: +91-361-22462918
Mobile: +91-94350-46822
E-mail: vikashjain@kvholidays.com, b2b@kvholidays.com
Website: www.kvholidays.com

Rhino Club Adventure And Tours

Nalbari

Mobile:+91-8011420716

Tel:+91-3624-223392

E mail: lairclub@yahoo.com

Landmark Tours & Travels

Guwahati

Cell :+91-99540 08638 / 99541 95835

Fax : +91-361-2462962

Email : landmark@explorenortheastindia.com,

landmarktours09@gmail.com

Website : www.explorenortheastindia.com

Landscape Safari

Guwahati

Ph. +91-361-2464663 / 64 / 65 / 09207043566 / 68

Email : info@landscapesafari.com, india@landscapesafari.com

international@landscapesafari.com

Website: www.landscapesafari.com

Leisure Travels

Guwahati

Cell.+91 9859499830, 9854040404, 9854041666

Ph. +91-0361 2456456

Email : sales@leisuretravels.in

Website: www.leisuretravel.in

Let's See Tour & Travels

Guwahati

Ph: +91 8011050893, 0361-2130624/25

+91-94368-95447, 94353-86328

E-mail: tawanggroup@gmail.com, sharma.lohit@yahoo.com

Luit Holidays

Guwahati

Ph:- +91 361 2970058, +91-94351 10838

E-mail: luitholidays@gmail.com

Website: www.luitholidaysonline.com

My Voyage

Guwahati

Mobile:+91- 96780-71669,

Office: +91-361-2462228,

Email: aparup@myvoyage.co.in

Website: www.myvoyage.co.in

Natural Holidays

Guwahati

Mobile No: +91-98645-11081/+91- 94350- 18775

E-mail: office@naturalholidays.in

Website: www.naturalholidays.in

Nature-Hunt Tours 'N' Treks

Guwahati

E-mail : tours@naturehunts.com

kazirangaecocamp@naturehunts.com

Phone No. +91-99575-77417/ +91-94355-15011

Website : www.naturehunts.com

Network Travels

Guwahati

Ph:+91-361-2605335

Fax:+91-361-2605335

Mobile:+91-94351-54638

E-mail: networktravelsindia@gmail.com

Website: www.networktravelsindia.net

News Travel Services (India)

Guwahati

Mob: +91-94350-45113, +91-97064-30415

E mail: info@newstravelservices.com

Web: www.newstravelservices.com

Nirmala Tours & Travels

Guwahati

Phone +91 361 2735722; Mobile +91 94353 08595

Email: nirmalatoursguwahati@gmail.com

Purvi Discovery Pvt. Ltd.

Dibrugarh

Ph : +91-373-2301120/2300035

E-mail: purvidiscovery@gmail.com

Website : www.assamteatourism.com

Reeve Tours & Travels

Guwahati

Tel: +91-361-2738875/ 2738870

Mobile: +91-98644-91137

Email: rit_sahariah@yahoo.co.in

R S Tour And Travels

Guwahati

Email: a.jalan@rstourandtravels.com

jalanabhimanyu@gmail.com

Mob : +91-98599-31511, +91-94351-54002.

Office: +91-98540-54001, +91-361-2456444.

Website: www.rstourandtravels.com

Sarothi Tourism

Guwahati

Ph:+91-361-2664972

Fax: +91-361-2669417

Mobile:+91-94350-40452, +91-99540-40452,

E-mail: sarothitourism@gmail.com

Website: www.sarothitourism.com

Shivani Aviates

Guwahati

Ph:+91-361-2464263, 2464266

Fax: +91-361-2669417

E-mail: shivaniholidays@hotmail.com

Shubhyatra

Guwahati

Tel: +91-361-2343830

E mail: subhyatra40@yahoo.in

Travel Station

Guwahati

Phone - +91-361-2463813

Mobile: +91-99540-22212/94353-42567

Email: travelstationghy@gmail.com

Website: www.travelstationindia.com

Valuemytrip Travels Pvt. Ltd.

Guwahati

Ph: +91-361-2734666

Mob: +91-94351-17687

E-mail: admin@valuemytrip.com

Website: www.valuemytrip.com

LOCAL TRAVEL

A much favoured option for traveling through the state are buses. Extensive bus networks connect most of Assam to Guwahati. There are buses run both by the state government and private operators.

One thing is certain whatever the kind of bus you board, the ride can be less spacious and bumpy at times, but if you are the kind who likes to travel impromptu they are definitely the quickest way to reach your destination.

Cycle-rickshaws are available in almost all parts of the state, especially in smaller towns, and are a convenient means of covering short distances. Not only do they precariously balance two to three people, but often carry merchandise as well. Within large cities like Guwahati, the most-sighted means of transport is arguably the auto-rickshaws and the city buses. They are the most practical conveyance for travelling within the city, and also for visiting destinations nearby.

There are several car rental agencies in Guwahati and all big towns. You could consult your hotel or contact the cab operators for guidance on local car rentals.

PACKAGE TOURS - Organised by Assam Tourism

- City Tour (Guwahati)
- Temple Tour (Guwahati)
- Nabagarha-Kamakhya-Dolgovinda-Dirgheshwari-Balaji-Basishtha (Guwahati)
- Madan Kamdev-Hajo-Sualkuchi
- Kaziranga Safari
- Shillong Tour
- Pobitora-Mayong-Sita Jokhala

DISTANCES FROM GUWAHATI in km

Agartala	599	Kohima	342
Aizwal	538	Kolkata	1182
Darjeeling	587	Manas NP	136
Dibrugarh	445	Nameri NP	224
Dibru Saikhowa NP	535	Orang NP	109
Dimapur	280	Shillong	103
Gangtok	624	Silchar	348
Haflong	309	Sivasagar	362
Imphal	487	Tawang	577
Itanagar	420	Tezpur	181
Jorhat	307	Tinsukia	492
Kaziranga NP	217		

POLICE ASSISTANCE

Police Assistance booths are located at the airports, railway station and near major bus stops throughout the state.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Police - 100

Police Control - (0361) 2540138, 2540113

Women's Police - (0361) 2524627

Fire - 101, (0361) 2340222

Ambulance - 102, 108, (0361) 2544356, 254435

ASSAM TOURISM FACILITIES

The Department of Tourism and Assam Tourism Development Corporation Limited operate lodges and resorts – some on contract basis – at various urban centres and wildlife and rural destinations.

ACCOMMODATION

New Delhi

- **Swagatam Guest House**, Ph: +91-11-26165846

Guwahati

- **Prashaanti Tourist Lodge**, Station Road
Ph: +91-361-2544475
- **Prashaanti Tourist Lodge**, Kamakhya, Ph: +91-9435042063
- **Prashaanti Yatri Niwas & Restaurant**, Navagraha, Guwahati
Ph: +91-9464083579

Kaziranga National Park

Straddles three districts 217 km east of Guwahati

- **Bonani, Bonoshree & Kunjabon lodges**
Ph: +91-3776-262423
- **Aranya Tourist Lodge**, Kohora, Ph: +91-3776-262429
- **Prashaanti Lodge**, Ph: +91-3776-262429
- **Jupuri Ghar**, Ph: +91-9435196377
info@jupurigharkaziranga.com
- **Agoratoli Resort**, Ph: +91-9435110838, 9706010838
info@agoratoliresort.com

Manas National Park

Straddles five districts 176 km northwest of Guwahati

- **Prashaanti Tourist Lodge**, Barpeta Road, Ph: +91-98540 49790, +91-98647 20106
- **Bansbari Lodge**, Near Park entrance, Ph: +91-3666-260223

Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park

Straddles Darrang and Sonitpur districts 140 km northeast of Guwahati

- **Prashaanti Tourist Lodge**, Ph: +919954023413/9864023413/9854165351

Nameri National Park

In Sonitpur district 220 km northeast of Guwahati

- **Prashaanti Eco-Tourism Project**, Potasali, Ph: +91-9954357376/9435316644
- **Tourist Lodge**, Bhalukpong, Ph: +91-3782-234037, +91-9402802234, 9402020187
- **Prashaanti Tourist Cottages**, Bhalukpong, Ph: +91-99570-81781, +91-94011-41869

Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary

In Morigaon district 35 km east of Guwahati

- **Prashaanti Tourist Lodge**, Pabitora, Ph: +91-9854092192

Majuli (Rural tourism)

Brahmaputra river island 333 km east of Guwahati and accessible via Nimatighat near Jorhat

- **Prashaanti Ecotourism Resort**, Kamalabari Ph: +91-9508098339

Jorhat

Headquarters of Jorhat district 308 km east of Guwahati

- **Prashaanti Tourist Lodge**, MG Road, Ph: +91-376-2321579

Tezpur

Headquarters of Sonitpur district 174 km northeast of Guwahati

- **Prashaanti Tourist Lodge**, Jenkins Road Ph: +91-3712-221016

Sivasagar

Headquarters of Sivasagar district 363 km east of Guwahati

- **Tourist Lodge**, Ph: +91-3772-222394

Nagaon

Headquarters of Nagaon district 123 km east of Guwahati

- **Tourist Lodge**, Ph: +91-3672-236446
- **Downtown Holiday Resort**, Samaguri Ph: +91-3722-29007, +91-361-2331003

Golaghat

Headquarters of Golaghat district 307 km east of Guwahati

- **Prashaanti Tourist Lodge** Ph: +91-3774-280611/280730, +91-9864286200

Nalbari

Headquarters of Nalbari district 71 km west of Guwahati

- **Proshaanti Tourist Lodge** Ph: +91-5624-220973/222821

Barpeta

Headquarters of Barpeta district 140 km west of Guwahati

- **Prashaanti Yatri Niwas**, Ph: +91-9854200686

Diphu

Headquarters of Karbi Anglong district 271 km east of Guwahati

- **Tourist Lodge**, Ph: +91-3671-272694

Haflong

Headquarters of Dima Hasao district 325 km southeast of Guwahati

- **Tourist Lodge**, Ph: +91-3673-236468

Sadiya

A small town 549 km east of Guwahati

- **Prashaanti Tourist Lodge**, Ph: +91-9957003572

Dhubri

Headquarters of Dhubri district 287 km west of Guwahati

- **Prashaanti Tourist Lodge**, Ph: +91-3662-230961, +91-9435029720

Silchar

Headquarters of Cachar district 343 km south of Guwahati

- **Prashaanti Tourist Lodge**, Park Road
Ph: +91-3842-232376

Hailakandi

Headquarters of Hailakandi district 335 km south of Guwahati

- **Prashaanti Tourist Lodge**, Ph: +91-9435078737

Digboi

- **Prashaanti Lodge**, Ph: +91-3751-269247,
+91-9435137070

Chandubi

A picturesque lake 55 km southwest of Guwahati

- **Chandubi Picnic Cottage**, Rajapara
Ph: +91-361-2547102

WAYSIDE AMENITIES & RECERATION SPOTS

Guwahati

- **Sukreswar Ghat Udyan**, +91-9435100580
- **Bir Lachit Udyan**, Jalukbari, +91-9957837894
- **Shanti Udyan & Restaurant**, Dighalipukhuri
Ph: +91-9954078265
- **Sati Radhika Shanti Udyan**, Uzanbazar
Ph: +91-9854139488

Wayside Amenities Centre & Cottages, Jakhalabandha

Ph: +91-9859522320/9864081750

Tourism Project, Bhalukpong, Ph: +91-3782-234896
+91-9436256310

Samaguri Tourism Project, Samaguri, Ph: +91-9864017412,
+91-367-2229007

Rhinorica Wayside Amenities Centre, Kaziranga

Ph: +91-9864046332

Chapanala Picnic Spot, Nagaon, Ph: +91-9401442866

Prashaanti Wayside Amenities Centre, Kalain, Silchar
Ph: +91-9435374021

Triptire Ekhaj Wayside Amenities Centre, Amoni

Ph: +91-9435060228

Prashaanti Wayside Amenities Centre, Moran

Ph: +91-9854842093/9854066351

Prashaanti Wayside Amenities Centre, Sivasagar

Prashaanti Wayside Amenities Centre, Digboi

Ph: +91-9435142063

BOOKING & CONDUCTED TOURS

Please contact:

Red River Tours & Travels (a unit of ATDC Ltd)

2nd Floor, AK Azad Road, Rehabari, Near Nepali Mandir
Paltanbazar, Guwahati - 781008

Email: redrivertravels@gmail.com,

Ph: +91-361-2738005/06, +91-7896060366,
7896035322, 789606072

RIVER CRUISE

Cruises on the Brahmaputra are offered by both Assam Tourism and private operators. Most of the cruises leave from Sukreswar Ghat on MG Road. Some operators have luxury services to Kaziranga and beyond.

Assam Bengal Navigation Co. Pvt. Ltd.

Dihang Arcade, GNB Road, Guwahati-781003

Ph: +91-361-2667871/72/73,
+91-92070 42330/31

Email: sales@assambengal.in

Brahmaputra Cruise Pvt. Ltd.

289, AT Road, Bharalumukh

Ph: +91-9435103304, +91-9435558005;

Tel/Fax: +91-361-2734769

Email: enquiry@bcpl.in

Website: brahmaputrarivercruises.com

Alfresco Grand

Machkhowa, Guwahati-781009

Ph: +91-9435558004

Website: alfrescogrand.com

Mahabahu River Cruise

Pandu, Guwahati

Ph: +91-9508992657

Website: mahabahucruiseindia.com

River Queen (IWT)

MG Road, Guwahati

Ph: +91-9435100580

Floating restaurant and discotheque

Kamakazi

MG Road, Fancy Bazar, Guwahati

Ph: +31-9748005656

Also visit assamtourism.org for options.

Please check the sites for bookings, discounts, dates and cancellations.

**NORTHEASTERN STATE HOUSES /
BHAWANS**

Guwahati has guesthouses of Assam's northeastern neighbours. One can visit these offices for Restricted Areas Permit and/or Inner-Line Permit required to visit these states.

Arunachal House

Rukminigaon, Dispur, Guwahati -781021

Ph: +91-361-2412859/2416720/2412859

Mizoram House

GS Road, Tarun Nagar, Guwahati - 781005

Ph: +91-361-2529441/2529626, Fax: +91-361-2529448

(Rajgarh Road, Ph: +91-361-2457924)

Nagaland House

Sachal Road, 6th mile, Khanapara, Guwahati - 781022

Ph: +91-361-2332158

Tripura Bhawan

Bylane 4, Birubari, RK Mission Road, Ulubari

Guwahati - 781007

Ph: +91-361-2492041/42

Manipur Bhawan

Rajgarh Road, Guwahati - 781003

Ph: +91-361-2526707

Meghalaya House

AK Azad Road, Rehabari, Guwahati - 781008

Ph: +91-361-2632174, 2544343

Sikkim House

Panjabari Road, Khanapara, Guwahati - 781037

Ph: +91-361-2339999

RURAL STAY

The essence of Assam's ethnicity and culture lies in villages. Individuals and self-help groups have established cottages and huts with basic amenities for tourist to absorb the state's rustic charm. Local cuisine, music and dance, hands-on farming, interaction with locals on farm management and techniques, homestays (organised locally), visits to monasteries and forestlands are part of the leave-your-city-behind package.

Majuli

Brahmaputra river island 333 km east of Guwahati and accessible via Nimatighat near Jorhat

- **Ygdrasill Bamboo Cottage***, Between Kamalabari and Garamur, Ph: +91-8876707326, bedamajuli@gmail.com
- **La Maison de Ananda**, Near Garamur, +91-9957186356, 9435205539, 8822838438 monjitrising@yahoo.in
- **Mepo Okum**, near Garamur, Ph: +91-9435203165
- **Donipolo**, Near Garamur, Ph: +91-9435205539
- **Hotel Island**, Garamur, Ph: +91-3775274712
- **Seuj Bilas**, Kamalabari, Ph: +91-3775 27345
- **Kakoti Guest House**, Garamur, Ph: +91-9435203418
- **Kamalabari Satra Guest House**, Kamalabari, Ph: +91-3775-273302

*(*Organises boat-and-tent trips to Mulai Kathoni, a sandbar in the Brahmaputra 18 km from Jorhat developed into a forest singlehandedly by green award winner Jadab Payeng)*

Mayong

A cluster of villages known for sorcery and magical cures, Mayong can be packaged with a trip to Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary. For accommodation please refer to 'Pabitora' under JUNGLE STAY.

Mayong Village Museum & Research Centre, Ph: +91-9854479746

Gandhamou

30 km northwest of Guwahati, near silk town Sualkuchi

Rural Tourism Project, Ph: +91-9859291081

Merbeel

70 km from Dibrugarh town, near Naharkatiya

Sasoni Merbeel Eco-Tourism Development Project, Ph: +91-8472911510, 9435202154

Emthong Eco Lodge

Village of Singpho community, near Margherita in Tinsukia district

Namphake

Village of Buddhists near Dibrugarh town, offering homestays

URBAN STAY

Major urban centres and tourist destinations in Assam offer a range of accommodation in hotels from economy to luxury, resorts, cottages, lodges and guesthouses. Most have air-conditioning and a clean ambience and are reasonably priced (with tariff subject to change and taxes as applicable).

Following is a list of accommodation in urban areas. The hotels, guesthouses and lodges are in order of luxury to economy, and some of the popular ones in Guwahati are slotted in two categories with only five- and four-star hotels indicated.

GUWAHATI & OUTSKIRTS

Economy to budget	High-end/luxury
Lilawati Grand , Motilal Nehru Road Ph: +91-361-2733093	Vivanta by Taj ***** Guwahati, Assam Guwahati Shillong Rd, Jayanagar, Khanapara, Guwahati, Assam 781022 Phone: 0361 710 6710

Economy to budget	High-end/luxury
Hotel Rialto GNB Road, Panbazar Ph: +91-361-2730840	Radisson Blu***** NH37, Gotanagar Ph: +91-361-7100100 Fax: +91-361-7100100 reservations.guwahati@radisson.com
Hotel Suradevi Motilal Nehru Road, Panbazar Ph: +91-361-2545050	Hotel Dynasty**** SS Road, Lakhtokia Ph: +91-361-2516021/7120055 Fax: + 91-361-2514112 info@dynastyhotel.in reservations@dynastyhotel.in
Star Lodge GNB Road, Panbazar Ph: +91-0361-2734758	Hotel Rajmahal**** AT Road, Paltabazar Ph: +91-361-2549141-46/2511602-04, +91-84860-20037 Fax: +91-361-2639282 info@hotelrajmahal.in
Hotel Minerva GNB Road, Panbazar Ph: +91-361-2732084/2733582, +91-9707657730	Hotel Gateway Grandeur**** GS Road, Christianbasti Ph: +91-361-7110022, +91- 9678041002/4/5/8/9 Fax: + 91-361-2340022 info@gatewaygrandeur.com
Hotel Silk Route SS Road, Lakhtokia www.silkrouteguwahati.chobs.in	The Lily Hotel**** GS Road, Sixth Mile, Khanapara Ph: +91-361-2229791, +91-7896000123 reservation@thelilyhotel.com
Kuber International HB Road, Fancybazar Ph: +91-361-2515807	Kiranshree Portico**** Paltanbazar Ph: +91-361-2735300-10, Fax: +91-361- 2735311 kiranshree@kiranshreeportico.com
Prag Continental MN Road, Panbazar Ph: +91-361-2540850	Pragati Manor**** GS Road, Christianbasti Ph: +91-361-2341265 info@hotelpragatimanor.com
Monsoon Palace GNB Road, Near RBI, Panbazar Ph: +91-9864043958	The Residency Tourist Resort Behind SBI Main Branch, Dispur Ph: +91-8811038779, +91-0361-2237645 residency1ghy@gmail.com

Economy to budget	High-end/luxury
Hotel President GNB Road, Panbazar Ph: +91-361-2544911	Prabhakar Homestay H/No 2, Bylane 2, KP Baruah Road, Chandmari Ph: + 91-361-2650053, +91- 9435033222/9435033221 shielabora@yahoo.com, maheshbora@ yahoo.com
Hotel Starline MD Shah Road, Paltanbazar Ph: +91-361-2518341	Hotel Royale de Casa Dr BN Saikia Path, Beltola Ph: +91-361-2220031/2223350/2223351 info@royaledecasa.com, msm@ royaledecasa.com
Hotel Maitri Residency GS Road, Paltanbazar Ph: +91-361-2631444	Vishwaratna Hotel AT Road, Ph: +91-9954190005, +91-361- 2607712 reservation@vishwaratnahotel.com
City Palace Opp ASTC, Paltanbazar Ph: +01-361-2635849	Hotel Nandan GS Road, Paltanbazar Ph: +91-9706098845, +91-361-2540855 +91-361-2739811/2/3/4/5/6/7, 2739731/2634797/98/99 info@hotelnandan.com, nandan1@ sancharnet.in
Hotel Indira KC Sen Road, Paltanbazar Ph: +91-361-2545161	Hotel Atithi 7, AK Azad Road, Paltanbazar Telefax: +91-361-2732111/666/777, 2542320 info@atithihotel.in
Hotel Blue Moon Latasil, Bhuban Road Ph: +91-361-2540059	The Contour Hotel KC Sen Road, Near Paltanbazar Police Station Ph: +91-361-2600024/25/26/27, Fax: +91-361-2600028 reservation@thecontourhotel.com
Hotel Tibet GS Road, Paltanbazar Ph: +91-361-2519815	Landmark Hotel Dr B Barooah Road, Ulubari Ph: +91-361-2455248, 2528218, 2528245, 2462963 contact@thelandmarkhotels.in guwahati@thelandmarkhotels.in

Economy to budget	High-end/luxury
Hotel Bob GS Road, Paltanbazar Ph: +91-361-2134734	Ginger IHM Campus, VIP Road, Upper Hengerabari, Borbari Ph: +91-361-7160633 reservations.guwahati@gingerhotels.com
Rangpur Inn 3 rd Floor, LB Plaza, GS Road, Bhangagarh Ph: +91-361-2450014	Hotel Grand Starline GS Road, Christianbasti Ph: +91-361-2341455/755, +91-9864339055 hotelgrandstarline@rediffmail.com
Hotel Geetanjali GS Road, Paltanbazar Ph: +01-361-2634552	Agnideep Continental GS Road, ABC, Tarun Nagar Ph: +91-361-246 4700
Rodali Residency GS Road, Paltanbazar Ph: +91-2630861	Hotel Nakshatra Opp Shankardev Nethralaya, Beltola Ph: +91-361-7112345 hotelnakshatra@gmail.com
Hotel Mahalaxmi Indo-Myanmar GS Road, Paltanbazar Ph: +91-361-2602062, 9854031726, 9435143063 mahalaxmiindomyanmar@gmail.com	Rains Inn Solapara Road, Paltanbazar Ph: +91-9957223131 rainsinnguwahati@gmail.com
Hotel Trimurti International GS Road, Paltanbazar Ph: +91-361-2542170	Hotel Parashuram Near ISBT, NH 37, Garchuk, Katabari Ph: +91-361-2279976, +91-8399969010, 9706671945 hotelparshuram3star@hotelparshuram.com hotelparshuram3star@gmail.com
Hotel Hornbill Md Shah Road, Paltanbazar Ph: +91-9957999105	Hotel Millennium Dhanuka Complex-B, Sati Joymati Road, Athgaon Ph: +91-361-2739057/49, +91-9401044444 hotelmillennium@hotmail.com

Economy to budget	High-end/luxury
Amrit Regency GS Road, Ulubari Ph: +91-361-2604177	Greenwood Resort GS Road, Madhab Nagar, Khanapara Ph: +91-9207042326/9207042327, +91-361-2331054 info@greenwoodresort.in
Hotel Ambarish GS Road, Ganeshguri Ph: +91-361-2344526	Dichang Resort NH37, Patorkuchi, Sonapur Ph: +91-9954290184/8811094940/9954009353 info@dichangresortnhotel.com
Fame City GS Road, Paltanbazar Ph: +91-361-2734836	Brahmaputra Jungle Resort Tepesia, Sonapur, Kamrup(metro), Assam. Mob : 9706099375/79 Email: brahmaputraresort@yahoo.com. www.brahmaputraresort.com
Hotel Prince B Dr B Barooah Road, Ulubari Ph: +91-361-246 0311	Spring Valley Resort Kamarkuchi, Sonapur Ph: +91-9435143970/9957577741 salesnmarketing@springvalleyresort.net manager@springvalleyresort.net
Hotel Surya KC Sen Road, Paltanbazar Ph: +91-361-2510584	Aarian Woods Resort Kamarkuchi, Sonapur Ph: +91-8811099160/61/62, 9957231919 info@aarianhotelsandresorts.com infoaarianwoods@gmail.com
Hotel Aroma Paltanbazar Ph: +91-0361-2735273, 9207112248	Hotel Aarian Aatithya 17, Ananda Nagar Road, Six Mile Ph: +91-8811099160/161/162 info@aarianhotelsandresorts.com infoaarianatithya@gmail.com

Economy to budget	High-end/luxury
Hotel Grand Majesty Laxminagar, Hatigaon Ph: +91-361-2222893, +91-9706027555	Hotel Siroy Classic GS Road, East Manipuri Basti, Paltanbazar Ph: +91-361-2608485 info@hotelsiroygroup.com
	Hotel Siroy Lily Solapara Road, Paltanbazar Ph: +91-9706147119, +91-361-2733124/125 hotel_siroylily@yahoo.com

OTHER HOTELS/LODGES IN GUWAHATI

Hotel Rajdoot

KC Sen Road, Paltanbazar, Ph: +91-8011432703

Hotel Madhuban

ME Road, Paltanbazar, Ph: +91-361-2601743

Hotel Biswanath

ME Road, Paltanbazar, Ph: +91-361-2633597

Arya Inn

GS Road, Ulubari, Ph: +91-361-2739904

Hotel Alankar

187, Maniram Dewan Road, Chandmari, Ph: +91-361-2663819

Hotel Rhino

Silpukhuri, Ph: +91-361-9508062131

Hotel Kamrupa

RG Baruah Road, Ph: +91-361-2202300

Hotel Utopia

Guwahati Medical Road, Bhangagarh, Ph: +91-361-2547442

Hotel Sagar

Nepali Mandir, Paltanbazar, Ph: +91-361-273500/01

Hotel Nava Alaka

Fancybazar, Ph: +91-361-2541070

Hotel Nivedan

GS Road, Dispur Super Market, Last Gate, Ph: +91-361-2234947

Hotel Rituraj

Kedar Road, Fancybazar, Ph: +91-361-2732201

Hotel Neptune

Soniya Complex, Beltola Tiniali, Ph: +91-9864022080

Hotel Maruti

SRCB Road, Fancybazar, Ph: +91-361-2518531

Anjuna Residency

GS Road, Manipuri Basti, Paltanbazar, Ph: +91-361-2606712

Priya Palace

2, Janpath Lane, GS Road, Ph: +91-361-2466224

Kamakhya Tourist Lodge

Ph: +91-8811013044

VIP International

Priya Market Complex, Kalapahar

Anjoli Lodge

Near Rajdhani Mosque, Ganeshguri, Ph: +91-361-9435045608

Hotel Upasana Palace

Near Ganesh Mandir, Ganeshguri, Ph: +91-361-2262014

Hotel Louhitya

MG Road, Ph: +91-361-2608432

Hotel Embassy

KC Sen Road, Paltanbazar, Ph: +91-361-2517403

Vikash International

Paltanbazar, Ph: +91-361-2600338

Sundarban Guest House

Buddha Hall, ME Road, 1st Bylane, Paltanbazar, Ph: +91-361-2730722, 2131261

River View Guest House

Uzan Bazar, Ph: +91-9706341499

Hotel Nova

SS Road, Fancybazar, Ph: +91-361-2511464

Upasana Palace

Near Ganesh Mandir, Ganeshguri, Ph: +91-361-2262014, +91-9706022765

Bhargav Inn

GS Road, Paltanbazar, Ph: +91-8474014434

Rajdhani Regency

Last Gate, Dispur, Ph: +91-361-2227575

Hotel Chanakya

KC Sen Road, Paltanbazar, Ph: +91-361-2732686

Hotel Sukomani

KC Sen Road, Paltanbazar, Ph: +91-361-2514160

Hotel Joydurga

KC Sen Road, Paltanbazar, Ph: +91-8135915600

Happy Lodge Hotel

Paltanbazar, Ph: +91-361-2609696

Daffodil Lodge

AT Road, Paltanbazar, Ph: +91-361-2609333

DIBRUGARH

City Regency

RKB Path, Ph: +91-373-2326805, 2325442/43/44
cityregency@rediffmail.com

Hotel East End

New Market, Ph: +91-373-2322698, 2327098, 2101421
hoteleastend@yahoo.co.in

Little Palace

AT Road, Marwari Patty, Ph: +91-373-2328700/02/03

Hotel Devika

AR Road, Puja Ghat, Ph: +91-373-2325959
info@hoteldevika.com

Indrasurya

RKB Path, Station Road, Ph: +91-373-2326322, 2324415
hotelindrasurya@gmail.com

Rajawas

Chotagala, AT Road, Ph: +91-373-2323307, 2324303
hotelrajawas@gmail.com

JORHAT

Hotel Paradise

Solicitor Road, Ph: +91-376-2321521

Hotel MD's Continental

Marwari Patty, Ph: +91-9435703435
www.hotelmidscontinental.com

Hotel Jora Palace

Raja Moidam Road, Ph: +91-376-2301375

Hotel East Grey

Tarajan Bypass, Kotoky Pukhuri, Ph: +91-376-2372105, 2372137

More International

AT Road, Ph: +91-376-2300472, 2304075

Hotel Dipti

Biman Barua Road, Ph: +91-376-2326973

TEZPUR

Hotel Luit

Ranu Singh Road, Ph: +91-3712-222083/224708

Hotel Kanyapur

NT Road, Ph: +91-3712-220261, 222311

Hotel KRC Palace

JN Road, Ph: +91-3712-222688

The Fern Residence

Baruah Chuburi, Ph: +91-3712-255503

KF Hotel

Ketekibari, Mission Chariali, Ph: +91-3712-255203, www.kfhotels.com

Hotel Blue Star

Janaki Cinema Road, Ph: +91-3712-220682

TINSUKIA

Hotel Royal Highness

GNB Road, Ph: +91-374-2330661

Hotel Rangghar Residency

GNB Road, Ph: +91-8822942419

Hotel Highway

AT Road, Ph: +91-8402008333

Hotel Centre Point

GNB Road, Ph: +91-374-2338789

Hotel Mayurjyoti

AT Road, Ph: +91-374-2336725

Hotel East International

Chairpatty, Ph: +91-374-2330700/24, 2330839, 2330978

Hotel Ballerina

AT Road, Ph: +91-374-2339217, 2332323/24, info@hotelballerina.com

Jungle Stay

KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK

Director, Kaziranga National Park

Bokakhat, Ph: +91-3776-268095, unicornis@sancharnet.in

DFO, Eastern Assam Wildlife Division

Bokakhat, Ph: +91=3776-268007

Forest Guest House

Ph: +91-3776-268007

Forest Heritage Inspection Bungalow

Ph: +91-3776-268007

Gramonnayan Bhawan, Kohora, Ph: +91-3776-299710

Soil Conservation IB, Kohora, Ph: +91-3776-262409

Wild Grass, Ph: +91-8761833837

Iora - The Retreat

Ph: +91-9957193550, 9954000444, 9954000555,
iora@kazirangasafari.com

Borgos

No. 1 Sildubi Goan, Kohora, Ph: +91-7399041192-94, 8811023473/83,
+91-3776-294111, 262777

Diphlu River Lodge

Kuthuri, Ph: +91-9435146214, +91-361-2667871/72/73,
sales@assambengal.in

United-21 Grassland

Ph: +91-8811003986, +91-22-61841444,
cst@panoramicworld.biz

Landmark Wood

Kanchanjurie, Ph: +91-9957189228, 9957189229,
contact@landmarkhotels.in

Maihang, Ph: +91-9085611973

Wild Berry, Ph: +91-9954272472

Birds Eye, Ph: +91-9435182451

Hills N Lake, Near Mahi Miri Ting, Bagori,
Ph: +91-9435525553

Green Ashiyana, Bagori, Ph: +91-9957189228/29

Green Reed Lodge, Ph: +91-3776-262417

Hornbill Resort, Ph: +91-9435124333

Kaziranga Florican Lodge, Ph: +91-9954246816

Bonhabi Lodge, Ph: +91-3776-262675, 262525,
e7safari@rediffmail.com

Brahmaputra Jungle Camp, Ph: +91-9435011380

Borosha Resort, Ph: +91-9854589024

Sneha Bhawan, Ph: +91-9707866117

Chikuni Bhawan, Ph: +91-94352-35381

Shanti Lodge, Ph: +91-9435154298

MANAS NATIONAL PARK

Field Director

Barpeta Road, Ph: +91-3666-261413, 260289 (Control Room)
www.manasassam.org

Musa Jungle Retreat

Bansbari, Ph: +91-8472885633
sales@lbtourism.co.in, www.musa.in

Birina Lodge

Bansbari, Ph: +91-9707884206

Florican Cottages

Bansbari, Ph: +91-9613973343

Manas Maozigendri Eco-tourism Society

Kamardwisa, Ph: +91-9864034614
xtreme.ne@gmail.com

DIBRU-SAIKHOWA NATIONAL PARK

DFO, Tinsukia Wildlife Division

Ph: +91-374-2331472

Wave Ecotourism

Guijan, Ph: +91-9954791573/9707702040
wave_ecotourism@yahoo.com,
gohainniranta@gmail.com

Banashree Eco Camp

Ph: +91-9435335462,
banashree_eco@yahoo.com

NAMERI NATIONAL PARK*

DFO, Western Assam Wildlife Division

Dolabari, Tezpur, Phone: +91-3712-268054

Range Officer, Nameri Wildlife Range

Potasali, Ph: +91-3714-270558

ORANG NATIONAL PARK

DFO, Mangaldoi Wildlife Division

Mangaldoi, Ph: +91-3713-230022

PABITORA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

DFO, Guwahati Wildlife Division

Ph: +91-361-2550207

Zizina Otis

Ph: +91-9854020651, 9854030506, wildviewpobitora@gmail.com,
www.zizinaresorts.com

HOLLONGAPAR GIBBON WILDLIFE

DFO, Jorhat Division

Jorhat, Ph: +91-376-2320008

Forest Range Officer, Mariani Range

Mariani, Ph: +91-3771-244125

DEHING PATKAI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

DFO, Digboi Division

Digboi, Ph: +91-3751-264433

Central Transit Accommodation

IOC Digboi, Ph: +91-3751-264025

CHAKRASILA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

DFO, Kokrajhar Wildlife Division

Kokrajhar, Ph: +91-3661-270635

*(*For Bura Chapori Wildlife Sanctuary and Sonai-Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary too)*

Police stations in Guwahati

(STD: 0361)

Panbazar:	2540106
Paltanbazar:	2540126
Jalukbari:	2570522
Dispur:	2261510
Noonmati:	2550281
Chandmari:	2660204
Fancybazar:	2540285
Bharalumukh:	2731199
Basistha:	2302158
Maligaon:	2674244
Gorchuk:	2270151
Jorabat:	2897001
Azara:	2840287
Hatigaon:	2231060
Bhangagarh:	2461756
Geetanagar:	2417323
Women's PS:	8753814142
City Police Control Room:	2464557









Published by:

Tourism Department

Government of Assam

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Website: directortourism.assam.gov.in