

Majuli protection

Union Minister for Water Resources Harish Rawat's assurance that the Centre would take all possible steps to check the recurring floods and unabated erosion to protect Majuli will definitely rekindle hope amongst the people living in the island. Harish Rawat, after taking stock of the ravages unleashed by floods during his visit to Majuli -the largest inhabited river island of the world on Thursday also assured that the necessary funds for undertaking protection work in the island would be released. The assurances of the Union Water Resources Minister if translated into reality will definitely help in protection of the island which is waging a grim battle for its very existence. The authorities should ensure that the funds meant for protection of Majuli are not diverted and are utilized properly. Optimum use of modern technology in combating floods and erosion will to a great extent help in protection of the island. A positive aspect for Majuli is that a number of organizations are working for the protection and preservation of this unique river island. Execution of Majuli protection work by the Brahmaputra Board has resulted in the river island regaining landmass at an average rate of 2 to 2.5 sq km annually. The area of the island was 502.21 sq km in 2004 and now it is around 520 sq km. Protection of the island is a must to keep alive the rich tradition, culture and its unique landscape. Proper protection work will go in a long way in convincing the UNESCO in declaring the island as a World Heritage Site, a status which it so rightly deserves.

A virtual treasure trove of culture, for Majuli it has always been a constant struggle for survival. In spite of the odds staked against it the people of this pristine island are not only preserving but also carrying forward its rich cultural and spiritual heritage. Though unabated erosion by the river Brahmaputra is posing a grave threat to the very existence of Majuli, it hasn't broken the spirit of its people who are bravely battling against the forces of nature. The people of the island are striving hard to maintain its unique identity and heritage. A number of Sattras had no way out but to shift base from the island due to unabated erosion. There are now around 22 Sattras in Majuli the prominent among them being Auniati, Dakshinpat, Garmur and Uttar Kamalabari. Majuli is the only place in the region where the past blends with the present. In spite of being endowed with eye-catching landscape and being the honeycomb of culture, Majuli has all being ignored, neglected and deprived of its legitimate global recognition claim.