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**start a business?**

**Three simple things:**  
know your product better than anyone,  
know your customer, and  
have a burning desire to succeed."

**Dave Thomas**  
Founder, Wendy's



Vol. 18  
May & June, 2017

# **FINER**

## News & Views

# **START UP INDUSTRIES IN THE NORTH EAST**



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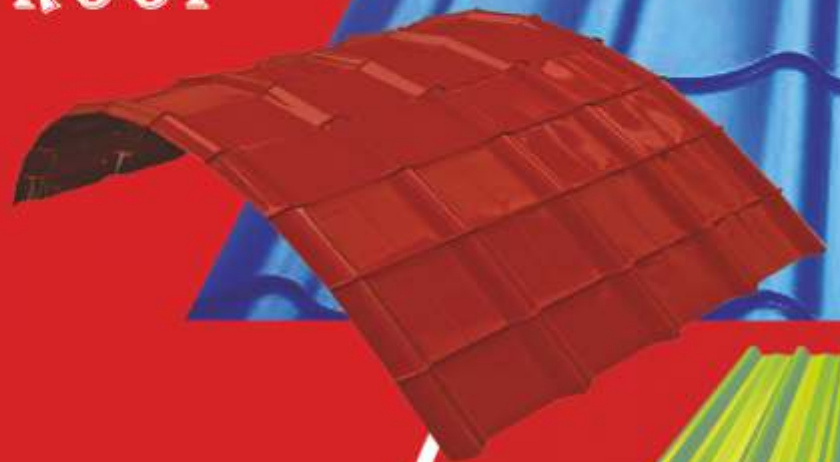
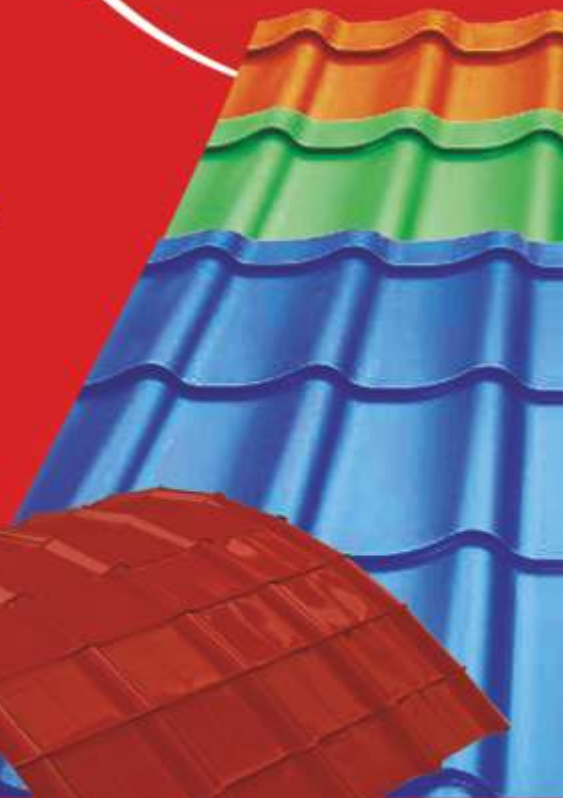


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**R. K. More**  
Bulletin Chair  
FINER News & Views

**R. K. More**  
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**Rajeev Goswami**  
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FINER News & Views

**Rajeev Goswami**  
Dy. Director General  
FINER



**Saurav Bora**  
Member  
FINER News & Views

**Saurav Bora**  
Assistant Director General  
FINER

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NORTH EASTERN REGION

চন্দ্ৰমোহন পাটোৱাৰী  
মন্ত্ৰী  
পৰিবহণ, উদ্যোগ আৰু বাণিজ্য,  
সংসদীয় পৰিক্ৰমা, অসম



**Chandra Mohan Patowary**  
Minister  
Transport, Commerce & Industry,  
Parliamentary Affairs, Assam

Date: 16.06.2017

### **MESSAGE**

It gives me immense pleasure to know that FINER will publish its monthly bulletin 'News & Views' with a focus on 'Start ups in the North Eastern Region' in its upcoming edition.

India is the world's fastest growing startup ecosystem and this new phenomenon holds the key to economic transformation of the country. North East has a vast talented pool of entrepreneurs who have scripted success in their ventures.

I hope that the monthly edition of 'News & Views' will aptly focus on the opportunities and infrastructure of startup initiatives in Assam and North East Region. I hope it will go a long way in encouraging young minds to transform their original and innovative ideas into fruitful shape.

I congratulate the FINER team and hope that the monthly edition receives wide readership.

**(Chandra Mohan Patowary)**

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**Office:** Assam Secretariat "C" Block, 2nd Floor, Room No. C-228, Dispur, Guwahati-781006, Assam, India  
**Residence:** Ministers' Colony, Dispur, Guwahati-781006, Assam, India  
**Phone:** 0361-2237014 (Telefax), **E-mail:** cmpatowary02@gmail.com





# President's Desk

**B**lessed with abundance of natural resources, the North East Region offers immense scope for trade and business to flourish in various sectors. However, even as the country has seen many start-ups transform their innovative ideas into sustainable businesses over the past decade, the Region has not seen a commensurate evolution of such ventures.

But the good part is that the few who had ventured out to transform their ideas into reality have been successful in sustaining their ventures. There is a strong need for an eco-system to boost the development of startups in this region, especially in sectors such as agriculture, tourism and hospitality, food processing, business process outsourcing, electronics and electricals, healthcare, agro-based industries, inland water transport and solar energy. Compared to the rest of India, entrepreneurial activity in the start-up segment has been rather less primarily because of factors such as infrastructure, access to funds and skilled manpower. Then again, lack of big industries is an obstacle as many start-ups, particularly those in IT, cater to large organisations.

It is also pertinent that the government, the academia and financial institutions join hands to facilitate a support system for new entrepreneurs.

The Department of Industries and Commerce, Government of Assam and Assam Gramin Vikash Bank recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the Chief Minister's Start-up Fund, Sarothi. The scheme offers financial assistance in the form of loans from the bank with subsidy on interest rates to all innovative start-up industrial activities.

Creation of venture funds to support existing and aspiring entrepreneurs is significant. The North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Limited (NEDFi), in collaboration with the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region has set up the **North East Venture Fund**, a dedicated venture capital fund for the region, to encourage **start-up ventures in the region**. The focus of the fund will be on early and growth-stage investments, mostly in the fields of IT & ITES, food processing, healthcare, tourism, retail and aggregation of services.

The Union Cabinet is expected to approve setting up of a Rs 2000 crore credit guarantee fund by July-end with a view to provide collateral-free funding facilities to start-ups, which augurs well for the start-up scenario in the North East. Besides, the Start-up India Hub portal which was launched recently will be an ideal platform for budding entrepreneurs and keep them informed about government schemes, mentors, venture capital firms and facilitators.

So while there is a lot of catching up to do, the flip side is that with a system in place and funds for the taking, there is immense scope for start-ups in North East to plug in and get started.

Pabitra Buragohain  
President, FINER



FINER Delegation meets  
**Shri Arun Jaitley, Hon'ble Union Finance Minister,**  
in New Delhi on 1st June, 2017

FINER delegation had camped in New Delhi during May 30 and June 1, 2017. The delegation met Hon'ble Union Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley and discussed issues related to GST. The delegation requested that there should not be any dilution in refunds and that the promised incentives are not altered under the new regime. The team also requested for a focussed industrial policy for North East.



FINER President Shri Pabitra Buragohain met Hon'ble Minister of State for Home Shri Kiren Rijju in New Delhi and discussed issues related to NEIIPP and GST, on June 16, 2017



FINER President Shri Pabitra Buragohain met Hon'ble DoNER Minister Dr Jitendra Singh in New Delhi and discussed issues related to NEIIPP and GST, on June 15, 2017



FINER Delegation meets  
Smt. Ravneet Kaur,  
Joint Secretary, DIPP, New Delhi



FINER Delegation meets  
**Smt. Vanaja Sarna**  
Chairman, Central Board of Excise and  
Customs, New Delhi



# WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY CELEBRATION



FINER President Shri Pabitra Buragohain distributing a sapling among members at FINER Secretariat on the occasion of World Environment Day on 5th June, 2017



A sapling being planted on the factory premises of Aroma India Pvt. Ltd. at Rajapara, Kamrup District on the occasion of World Environment Day on 5th June, 2017





FINER Vice President Shri Bajrang Lohia addressing the media on issues regarding the New Industrial Policy for North East and GST, at Hotel Pragati Manor, Guwahati, on 23rd June, 2017. FINER Past Vice Chairman Shri Amit Kumar Jain also addressed the Media.



FINER Vice President Shri Bajrang Lohia addresses members during a meeting to discuss issues relating to the New Industrial Policy and GST, on 21st June, 2017. FINER President Shri Pabitra Buragohain, Vice President Shri Rajeev Agarwal, Past President Shri Subhash Agarwal and Past Vice Chairman Shri Amit Kumar Jain also addressed the gathering.



# FINER seeks focused industrial policy

STAFF REPORTER

**GUWAHATI, June 23.** The Federation of Industry and Commerce of North Eastern Region (FINER) has moved both the Centre and the State Government in its persistent efforts to push for a better and focused industrial policy as well as highlighting issues regarding GST and its impact on industrialisation in the region.

Addressing a press conference today, Bhangam Lohia, Vice-President of FINER said that any dilution in benefits to industrial units under the old industrial policy would be detrimental to the cause of industrialisation in the North East and that the benefits must be retained for industrialisation and investment in the region.

Over the past few weeks, FINER has submitted representations before Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, DENER Minister Dr Jitendra Singh and Minister of State for Home Affairs Nitin Gadgil and discussed issues related to NEIPP and GST.

The team sought a focused industrial policy for the North East and sought greater clarity on how the Central excise duty refund, currently available for industries set up pursuant to NEIPP, would continue under the GST regime.

Under the NEIPP 2007, the units



Bhangam Lohia (L), Vice President of FINER along with former Vice Chairman Anil Kumar Jain, addressing a press conference in Guwahati, on Friday. — UNI

that have come up in the North East were promised 100 per cent refund of excise duty paid (i.e., net of Central Credit).

"With the announcement of GST, adversely the refunds would be reduced to 58 per cent by the Central Government. The fine of the balance 42 per cent of the refunds according to known," Lohia said.

Anil Kumar Jain, past vice-chairman

of FINER said that the shift of the new industrial policy was made but with the GST being rolled out next month, the policy might get a little delayed.

It transpired during the meeting, FINER had with Central ministers and bureaucrats that the new industrial policy being proposed will be for three years, while the benefits to industrial units in the region will be for five years.

The earlier policy had benefited

many industries in the remote areas of the region and investments by big companies have taken place," Jain said.

With the Goods and Service Tax (GST) is slated for a July 1, 2017 implementation, some crucial issues regarding industries, and with special reference to Assam and the North East are still unclear.

"The issue of how the Central excise duty refund, currently eligible for

industries set up pursuant to the NEIPP policy would continue under the GST regime is still not clear as there was no reaction to it," Jain said.

With regard to GST, FINER had requested the Centre that there should not be any dilution in refunds and that the proposed incentives were not altered under the new regime.

A FINER delegation comprising president Pabitra Baragohain and vice-president Bhangam Lohia had on June 20 held discussions with Union Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and Industry Minister Chandra Mohan Pawar and handed over separate representations on excise refund and other high-impact issues under the GST regime.

Both ministers were positive and advised that they would request Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal to immediately write to the Prime Minister impressing upon these issues," Lohia said.

FINER had submitted a detailed memorandum incorporating suggestions for a new industrial policy for the North East to NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant on March 15, 2017.

Ever since, FINER has been taking up crucial issues relating to the NEIPP. It is a bid to push for revamping the NEIPP Policy or to have a new policy framework in place.

The Assam Tribune : 24 June, 2017

■ মন্থন ঔদ্যোগিক নীতিৰ অপেক্ষাত ■

জি এছ টি ক কেন্দ্ৰীয় শুদ্ধ বেহাইব  
কর্তনে উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ ঔদ্যোগিক  
ক্ষেত্ৰত কু-প্ৰভাৱ পেলাব : ফাইনাৰ

গুৱাহাটী, ২৩ জুন : জি এছ টি ক কেন্দ্ৰীয় শুদ্ধ বেহাইব আৰু অপেক্ষাতৰ প্ৰশ্নৰ সত্ত্বেও কেন্দ্ৰীয় আৰু উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ ঔদ্যোগিক ক্ষেত্ৰত কু-প্ৰভাৱ পেলাব : ফাইনাৰ।

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Dainik Assam : 24 June, 2017

জি এছ টি ক কেন্দ্ৰীয় শুদ্ধ

গুৱাহাটী, ২৩ জুন : জি এছ টি ক কেন্দ্ৰীয় শুদ্ধ বেহাইব আৰু অপেক্ষাতৰ প্ৰশ্নৰ সত্ত্বেও কেন্দ্ৰীয় আৰু উত্তৰ-পূৰ্বাঞ্চলৰ ঔদ্যোগিক ক্ষেত্ৰত কু-প্ৰভাৱ পেলাব : ফাইনাৰ।

## Don't dilute NEIPP, FINER to Centre

BY OUR STAFF-REPORTER

**Guwahati, June 23.** The Federation of Industry and Commerce of North Eastern Region (FINER), the apex industry association of the Northeast, has moved the Centre with a plea not to "dilute" the proposed new industrial policy for the region by bringing in changes midway.

The present policy, the North East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy (NEIPP), 2007, expired on March 31.

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, Bhangam Lohia, Vice-President of FINER, said that any dilution in benefits to industrial units under the old industrial policy will be detrimental to the cause of industrialisation in the Northeast and that the benefits must be retained in the proposed new policy for industrialisation and investment in the region.

The FINER also suggested that the Centre should not have a list of strict areas in the new industrial policy for the Northeast as new units may come up in areas irrespective of the current market.

Over the past few weeks, FINER has been submitting representations before Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, DENER Minister Dr Jitendra Singh and Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Nitin Gadgil and discussed issues related to NEIPP and GST.

The team requested for a focused industrial policy for Northeast and sought greater clarity on how the Central excise duty refund, currently eligible for industries set up pursuant to NEIPP, will continue under the GST regime.

Under the NEIPP 2007, the units that have come up in the North East were promised 100 per cent refund of excise duty (i.e., net of Central Credit).

With the announcement of GST, adversely the refunds will be reduced to 58 per cent by the Central Government. The fine of the balance 42 per cent of the refunds according to unknown.

After Arun Jaitley, Past Vice Chairman of FINER who was also present in the Friday's press conference said that the shift of the new industrial policy was ready but with the GST being rolled out next month, the policy might get a little delayed.

It transpired during the meeting, FINER had with Central ministers and bureaucrats that the new industrial policy being proposed will be for three years while the benefits to industrial units in the region will be for five years.

With the Goods and Service Tax (GST) is slated for a July 1st 2017 implementation, some crucial issues regarding industries, and with special reference to Assam and North East, are still unclear.

The issue of how the central excise duty refund, currently eligible for industries set up pursuant to the NEIPP policy would continue under the GST regime is still not clear as there was no reaction to it.

In regard to GST, FINER had urged the Centre that there should not be any dilution in refunds and that the proposed incentives are not altered under the new regime.

FINER delegation comprising President Pabitra Baragohain and Vice President Bhangam Lohia had on June 20 held discussions with Union Finance Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma and Industry Minister Chandra Mohan Pawar and handed over separate representations on excise refund and other high-impact issues under the GST regime.

It may be mentioned that FINER had submitted a detailed memorandum incorporating the suggestions for a New Industrial Policy for the North East to NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant on March 15, 2017.

The Sentinel : 24 June, 2017

PRESS REPORT

# Retain excise duty benefit, says Finer



Ajay Kumar Finer addresses the news conference in Gandhinagar on Friday. Photo by Ujjwal Prasad

ANURAG LATHIA

Gandhinagar, June 23: The Federation of Industry and Commerce in North-Eastern Region (FINER) has moved both the Centre and the Assam government to retain the benefit of 42 per cent refund on excise duty for 10 years which compensates set up in the region due to erosion under the North-East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy (NIIPPI) 2007.

Industries set up till March 31, 2017, were supposed to get 100 per cent refund on excise duty for 10 years under the NIIPPI. However, after the implementation of the Goods and Ser-

vices Tax Act, 2017, from July 1, the Centre will refund 30 per cent of excise duty. It has not yet been stated if the remaining 42 per cent of excise duty will be refunded or not.

GST is a uniform indirect tax which will replace all the indirect taxes, such as excise duty, value added tax and service tax levied by the central and state governments.

Over the past few weeks, Finer has approached Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, DoNER minister Jitendra Singh and ministers of state for home affairs Kiren Rijiju at the Centre and sought help from Assam chief min-

ister Sarbananda Sonowal, finance minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and industries minister Chandra Mohan Patra.

"We are going to meet the finance and chief ministers in other northeastern states, where industries were benefited by the current excise duty refund structure. With the announcement of GST, apparently the benefits would be restricted to 30 per cent by the Centre," Anurag Lathia, vice-president of Finer, told reporters here this morning.

"The fate of the balance 12 per cent of the refunds awaiting is unknown. The advantage is that the two of the

42 per cent will be refunded by the state, but that will cause confusion. We have urged the ministers at the Centre and in Assam to retain the old refund policy for the restructuring of industries."

Amit Kumar Jain, former vice-chairman of Finer, said financial and his cabinet colleagues had assured them that they would take up the issue with the Centre.

Finer has been persistently asking for a new industrial policy to replace NIIPPI, which was suspended in 2014. An overview of the challenges and business in the Northeast faces due to the region's geographical remote-

ness and high security.

The Centre had last year revised NIIPPI stipulating that all the subsidies to industrial units will be disbursed through the direct benefit mechanism.

"Any attempt to benefits to industrial units under the old industrial policy will be detrimental to the cause of industries in the Northeast. The benefits must be retained for industrialisation and investment in the region. We are waiting for implementation of the GST in July and based on the details, we can ask for what is required in the new industrial policy," Jain said.

The Telegraph : 24 June, 2017

## NE investments on hold before Centre's new industrial policy

TANUJ KUMAR

Gandhinagar, Assam: Prospective investors are keeping their fingers crossed over the Centre's proposed new Northeast Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy (NIIPPI), saying that any likelihood of the initiative provided in the previously existing NIIPPI 2007 would be a setback to industrial growth in the region.

Federation of Industry and Commerce in North-Eastern Region (FINER), vice-president Anurag Lathia on Friday said the benefits under the old policy must be retained for industrialisation and investment in the region.

NIIPPI 2007 expired on March 31, this year, and various industry bodies, including the state government, have been demanding a new policy with incentives to attract investment in the industry sector of the region. With the expiry of NIIPPI 2007, industry bodies are concerned that fresh investment in the state have virtually dried up after March 31.

Finance vice-chairman of FINER, Amit Kumar Jain, said investment to the tune of Rs 60,000-70,000 crore is in the pipeline but prospective investors are keeping their fingers crossed as they do not know what the benefits will be under the new industrial policy.

"The state government is proactively taking up our concerns with the Centre. The new policy is expected to come out in July. But we have no idea what new benefits are there in the new policy. Lot of industries are in the state took place under the NI-

**The state government is proactively taking up our concerns with the Centre. The new policy is expected to come out in July. But we have no idea what new benefits are there in the new policy. Lot of industrial activities took place under the NIIPPI 2007**

AK JAIN  
Former vice-chairman, FINER

IPPI 2007. Our expectation is that the new policy should have benefits which can attract more investment in the region," Jain said. FINER said it has submitted a memorandum highlighting its concerns to NIIPPI Panel CIP to Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, Union DoNER minister, Jitendra Singh, and Union minister of state for home, Kiren Rijiju, in New Delhi, recently. FINER demanded a well-defined industrial policy and greater clarity on how the Central excise duty refund, currently eligible for industries set up pursuant to NIIPPI, would continue under the GST regime. Under the NIIPPI 2007, units that have come up on the refund set were promised 42% refund of excise duty, FINER said.

With the announcement of GST, apparently the refunds would be restricted to 30% by the Central government, Lathia said. The fate of the remaining 12% of the refunds awaiting is unknown, he said.

The Times of India : 24 June, 2017

### पूर्वोत्तर के लिए नई व स्पष्ट उद्योग नीति बने : फाइनर

एनए-एफएक प्रांतीय क्षेत्रों में पूर्वोत्तर क्षेत्रों को सर्वोत्तम से सर्वोत्तम विकास का मार्ग देना। प्रतिनिधिसंसद में पूर्वोत्तर के विकास, उद्योग प्रवर्धन नीति का प्रस्ताव देना। उद्योग नीति के तहत निवेशकों को आकर्षित करने का उद्देश्य है। उद्योग नीति के तहत निवेशकों को आकर्षित करने का उद्देश्य है। उद्योग नीति के तहत निवेशकों को आकर्षित करने का उद्देश्य है।

गुवाहाटी। पूर्वोत्तर के उद्योग नीति के तहत निवेशकों को आकर्षित करने का उद्देश्य है। उद्योग नीति के तहत निवेशकों को आकर्षित करने का उद्देश्य है। उद्योग नीति के तहत निवेशकों को आकर्षित करने का उद्देश्य है।

पूर्वोत्तर के उद्योग नीति के तहत निवेशकों को आकर्षित करने का उद्देश्य है। उद्योग नीति के तहत निवेशकों को आकर्षित करने का उद्देश्य है। उद्योग नीति के तहत निवेशकों को आकर्षित करने का उद्देश्य है।

Purbanchal Prahari : 24 June, 2017







# JOIN FINER

## YOUR BENEFITS AS OUR MEMBERS

### Networking :

- Platform to interact with over 300 other members that are leaders in industry, trade and commerce of the region.
- Fora to meet business and political leaders in regular meetings.
- Platform to interact with state and central government, bank and other institutions.

### Policy work :

- Participation in different national and state policy committees and task forces FINER works closely with government on policy issues, legislation, regulations etc.
- Representations to central & state governments and other institutions on problems of general nature faced by members.
- Dissemination of Information on export, import and technology collaboration.
- Research studies on relevant topics.

### Business Services :

- Facilities participation in trade fairs & exhibitions in India and abroad.
- Develop business through buyer-seller for a within the region and outside.
- Participate in business delegations of FINER | FICCI | Govt. of India within India and abroad.
- Participate in Seminars | workshops on relevant topics conducted by experts in that field.
- Take part in training programs in house as well as outside in prestigious institutions of the country.

### Information dissemination :

- Access to publications and reports on wide range of subjects at FINER office.
- Directory of members with Company profile.
- Free subscription of FINER bulletin, a monthly update on business news and latest updates on government policies, notifications, tax, laws etc.
- Important business & economic news through FINER mailers.

### Web Services :

- Information on important events organized by FINER and other activities, press releases, important news etc. through FINER website :[www.finer.in](http://www.finer.in)



## APPLICATION FORM



To,  
The President  
FINER  
Guwahati

Date :

Dear Sir,

We have the pleasure to apply for Membership of FINER as per details furnished below :

**1) Name of Applicant Firm/Company**

Registered Office

Address : \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. : \_\_\_\_\_ Fax No : \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail : \_\_\_\_\_

Address for Correspondence \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. : \_\_\_\_\_ Fax No : \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail : \_\_\_\_\_

**2) Constitution : (Tick any one)**

a) Proprietorship/Individual :

b) Partnership :

c) Private Limited Company :

d) Public Limited Company :

e) Chamber/Association :

f) Society :

g) Others (Specify) :

**3) Name of Proprietor/Partners/Directors/Office bearers (as applicable) :**

**4) Name of Chief Executive/Regional head (in case Chief Executive is based outside NE Region) :**

Telephone No. : \_\_\_\_\_ Fax No : \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail : \_\_\_\_\_

**5) Nature of Activities : (Tick any one)**

a) Industry :

b) Commerce :

c) Chamber/Association :

**6) Details of Principal Activities : \_\_\_\_\_**

**7) In Case of Industry :**

a) Factory Address : \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. : \_\_\_\_\_ Fax No : \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail : \_\_\_\_\_

b) Particulars of Manufacturing unit :

a) Products Manufactured : \_\_\_\_\_

b) Installed capacity : \_\_\_\_\_

c) Connected Power Load : \_\_\_\_\_

d) No. of Employees : \_\_\_\_\_

e) SSI Regn. No./SIA No./IL No. : \_\_\_\_\_

(Photograph to be enclosed)

f) Investment in fixed assets as per latest audited balance sheet :

\_\_\_\_\_

**8) In case of Chamber/ Association ( enclose memorandum of Association) :**

Membership Strength : \_\_\_\_\_

**9) In case not covered by (7) or (8)**

a) Annual turnover as per latest audited balance Sheet \_\_\_\_\_

b) No. of Employees : \_\_\_\_\_

**10) Membership of any other Association :** \_\_\_\_\_

**11) Any Other Important/relevant information :** \_\_\_\_\_

we enclosed herewith a Cheque/Demand Draft No. : \_\_\_\_\_

Dated \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ for Rs. \_\_\_\_\_

payable at \_\_\_\_\_ towards Admission fee and Annual Subscription in favour of "Federation of Industry & Commerce of North Eastern Region," or "FINER". We also agree to abide by the rules and regulations of FINER in force from time to time.

Introduced by

Signature & Seal

Signature & Seal

(Existing member of FINER)

of the Applicant

**N.B.**

**Admission Fee & Annual Subscription**

| TICK                     | Segment                                       | Basis   | Admission Fee | Annual subscription |
|--------------------------|---|---|---------------|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Micro   | Investment which does not exceed Rs. 25 lakh                        | 3,000         | 5,000               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | SME   | Investment more than Rs. 25 lakh but does not exceed Rs. 5 crores.  | 4000          | 11,000              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | MSME  | Investment more than Rs. 5 crores but does not exceed Rs.10 crores. | 6000          | 17,000              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Large   | 10 Crs to 100 Crs Investment  | 15000         | 45000               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | MEGA  | 100 Crs +   | 20000         | 75000               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Chamber of Commerce / Association of Industry |   | 6,000         | 11000               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Commerce and Service                          |   | 10000         | 12000               |

The financial year of FINER runs from 1st April to 31st march. The applicant, seeking membership during 1st April to 30<sup>th</sup> September will have to pay prescribed Admission fee and the prescribed Annual Subscription in full. Applicants seeking membership after 30<sup>th</sup> September will pay the prescribed Admission fee in full and half of the prescribed Annual Subscription. To renew the membership, the annual subscription must be paid within 1st quarter of the financial year.

**13. Membership**

- The Governing Board (hereinafter referred to as the Board) shall decide as to admission of members to the Federation.
- Membership shall be open to all chambers, associations, bodies, societies, corporate entities, firms, individuals and other connected with the industry and commerce who are interested in the activities of the Federation. In case of trade, membership shall be open to its cambers and associations only



# MY ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEY

Ragesh Keisham  
Chairman & Managing Director  
SuiGeneris Agronomy Private Limited, Manipur  
rageshkeisham@thesuigeneris.in

As they say, the journey of an entrepreneur is a journey of self-discovery and it all starts with discovering that one dream which won't let you sleep. Like any other entrepreneur, I was also a dreamer. For some, it was a six-figure income and for others, it was more about inspiring people. But for me, it was all about improving the present economic condition of Manipur by utilizing the already available resources, generating employment for the underprivileged and manufacturing world class products, all in one stroke. Until recently I was scared of dreaming because too many dreams have been shattered. There was a time when I wanted to be a caterpillar safely ensconced in my shell of mediocrity and I didn't want to fly. I had tried flying and had my wings clipped by my own failings. But no matter how hard you try to be nobody, you just need to be somebody. The dreams aren't going to go away as they are not to be fulfilled but to be lived. It's walking the way which is the real trip.

Entrepreneurship is all about your ability to take risks, but to start a venture in a less favoured place like Manipur where the business eco system is non-existent is beyond imagination. Starting a venture in the North East always has the disconcerting knack of unsettling our minds over the matters we took for granted. There would be times when you would have the impression that you are holding a bubble which might just burst anytime. So, it's more about how fast you can adapt to the volatile nature of this region. What might work in other parts of the world might not work in this part of the country because we have a very different business eco-system. This is when I say, act like a north-easterner when you are in the North East. It's all about your ability to adjust well with the environment because management I believe is all about managing men and how you excel in it. If I have to speak from my experience, it's better to start a venture by utilizing the already available resources and come up with something unique by finding the gap in the market. As an entrepreneur and as a start-up, I believe it is important to identify the gap in the market and bridge it because you cannot succeed as a start-up unless you are solving a problem. This is exactly why I founded the SuiGeneris and launched my first herbal green tisane – brand named CC Tea. As we know tea is the most widely consumed beverage next to water and is sold at a quantum of 4.6 million tons a year, the idea of coming up with an alternative beverage sans



caffeine was really exciting. As more and more people are becoming health conscious, an alternate beverage to bulldoze the addictive caffeine habit was in the offing and I took up the challenge left, right and centre. I always knew CC Tea could be the next big thing if marketed the right way. CC Tea is a 100% Organic and 100% Natural herbal/ green tisane and is certified organic by SGS India and has received



approval and license from FSSAI. This is a natural green tisane which is revolutionizing an entire generation of tea drinkers and is finding insightful penetration in the lives in and outside of Manipur. It has no additives, is naturally caffeine free, is rich in antioxidants, and most importantly, has a very distinct yet appealing lemony taste. Nevertheless, the journey of CC Tea was no less thorny coupled with failures and rejections. But from a meagre 3

rather than our exotic North East with gently undulating hills, emerald green valleys and blue lakes with miles and miles of virgin fertile lands. Home to many rare species of flora and fauna, North East's unique topography produces many rich yields.

As I mentioned earlier that I am a strong believer of the Startup system, I believe if you take a group of people with the right equity incentive and organize a startup, you can unlock human potential never before possible. They can achieve unbelievable things. So, I met a few young entrepreneurs in the region and asked them what are the most important factors they think is important to start a business and they said, No.1. Business Idea. No.2. Funding. No.3. Team. No.4. Business model. No.5. Timing. But an extensive study was done of the factors which matters the most in a startup with 100 highly successful Startups and 100 failed Startups and the result is pretty different: No.1. Timing. No.2. Team. No.3. Business Idea. No.4. Business Model. No.5. Funding.

When I talk about 'Timing', I am sure we all have heard about Airbnb. As we know they are an online marketplace to rent out homes for vacation and other purposes. No one believed this idea and every investor rejected this idea thinking that no one would rent out their homes to strangers. But the economy was in the height of its recession and everyone wanted some extra cash. At the same time, customers wanted to save some extra cash because of the tough economy and preferred for a homestay. And there you go, Airbnb is one of the most successful startups in the history. Let's also talk about Z.com, an online entertainment company. They had the perfect business plan and heavily funded and they even signed some incredible Hollywood talents. But the broadband penetration was

really low in 1999 and 2000 and it was tough watching video online because you needed codecs and other stuff to watch it and eventually it went out of business in 2003. Right after two years Adobe solved the codec problem and with better broadband penetration YouTube was launched and perfectly timed. When YouTube



employees, SuiGeneris now stands tall at 1000+ workers driving the company for growth.

So, my dear entrepreneur friends, sustainability will remain the top trend in the next coming years and food businesses that embrace sustainability will be the rockstar. When we talk about food business, where else can we go





started, it didn't even have a business plan but it was perfectly timed. So, it's more about knowing when to push the button.

Don't worry and don't wait for the best plan. Please remember, you will never have a perfect plan at the start. The number one ingredient in coming up with a business idea is to find a problem. You need to identify a pain point. Then you need to come up with a solution and see if friends and families would buy it. If no one is willing to pay for that idea, then you better come up with something different, something better. This is why they say, everybody has a plan until they get punched in the face. So, there is a thin line between being persistent and being stupid. It's for you to decide which one you want to become. If you feel that there is merit in your business idea, then you can persevere, if not you have to pivot. Pivot in simple language is like having a plan B. The perfect example would be about an app called Burbn with contents of Mafia wars and other features. The result was not as expected and the founders see that it was failing. But the photo clicking feature option was pretty popular among the users so they pivot their idea towards making the photo clicking feature better and thus Instagram was born. This is why I always say, never fall in love with your idea. It's not always about re-inventing the wheel, it's more about building a better mousetrap. But remember, don't come up with something which no one needs.

Once you have your idea in place, build a good team who can execute the idea well and bootstrap in the start. Don't spend money on unnecessary things. And my dear friends, never be afraid of failures. The greatest achievers are the ones who fail the most because they are the ones who try the most. When someone asked Mr. Edison whether he felt bad because he failed a 1000

times before coming up with the light bulb, he replied – not at all. I didn't fail 1000 times, it's just that the invention took 1000 steps. So, don't give up. You have to see the invisible to achieve the impossible.

After we design a proper business model, it is time we go for the proof of concept. Once we start getting some traction, it is then time to reach out for funding to further grow the business to the next level. The journey from the concept stage till bringing an investor on board is a long crusade but is reasonably easier if you do all the things right. With various funding options available now like Angel Funding, VC Funding and Crowd funding, it is for the entrepreneur to decide what suits the business best. As it is not very wise to start a business with debt as it will siphon off cash when the business needs it the most, the entrepreneur can still opt for a bank loan as the last option.

Lastly, it is not about the What and also not about the How, it is more about the 'Why' of the business that is important. The world wants to listen to the stories as to why you have started this venture. So, the most important question to be answered when starting a business is the 'WHY'.

In a region that has one of the highest number of unemployed youths and the craze is always about government jobs, I could have easily opted for a white-collar job but as Robert Frost said, "Two roads diverged in a wood and I - I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference."

The reason I wanted to be a caterpillar is because I was scared I might not make a kick-ass butterfly. But now I figure it doesn't really matter if I turn out a moth. The satisfaction is in the fact that I had dared to live my dreams.

# PARADOX OF START UP

## What It Needs To Start Up In NER

Dr. Sriparna B Baruah  
Head CIE,

Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Guwahati

sriparnabbaruah@gmail.com

### Background:

Entrepreneurship was a dream to be had and forgotten. Most middle class Indians would not have ever thought about giving up a crore plus salary to try out a business idea until as late as 1990s. Today they feel free to make such choices – free from the stigma of potential failure, free from the parental pressures to settle down in life, free to try making their own economic destiny.

Three changes have ushered in this freedom. First is the gradual rising value of acceptance of enterprise as a

there is a long list of 'succeeded in the second attempt' entrepreneurs in the country. Another big change is in the thinking of what's business and who's an owner. Startups change their business model and products significantly during the period of experiment. Founders of some of the biggest start ups have no hesitation in reducing their stake to less than 50% to ensure that their ideas and business bloom even if they no longer have control.

Entrepreneurship is well known to be one of the key drivers for development of any nation. It is indicative of a country's prosperity; it's capability to be a job provider rather than be a job seeker. On the global map, United States of America is a world leader in entrepreneurship with the sturdiest global economy. Entrepreneurship is deep rooted in the history of the US. This thrust towards entrepreneurship development in the US is evident in its close relation between the industry and the universities. Stanford University is a pioneer in promotion of entrepreneurship development with half of the startups in Silicon Valley having roots in Stanford. The US also boasts of a very strong venture capital industry with its first venture fund, the American Research and Development Corporation, founded in 1946. Today, the industry has an unrivalled mixture of resources, expertise and customers. Hence, an unparalleled eco system for entrepreneurship in the US makes it an entrepreneurial hub.

career choice. Second big change is how career is seen in society and among investors. Though India is far more risk averse than America, more and more young Indians are seeing failure as a learning and not as an ending. By now,

India has a pioneering status among the developing nations for its early start on a variety of entrepreneurship education programmes since the





1950s, and for the most part entrepreneurship education in post-Independent India had its aim to encourage self-employment and founding of SMEs. As the economy transitioned from being a primarily agrarian into one that had significant contribution from other sectors, it was felt that the most pressing requirement was education that would enable need-based entrepreneurs to foray into these emerging sectors. And in 1999 the Government took steps and the Ministry for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprise (MSME) was set up to provide thrust towards enterprise development. Gradually the MSME sector began to grow and there was a growing inclination towards entrepreneurship. As the eco system developed, the educational institutes also took up the responsibility to provide an entrepreneurial boost through their curriculum and started with entrepreneurship development programmes. The premier institutes gradually leaned towards setting up of incubation facilities, mentoring programmes for igniting and nurturing ideas and this brought in the emergence of startups.

Majority of the big names in start-ups have emerged from the premier educational institutes like the IITs and IIMs. But it is high time that the other educational institutes like engineering colleges across the states, management institutes, etc also take up the responsibility to promote entrepreneurship and augment the generation of ideas in the campuses. This will enable the startup bug to reach across different colleges and universities in the country and help young talents build their businesses even from the smaller cities and towns.

Young well educated and well informed individuals with innovative thinking, risk taking characteristics, leadership qualities, determination, focus etc. are emerging as the new age start-up entrepreneurs. Start-ups have come up across the country in various sectors such as food, agriculture, health, financial services, e-commerce, taxi aggregators, etc. There is no dearth of investors for scalable ideas, and for this, an enabling eco system is a must.

#### India and Start Ups:

In the last five to six years the start-up scenario in India has seen a lot of activity and has blossomed into a key contributor to the country's entrepreneurial economy. Major contributor to this trend has been the mega funding that has been pumped into the best start up ideas. On the global map India is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest start up hub with US and China holding the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> spots respectively. This year has seen a major boost to start-ups with the Government of India launching the Start Up India initiative in January 2016. With this initiative, a roadmap for the Indian startups has been envisaged.

India saw a mammoth funding of \$7.3 billion in startups in 2015. When we speak of funds, it is seen that the major share of funding has come through venture capital with 466 deals in 2015 with a value of worth \$5394.58 million. Global VC firms like Sequoia Capital, Accel Partners and Tiger Global etc. have all invested in



Indian startups in recent years. Be it Flipkart, Chaayos, Ola, OYO Rooms, Zomato, Paytm, Grofers etc. – all have received VC funding. The top funded startups may be classified broadly into enterprise tech, fintech and retail.

This surge in funding affirms the presence or the growth of a good eco system that is promoting entrepreneurial initiatives in the Indian society.

However, it is notable that majority of the startups and investors are from the metro cities (Bangalore being the startup capital of the country) that offers more opportunities to the entrepreneurs in terms of attracting investments from VCs, better incubation facilities, technological advancement, access to varied markets, mentorship programs, in-campus

houses back many startups nowadays. For instance, Ratan Tata recently invested in the Bangalore-based startup called Tracxn apart from many other investments in startups. But it is necessary to ensure that these opportunities also reach the lesser and the smaller cities and not just remain confined to the metros. An enabling eco system should ideally comprise:

- Enterprising individuals with risk-taking nature
- Scalable business ideas
- Investors
- Market access
- Incubation centres/Mentorship programmes
- Government policies/infrastructure
- Support from research organizations, financial institutes, educational institutes, big industries/corporate houses etc
- Technological support

There is no dearth of scalable ideas and risk taking individuals in the smaller cities of India. It is only the other factors of the eco system that needs to be upgraded if we wish to see the similar rise of startups in these cities as that of the metros. However, a favourable trend is seen to be catching up lately with tier II and tier III cities becoming small startup hubs. Jaipur, Chandigarh, Jalandhar, Vadodara, Mysore, Udupi, Coimbatore, Goa, Nasik, Kochi, Indore, Bhubaneswar, Mohali, Kanpur, Thiruvananthapuram etc. are some of the best non metros to have come up with startup ideas and have received funding according to a recent survey. Another notable trend seen in these towns and cities is that many young individuals who were working in well-paying jobs in the metros are returning to their hometowns to start up on their own and to live their dreams. Hence, an eco system is slowly but steadily developing in the smaller towns and cities as well.

#### Start Up Scenario in NER compared to rest of India:

While the whole of India is witnessing the startup revolution, a state like Assam and the entire North East region is yet to wake up to fully realize its potential in the startup segment. There is a strong need for an eco-system to boost the development of start ups in this region. With its magnificent natural beauty, the region is blessed with resources that offer potential for businesses to thrive especially in sectors like agriculture, eco-tourism, food processing, e-commerce for native products and various other services. The government so far has been focusing on the North East region to put a thrust on the MSME sector and has been successful to an extent. According to



idea generation opportunities etc. Last year, the highest number of startups founded were from NCR (1060) followed by Bangalore (925), Mumbai (546), Hyderabad (243) and Pune (171). Even the premier educational institutes like IITs, premier engineering colleges, top management institutes etc also boost entrepreneurship through their entrepreneurship programmes/cells etc. Also big corporate



a report by International Finance Corporation, the North East region has 2, 00,000 micro, small and medium enterprises. However, in the context of start-ups the region is lagging behind in terms of an enabling eco system for young startups of the North East. Except for a few handful of young entrepreneurs who are trying to build a foothold in the startup segment, there is hardly any entrepreneurial activity in startups here. Reasons behind this are many:

**Access to finance** - Arranging finance is a key issue here. Number of projects financed by banks is very few compared to developed states. Financial institutions do not play an aggressive role which is evident from the fact that most of these institutions do not fund new projects/new ideas. Schemes like Angel Fund promoted by the Government are not reaching the right target group and hence no convincing results are observed.

**Delays** - Be it registration, bank loan application or any other government formalities, processes are extremely slow. Planning becomes very difficult under such circumstances. Easier registration process for setting up of business is a very important component for entrepreneurship development. Now with the single window Act in place, simplified registration process is expected to augment entrepreneurial activities in the state

**Power Failure** - This is a factor known to all which makes our produces costlier and lowers production rate, but there are hardly any steps being implemented to overcome this challenge.

**Lack of Skilled Resources** - This is a serious problem, especially for IT companies in the state. Since the brain drain is excessively high, lack of well qualified resources is very much felt. This proves to be a stumbling block for tech & IT start-ups to come up.

**Lack of Big Industries** - The recent surge in start-ups in India is dominated by the service sector. Most of the start-ups (especially the tech startups) formed in the past few years cater to the big organizations. Lack of such organization in the region makes it difficult for new service companies to sustain.

Though of late, some major trends have been visible in the startup scenario in NER, especially in Guwahati, following in the footsteps of the bigger cities. Young well educated boys from the region who were till now holding plush jobs at various organizations in the metros or outside of NER are now returning to their hometowns to start off their own ventures. This is a positive sign towards the growth of startups. But it is important to give them a platform to scale their business ideas. To have an enabling ecosystem in place, it is essential that the various stakeholders such as government departments, academic institutes of the state, financial institutes, research organisations, industry experts from the region etc. come together and build a support system for the aspiring/existing entrepreneurs ensuring low-cost Internet connectivity, favourable policies, ease of doing business, affordable education and skilling services, low-cost debt for

priority sectors. Such collaborations can help in research and innovations since innovation is again a very critical and essential component of entrepreneurial initiatives. Such collaborations can lead to the setting up of incubation centres for entrepreneurs and mentorship programmes can be worked out. Mentoring is a very important factor for motivating/guiding the startups and Assam hardly has any mentoring programme.

Another notable trend of startups, as already mentioned at the beginning, is that most of the founders are from the premium educational institutes of the country like IITs, IIMs, IISc etc. This can be attributed to the entrepreneurial boost that is offered in the top colleges and universities like IITs, IIMs, IISc etc through incubation facilities, mentoring, networks with funders etc. Hence, there is a buzz of activity in the campus leading to the germination of ideas in the campuses. So many start-up founders of NER also come from these elite educational backgrounds. But to have a vibrant eco system and for promoting ideas, even the regional educational institutes can play a similar role of a mentor and incubator. This will give flight to the campus ideas that are cropping up in quite a number recently in the engineering colleges and management institutes of NER.

Majority of the information on startups from NER are based on random interaction with startup founders from the region and thus arrived at some of the observations. Major hurdle is that there is no properly documented data available on startups from NER in order to judge the exact scenario and this is a big gap. Thus, it is seen that NER has a long way to go to match up with the country's start up boom. This calls for proactive initiatives from all stakeholders and the government has a major role to play. There needs to be a synergy between all stakeholders.

#### Recommendations:

What is needed at the moment is to attract investors to NER. An enterprise trying to set up a business faces three obstacles – costs, procedural completeness and delays. These need to be addressed and eliminated to increase private investments into start-ups. Start-ups by rural enterprises across the agricultural, handicrafts and manufacturing sectors also need focus. Clarity on the definition of start-ups is also becoming essential to identify a business as a start-up and thus qualify for availing the start-up schemes. In this context, the GoI's Start Ups India initiative can be play a key role in building the future of startups in the NER. Funds announced by the Government should be accessible to all startups in the NER. Government can't guarantee that every entrepreneurial dream turns into a reality. But it can ensure that a good business idea is nurtured into a great business instead of getting killed because of absence of basics such as uninterrupted power, reliable mobile network, seed capital and clean and responsible administration. Hundreds of startups will be looking for such an assurance today.

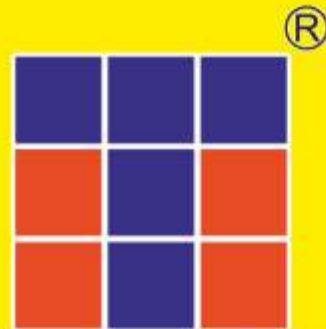


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# STARTUPS

## IN THE NORTH EAST REGION

..... A GLIMPSE

DR. ASHIMA SHARMA BORAH  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
K.C.DAS COMMERCE COLLEGE, GUWAHATI

ashimasharmaborah@gmail.com

"I See Start-ups technology and innovation as exciting and effective instruments for India's transformation"

Shri Narendra Modi  
Prime Minister of India



**N**orth East Region is a part of India that comprises eight states, namely Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland and Sikkim. These eight states are officially recognised under the North East Council (NEC) constituted in 1971 as the acting agency for the development of the eight States. The North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NEDFI) was incorporated on 9<sup>th</sup> August, 1995 and the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) was set up in September 2001.

Despite the presence of institutions such as NEDFI and NEC, the region has been neglected for some reason or the other by the government so far, which has led to severe backlogs in the field of road, infrastructure, industrialization and modernization. But the present government's strong resolution of strengthening the North East Region is hopefully expected to produce fruitful

results.

It is worth mentioning that one of the major concerns is the growing number of unemployed youths of the region on the one hand and the richness in natural resources, tourism hotspots, agricultural products, flora-fauna and its strategic locations, which provides great connectivity with the rest of the South Asian Nations, on the other. This aspect really needs to be pondered.

**Start-ups- A Strategy to cope with the North East Scenario:**

According to business dictionary, Start Up refers to an early stage in the lifecycle of an enterprise where the entrepreneur moves from the idea stage to securing financing, laying down the basic structure of the business and initiating operations on trading.

Start-up India is an initiative of the Government of India intended to build a strong eco-system for nurturing



innovation and Start-ups in the country that will lead to sustainable economic growth and generate large scale employment opportunities as well.

Today, the utmost necessity of North East Region is to exploit and explore the areas and avenues of potential and try to reap the economic benefits out of it, and try to solve some of the employment issues.

Some of the Start-Ups of the North East Region which have been able to establish themselves as a prominent brand in their specified areas are as under:

1. Awe Rides- It is a car and bike rental company operational in Guwahati, Pune and Chandigarh. They provide both services to travellers, hence enabling them to explore the North Eastern Region as per their own convenience.

2. Sui Generis Inc.- This Start-up produces CC tea (which is naturally caffeine free) exclusively grown in Manipur, its aim is to start a green revolution in the state and highlight the huge natural resource potential of Manipur.

3. Nature's Gift- It is a Start-up in the state of Sikkim and it is currently one of the leading producers of ginger, turmeric, buckwheat and millets. Currently, it produces 200 tonnes of organic products every year.

4. Absolute Tea- It is a Start-up from the state of Assam which collects and sells fine Indian tea from legendary gardens, small tea growers and tea artisans. They provide the finest Indian tea to tea lovers across the world, hence paving their way for a much vibrant tea culture.

Government Support to Start-ups in North East India:

In the "Start-up India 2016" Conference, which was co-ordinated by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), Union Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) Dr Jitendra Singh stated that the North-East States of India have extreme possibility to enter the Start-up environment. The Central government is planning to create a venture fund for Start-ups.

Singh further stated that "the declaration of Sikkim as

the first organic state of India has opened up new avenues for start-up initiatives in organic farming in the North East". The minister placed his views by saying that though the world is currently witnessing a sluggish economic growth, Indian Start-ups will play the role in diversifying and strengthening economy as well as be able to create employment. The present government's new initiative can play a huge catalyst in the growth of a Start-up as the potential of North Eastern youths are yet to be explored.

Also Make in India is an opportunity created by the Narendra Modi led Union Government to make India a manufacturing hub and strengthen India's economic stand. This opportunity should be grasped immediately for the benefit of local entrepreneurs of the country, which would not only provide them with a living but would make them aware of global business standards.

However, to cope with the North East scenario, the following strategies can be adopted:

- Engaging local entrepreneurs in supplies.
- Taking assistance of local entrepreneurs in transportation.
- Helping young entrepreneurs in establishing ancillary industries.
- Establishing Common Facility Centres (CFCs) throughout the region, considering the locally available resources.
- Encouraging tourism giants to invest in North East to develop the available tourism spots into world class tourism centres.
- Improving the infrastructure.

To add further, the government should take initiatives to improve connectivity to and from the North East States to the country and the world as well. The most challenging part is that whatever efforts the government is putting in to boost start-ups in the region, it will ultimately be the responsibility and effort of the people of the North East to grab the available opportunities and try to establish enterprises with innovativeness, thus uplift the region economically, and to an extent, solve the unemployment problem.

To sum up, it may be mentioned that new ideas or creativity amongst the people, the availability of natural resources, place to provide training facilities, good connectivity along with the ease of doing business become a good package for taking up Start-up business. Ironically all the above mentioned factors can be found in North East Region, but the resources remain unexplored and unexploited for economic purposes. Here, it is pertinent that awareness regarding Start-ups be carried out by institutions such as the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship, which was established in the year 1993 in Guwahati by the erstwhile Ministry of Industry (now the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises), Government of India.



# START SMALL, ACHIEVE BIG!

As start-ups keep mushrooming across the country, a few in the North East are also not far from their counterparts outside the Region as they take the less travelled path to battle the odds and achieve their dreams. The encouraging part is that most of them are starting young and giving the right shape to their business ideas. Here are some start-up ventures that are making a presence felt in the North East market:

## Bahniman Kakati, co-founder of TeaOrb, Guwahati

bahniman@teaorb.com

Meet Bahniman Kakati, co-founder of TeaOrb Services, an e-commerce marketplace headquartered in Guwahati. TeaOrb now has registered suppliers (small tea manufacturers) not only from all tea-growing districts of Assam but also from other Northeastern States.

"Our story started in 2012, when I saw a major IT company using digital marketing as an enabler to connect with customers worldwide looking for technical solutions and that triggered the possibility to deliver the freshest teas via internet. Towards this end, research was carried out in the tea consumption patterns in different countries of the world and India's share in that market. People were accustomed to drinking tea as it became available to them that were sanctioned by a century old system and it was time to make tea available as it should be, to everyone," Kakati, in his mid-thirties, said.

Bahniman and his father, Jayanta Kakati, immediately started working on a plan to offer an additional mode of sale to the centuries-old industry and popularize tea on the lines of fine wines and brand Assam as a tea destination along with promoting tourism in NE India, where tourists visit and stay in Heritage Bungalows in Tea Gardens. They wanted to offer visits and tours of fields and the tea factory to experience the toil and sweat that goes behind producing that exhilarating cuppa.

A concept paper was thus created and shared/discussed with a select few personalities from the industry and got support. The concept was shared with the Tea Board of India office in Guwahati, which gave support, and the company presented it to small tea growers in a workshop in March 2015. "Another presentation was made at a second workshop on market sourcing of organic tea, organised by the Tea Board in January last year. More interest was generated before the venture became a reality," he said. Using technology as an enabler, TeaOrb has created a Food & Beverage hybrid e-commerce marketplace for producers from North East, allowing them to collectively deliver their finest and freshest produce directly to consumers worldwide and fetch a better price as there are no intermediaries, affecting their payment capacity for better wage to tea workers and access to programmes and services to tackle climate change and offer tea tourism.

Apart from marketing and tourism, TeaOrb also have a consulting wing to provide guidance to producers in scientific agricultural practice in tea cultivation, modern manufacturing process in factory, marketing of the produce, matters related to Food Safety Standards Act 2006 and Tea Board of India's directives on Plant Protection Code (PPC).

"The company, TeaOrb, was incorporated on 29th May, 2015 and our portal platform, www.teaorb.com went live on December 21, 2016.

"This venture requires huge capital toward digital marketing, infrastructure and operations. It was initially thought that crowd funding would be the best option, but like introduction of any innovative idea, it



was difficult to bring about the required change in the mindset. The tech-savvy have understood the concept well. So with limited own resources we set about the task of obtaining the necessary licenses/registration from the authorities.

"We have reached to a stage of actually marketing followed by fulfilment of orders but sadly our efforts to obtain finance from financial institutions have not met with success given the level of awareness on start-ups in this part of India. Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship has, however, provided us with valuable inputs to take the venture forward," Kakati said.

"We are now looking for angel investors to fund our venture, which we believe will be a success given our twin objectives to make tea available as it should be, to everyone and uphold the essence of sustainability to address real issues affecting people and the environment," Kakati said.

# Koinonia Juice Plant/Water Plant, Koinonia Water Plant

**Vanlalchhanhima Ralte,**  
Co-Owner, Koinonia Juice Plant/Water Plant, Koinonia Water Plant  
Mizoram

vanlalchhanhima.ralte@koinonian.com

**K**oinonia is a partnership firm registered under District Industries Centre, Aizawl and Ministry of MSME, Government of India.

"Koinonia Juice Plant was set up at Lengte, Mizoram in September 2011 with an office in Aizawl. "We now have a ready-to-drink brand, Koinonia Lemon Juice. Our office is located in South Kanan, Aizawl. We are certified by the certification body of Intertek (India) Private Limited having a license under the Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) and a consent to Operate from the Mizoram Pollution Control Board, Government of Mizoram," Ralte said.

"We started our business plan from the beginning of 2011 with our private consultant from the food processing consultancy and an architect for the factory buildings. The building project was estimated at Rs 44 Lakh and the machinery at Rs 40 Lakh. With our new upgrade plan in 2017, the machinery for juice processing is estimated at Rs 60 Lakh," he said.

In the year 2013, Food Processing Industry, Directorate of Industry, Government of Mizoram had granted Koinonia subsidy for their building and machinery under one of its schemes.

"For processing of our product, our main raw material is Assam Lemon. Within our owned farm at Lengte, which is as large as 3.8 Ha., we have planted 10,000 lemon trees, in which 8000 trees are up to satisfactory for picking during each season, which is further extracted into Lemon Juice," he said.

"Within a year, 25,000 litres of Assam Lemon juice was extracted from our own farm. As demand increased, we started procuring extracted lemon juice from different local growers within Mizoram. Before every purchase is made from the local grower, we have an analyzing meter for each lemon juice, before it is further procured, and after each and every quality testing has been passed to our standard of procurement," Ralte said.

Now, our annual estimated stock of lemon juice for processing of our products comes between 75000 to 100000 litres. In addition to this, water has been used for processing of the products, which is first collected from the water tank and further treated water at our Reserve Osmosis (R.O.) Plant. Again, in addition to this, an ingredient has been added," he said.

Activities such as personnel recruitment, sales, purchases, advertising and finance are carried out in their city office in South Kanan, Aizawl.

"All daily production records, dispatch records, stock records from the factory are recorded and maintained," he said.

In addition to our market expansion, we are planning to set up a new production unit within the North-East India, which will be in a medium or large scale unit. The project is aimed at capturing the markets of neighbouring Bangladesh and Myanmar.





# Milster Mushroom Farms

Says Hrishikesh Majumdar, proprietor of Milster Mushroom, a brand of mushrooms, "It was a very tough decision to leave the corporate world and come back to my hometown Guwahati from Delhi. After gaining more than five years of experience in sales, marketing, imports and exports I decided to put my knowledge and savings in my own business."

"By the time I left Delhi, my dreams became more lucid and thoughts concrete. I along with my friend, who shares similar philosophy of the corporate world like me, started the work of cultivating edible mushrooms. It was I believe equally hard for him to quit the job and join the start-up," Hrishikesh, in his early thirties, said.

"The very idea originated from the visits to the weekend vegetable market. Mushrooms at our dining table were a regular affair and there was only one dedicated seller of mushrooms in the entire market. This very thought made me ponder about this mysterious vegetable," he said.

Hrishikesh started doing research and homework to find out initially that people have a unique mindset for this commodity. "Those who are unaware of edible mushrooms perceive them to be poisonous. Contrary to this, the others who are in the know love to consume them," he said.

"I started meeting people associated with mushrooms in and around Guwahati. Needless to mention in this online world the World Wide Web helped a lot. Articles on mushroom and cultivation along with videos on YouTube etc. provided the much needed information. I and my friend also managed to attend a few seminars on Mushroom cultivation and the business associated with it," he said.

The mushroom market was much unorganised unlike any other vegetable market.

Assam is a protein deficit state and these wonder caps besides containing high levels of protein, have significant levels of fibre, iron, zinc, potassium, phosphorus, selenium, vitamins B1, B3, B5 and B12 along with vitamin C and Vitamin D. In fact mushrooms are the only source of Vitamin D from any plant source.

"I realised that such a super nutrient food needs to be promoted and cultivated as staple food in places like Assam along with the neighbouring states. It's a vegetable unlike any other vegetable which is organic in nature," he said.

Finally after much research and knowledge, it was time to put it in practical implication.

"It was a cold November morning in 2016 when we decided to make it official or rather practical. We had a very humble start at our home's garage. After gathering the required commodities (which was a different battle in itself) we made our first mushroom cylinder (Mushroom Bag) which would yield Oyster Mushrooms. The very first cylinder was a sight and the remaining 24 almost looks equally crooked as



**Hrishikesh Majumdar,  
Proprietor, Milster Mushroom Farms  
Guwahati**

[milster.farms@gmail.com](mailto:milster.farms@gmail.com)

we gained experience in making them," he said.

As the experiment phase was successful and the yields started shrinking with the passage of time, Hrishikesh decided to expand his farm with the limited financial resources he had. "The expansion started with (all the arrangements from million visits to thousand places) a slow pace and we finally were successful in putting up over 500 cylinders during the end of it. That was the most hectic yet memorable weeks of the entire mushroom journey till date," he said.

The market scenario for mushrooms is flourishing in Assam and especially in its neighbouring states. There is no definite structure for dealing in mushrooms and the product reaches the end consumer after rolling through a series of middlemen. This in turn leads to increased price of the product.

"By January, 2017, our product, "Milster Mushroom" – Go Organic Stay Fit, was launched in the market. We make small SKU of 250 Gms packets for retail and supply bulk orders as an when requirement arises. The same Oyster mushroom can be marketed as dried Oyster Mushroom but only if a food license is made. Mushroom Papad, Pickles, High Protein Powder for garnishing food items can be also be produced," he said.

However, funds were hard to come by. "We visited departments of Agriculture and Horticulture but small scale mushroom start-ups lacks funding. This is a major drawback which I feel demotivates us from doing our work. Even vermicomposting is possible with the expired mushroom cylinders and can be done in large scale owing to support from the Government schemes," Hrishikesh said.

"Packaging machines like Nitrogen packaging which increases the shelf life of the packed mushrooms if provided by the government with subsidized rates would be beneficial for transportation of this perishable vegetable," he said.



A recognized manufacturer and a provider of innovative, effective power quality solutions, Guwahati-based DS Systems Pvt Ltd (DSSPL) has over the past two decades of inception, combined innovation and leading-edge technologies to cater to clients across the country.

DSSPL is one of the pioneers and a recognized manufacturer and provider of innovative, effective power quality solutions - Combining innovation & leading edge technologies to clients across India. Products include a full line of Uninterruptible Power Systems, Automatic Voltage Regulators, Surge Protection Devices, power management systems, turnkey integration services and site support.

DSSPL was incorporated in the year 1995 by two technocrats, Debajyoti Nath and Samor Borbora, graduates in Electrical Engineering, having excellent academic career. Since its incorporation, DSSPL has become a leading manufacturer, supplier and consultant for power protection to the corporate, industrial and public sectors. They offer one of the largest portfolios of power-protection products in the industry, allowing customers to easily manage power in a way that increases enterprise-wide systems availability.

Mr. Borbora says "We are a customer centric company focused on delivering industry's most efficient, highest density power supplies to increase business continuity. From inception DSSPL has always set the trend in the industry and is one of the first technology companies from North East India to be certified to ISO 9001/14001/OHSAS 18001 standards. Our products are also in compliance with CE & RoHS Standards. DSSPL is registered as a MSME unit with Directorate of Industries and NSIC (National Small Industries Corporation) as a manufacturer of UPS Systems. DSSPL was also the first technology (electronics hardware) company from North East to be empanelled and receive rate contract with DGS&D, Govt of India for supply of UPS to Govt Depts. and undertakings".

"From a small start in 1995, we have achieved multi-crore turnover with direct presence in all North Eastern States, West Bengal, Delhi-NCR, Gujarat, Odisha, Punjab etc. Decades of experience and application of latest technologies are reflected in the product design, which are developed for the most severe Indian power conditions. Today, we have over 10,000 sq. ft. of modernized manufacturing space in Guwahati and Delhi-NCR supported by an in-house R&D centre for undertaking latest design and development," he said.

The products of the firm are tested by reputed National Test Labs for specifications and performance. Supported by a large service network spread across the country, they are uniquely positioned to provide systems and integrated solutions wherever our customers are located.

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samor.borbora@dssystems.in  
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# AN ANCIENT ROUTE TO STAYING HEALTHY

Yoga is an invaluable gift of India's ancient tradition. It embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfilment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and the nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help in well-being. Let us work towards adopting an International Yoga Day.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi  
at the UN General Assembly on 27 September, 2014.

## What is yoga?

Yoga is a form of exercise that originated in ancient India and is practised widely across the world today. Yoga not only enhances physical strength but also contributes largely towards mental health and spiritual growth.

## Yoga Day

The idea of international Day of Yoga was the first proposed

by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi during his speech at the UNGA, on 27 September 2014. Going by the popularity of the ancient Indian practice, he suggested that yoga be given a special day as it was beneficial for everyone and making it a world event would help in spreading awareness about its benefits.





On 11th December 2014, India's Permanent Representative Asoke Mukherji introduced the draft resolution in UNGA. The draft text received broad support from 177 Member States who sponsored the text, which was adopted without a vote. This initiative found support from many global leaders. As many as 177 nations co-sponsored the resolution, which is the highest number of co-sponsors ever for any UNGA resolution of such nature.

When proposing 21st June as the date, Modi said the date was the longest day of the year in the northern hemisphere (shortest in the southern hemisphere), having special significance in many parts of the world. From the perspective of yoga, the summer solstice marks the transition to Dakshinayana. The first full moon after summer solstice is known as Guru Poornima. Shiva, the first yogi (Adi Yogi), is said to have begun imparting the knowledge of yoga to the rest of mankind on this day, and became the first guru (Adi Guru). Dakshinayana is also considered a time when there is natural support for those pursuing spiritual practices.

Following the adoption of the UN resolution, several leaders of the spiritual movement in India voiced their support for the initiative. On 21st June 2015, World Yoga Day was observed for the first time across the world and has since been celebrated annually.

### **Benefits of yoga**

Yoga not only keeps you fit but also has a lot of long-term benefits when you make it an integral part of your lifestyle. Some benefits of yoga include:

#### **1. Better posture**

Yoga helps in keeping the spine erect, enabling you to sit straight and not slouch. It also helps alleviate the stress on your spine, exerted through incorrect posture. Consistent practice of yoga helps in keeping the spine strong and prevents fatigue.

#### **2. Improved bone health**

Many postures in yoga require you to lift your own weight which helps in making the bones stronger and helps ward off osteoporosis.

#### **3. Increased blood flow**

The inverted and twisting nature of yoga poses wring out the venous blood from the internal organs and allow oxygenated blood to flow. This also boosts the haemoglobin and red blood cells count.

#### **4. Improved heart health**

When you practice yoga regularly, you get your heart into the aerobic range. This not only lowers the risk of heart attack but also relieves depression.



#### **5. Lowered blood pressure**

The *savasana* (corpse pose) helps people with hypertension. This pose is said to have resulted in great improvement in people with high blood pressure.

#### **6. Improved balance**

Yoga involves focusing on holding postures for extended periods of time. This helps in improving your body balance and developing muscle tone.

#### **7. Relaxation and sleeping aid**

Yoga can help you relieve the stress of modern life and helps you sleep deeper. Yoga encourages you to relax and slow your breath and to focus on the present. It shifts your focus from sympathetic nervous system to parasympathetic nervous system. Restorative asanas



and meditation also encourage a turning inward of the senses, which relaxes the nervous system.

### **8. Improved lung health**

Yoga draws attention to your breathing pattern and makes you aware of breathing correctly which filters the air, warms it and humidifies it removing the pollen and the dirt, supplying fresh oxygen into the lungs.

### **9. Reduced digestive problems**

Yoga like any other physical exercise can ease constipation and lower the risk of colon cancer. The movements that Yoga involves, improve the transport of food and remove waste through the bowels. This helps in getting rid of the waste from the system more effectively.

### **10. Eases your pain**

Yoga can ease your pain and help people who suffer from arthritis, back pain and other chronic conditions. When you relieve pain, you're in a much better mood and are inclined to be more active.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> International Yoga Day celebrations in the North East**

Along with the rest of the country and world, the Region too woke up early to perform yoga and join the celebration. From schools, colleges, to offices to defence establishments and homes, it was all about practising yoga and inculcating healthy habits for a better life.

The day also saw Hon'ble Assam Chief Minister Shri Sarbananda Sonowal participating in a mass yoga event at Gordan Higher Secondary School in Nalbari. Thousands took part in celebrations organized jointly by the State health and family welfare department and the directorate of AYUSH.

Addressing the gathering, Shri Sonowal said, "Yoga is a way of life that helps build a healthy body and mind. It helps to promote peace and a balanced development of the mind, body and soul."

Assam health minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, industry minister Shri Chandra Mohan Patowary and managing director, Patanjali, Acharya Balkrishna, were among those who participated in the camp.

The Army's Red Horn division of the Gajraj Corps also observed the day. The divisional headquarters of the Red Horn division at Umroi Cantonment and all formations and units of the division, took part in yoga programmes at Kokrajhar, Chirang, Dhubri, Bongaigaon, Goalpara, South Salamara, Mankachar, Diphu, Rangia, Thakurbari, Udalguri and Hathigarh. The events were attended by civilians and school students.

Assam DGP Mukesh Sahay joined more than 500 policemen and other officials of the department at the ground of the 10th Assam Police Battalion at Kahilipara in Guwahati.

In Arunachal Pradesh, the main function was organised at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium, Naharlagun, by the Indo Tibetan Border Police where more than 1,000 people participated. Despite the downpour, people from various walks of life joined the day initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland Governor Shri P B Acharya in a message said yoga is originated in India nearly 15,000 years ago, which was later embraced by the world an ideal practice to stay healthy and fit. He added that it is one of ancient India's most precious gifts.

In Nagaland, the day was celebrated at the Indira Gandhi Stadium, Kohima, with over 1,000 participants attending. Union minister for skill development and entrepreneurship, Shri Rajiv Pradap Rudy, attended another programme at Dimapur. "An Indian tradition has been made an international event by the Prime Minister," he said.

Manipur chief minister N. Biren Singh and Union human resources development minister Shri Prakash Javadekar led hundreds of practitioners at a yoga session at Imphal's Khuman Lampak sports complex.

Shri Biren Singh said if there was no inner peace and well-being of the mind and body, there would be no peace and harmony in Manipur. "Yoga is helping spread the message of peace and prosperity across the world," he said.

Shri Javadekar said the day was being celebrated at over one lakh venues across the country. Later, the two dignitaries flagged off the Run for Yoga to encourage people to practice yoga in Manipur.

Yoga camps were organized at various central government offices, defence establishments and educational institutions in Meghalaya. Though there was no state-level official celebration, the deputy commissioners of all the districts were directed to organise functions to commemorate the day at the district level.

The BJP, along with the Bharat Swabhiman Trust and Patanjali Yog Samity, organised a yoga camp at the J N Sports Complex, Polo Grounds, Shillong.



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