AIIDC

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIES, COMMERCE & PUBLIC ENTERPRISES

assam startup

IIM CALCUTTA INNOVATION PARK



Assam Startup TrailBlazers

Pioneering Startup Stories from Assam

VOL. 02

2022

2023

বিমল বড়া
মন্ত্রী
উদ্যোগ, বাণিজ্য, ৰাজহুৱা প্ৰতিষ্ঠান
আৰু সাংস্কৃতিক পৰিক্ৰমা বিভাগ।
অসম চৰকাৰ

সত्यमेव जयते

Bimal Borah
Minister
Industries, Commerce & Public Enterprise
and Cultural Affairs Departments
Government of Assam.

MESSAGE



It brings me great joy to introduce a remarkable testament to Assam's entrepreneurial spirit – a captivating startup coffee table book, showcasing the extraordinary success stories of 11 promising startups. This book echoes the resounding innovation and determination that define Assam's thriving startup ecosystem.

Under the visionary leadership of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam's startup ecosystem has witnessed an unprecedented era of growth and innovation, fostering a dynamic environment for emerging entrepreneurs.

Our commitment to fostering innovation has resulted in an ecosystem that encourages budding entrepreneurs to dream big and achieve even bigger. The department has laid the foundation for this journey through strategic interventions, encompassing cutting-edge incubation centers, investor-friendly policies, and skill-enhancement programs. These efforts have transformed Assam into a dynamic hub for startups across diverse sectors.

The stories within these pages reflect the resilience and creativity of our entrepreneurs. From rural innovations to tech-driven solutions, these startups exemplify the diversity and untapped potential of our state. Each success is a testament to our collective dedication in creating an ecosystem that propels dreams into reality.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Department of Industries, Commerce and Public Enterprise, startups, mentors, and investors who have contributed to this narrative of triumph. Let us continue working together, igniting innovation and steering Assam towards a future laden with opportunities and prosperity.

Dated : Dispur, the 21st August, 2023.

(BIMAL BORAH)

Janata Bhawan, D-Block, 4th Floor, Dispur, Guwahati - 06, ☎ : 0361-2237267, e-mail : minister.bimal.borah@assam.gov.in

Message from the Managing Director, AIIDC

In the heart of India's eastern landscape lies a region steeped in tradition, yet pulsating with innovation. Assam, a land renowned for its lush tea gardens, breathtaking landscapesand vibrant culture, has also emerged as a fertile ground for groundbreaking startups that are shaping the future.

This coffee table book, "Assam Startup Trailblazers," takes you on a captivating journey through eleven extraordinary stories of resilience, creativity and audacity. Each story encapsulates the spirit of Assam's entrepreneurial landscape, where dreams are nurtured against all odds and transformed into remarkable ventures.

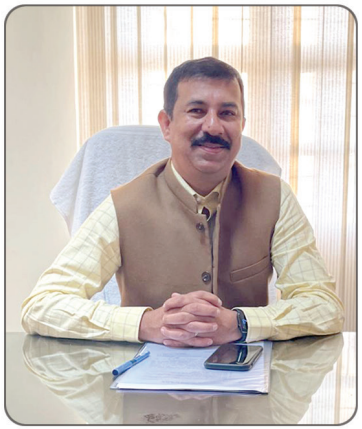
As you flip through these pages, you'll discover narratives that transcend geographical boundaries and industry norms. From transforming traditional crafts into global brands to leveraging technology to revolutionize age-old practices, these startups are rewriting the narrative of innovation in Assam. They are not just driving economic growth but also redefining the possibilities for future generations.

The stories within are more than just accounts of success; they are testaments to the unyielding determination of individuals who dared to envision a different path. These entrepreneurs navigated uncharted waters, embraced challenges as opportunities, and forged ahead with unwavering courage.

As you embark on this immersive journey, may you be inspired by the indomitable spirit of these Assam startup pioneers. May their stories remind you that innovation knows no boundaries, and dreams, when pursued with passion, can transform the world around us.

So, sit back, sip your favourite brew, and immerse yourself in the tales of courage, innovation, and triumph that define Assam's startup landscape. "Assam Startup Trailblazers" is not just a book; it's a tribute to the human spirit's relentless pursuit of progress.

Welcome to the world of Assam's startup pioneers – where ideas take flight and dreams know no limits.



Chinmoy Prakash Phookan, ACS
Managing Director
Assam Industrial Infrastructure
Development Corporation

Message from the COO

It is with immense pride that I introduce the captivating startup coffee table book, featuring the inspirational stories of struggle-to-success of 11 dynamic startups from Assam. The stories within this book epitomise the spirit of Assam's entrepreneurs who have embraced challenges with ingenuity. From deep-tech to agri-tech to prop-tech, these startups showcase the quality of world-class innovations emerging from the soil of Assam.

Assam's startup journey has been marked by proactive policies and strategic support mechanisms. The department has facilitated the establishment of robust incubation centers, streamlined regulatory frameworks, and promoted access to funding avenues. These initiatives have paved the way for a vibrant startup ecosystem that thrives on innovation and resilience.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation for these marvellous entrepreneurs who are blazing a trail for the generations to follow.



PRANJAL KONWAR
Chief Operating Officer
Assam Startup,
IIM Calcutta Innovation Park

PREFACE

In the heart of India's eastern landscape lies a region steeped in tradition, yet pulsating with innovation. Assam, a land renowned for its lush tea gardens, breathtaking landscapes and vibrant culture, has also emerged as a fertile bed for groundbreaking startups that are shaping the future.

This coffee table book, “Assam Startup TrailBlazers: Pioneering Startup Stories from Assam", takes you on a captivating journey through some extraordinary stories of resilience, creativity and audacity. Each story encapsulates the spirit of Assam's entrepreneurial landscape, where dreams are nurtured against all odds and transformed into remarkable ventures.

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PREFACE

Through captivating visuals and compelling narratives, "Assam Startup TrailBlazers" brings to life the human stories behind these startups. It's a celebration of those who dared to dream, those who toiled relentlesslyand those who overcame obstacles that seemed insurmountable. Their journeys mirror the spirit of Assam itself – a harmonious blend of heritage and modernity.

As you embark on this immersive journey, may you be inspired by the indomitable spirit of these Assam startup pioneers. May their stories remind you that innovation knows no boundaries, and dreams, when pursued with passion, can transform the world around us.

So, sit back, sip your favourite brew and immerse yourself in the tales of courage, innovation and triumph that define Assam's startup landscape. "Assam Startup TrailBlazers" is not just a book; it's a tribute to the human spirit's relentless pursuit of progress.

Welcome to the world of Assam's startup pioneers – where ideas take flight and dreams know no limits.

Turn the page and begin the journey.



Agrithink
We Serve U to Grow

AGRITHINK SERVICES

Fortifying Farmers' Future with Smart Agricultural Solutions

An agri-tech startup on a mission to integrate cutting-edge technology into agricultural practices to help improve yield and do away with uncertainties. Through its IoT-based Smart Microclimate Monitoring & Controlling System, Smart Soil Health Management System and Live In-field Expert Service/Consultancy, the startup has positively impacted 10,000 farmers.



Founding Year
2019

Founders
Dr. Bijaylakshmi Goswami
& Toufik Ahmed

A View through the Founder's Eyes



Hello, my name is Dr. Bijaylakshmi Goswami, a biotechnology expert on a mission to eliminate uncertainties in agriculture.

As a woman with relatively more privileges, I have always considered it my responsibility to uplift the plight of disadvantaged women. I trained women from the low-income segment toward helping them make a living through floriculture, vermiculture and orchid farming. I was making an impact, but that wasn't enough. Deep within, I aspired to start a venture in precision farming. But the clash between the fast-ticking biological clock and my inner calling kept me procrastinating.

In 2018, while working as a consultant for an IoT-based company, I realised I could do much more in elevating the region's agricultural scenario. Meanwhile, I met Toufik Ahmed, an adroit IT professional. My expertise in biotechnology made a perfect match with Toufik's IT proficiency to start a precision agriculture company. That's how the seeds of Agrithink Services were sown.

Dr. Bijaylakshmi Goswami

The Evolution

We got down to immediate action to build the prototype of our now patent-pending, IoT-based Smart Microclimate Monitoring & Controlling System (SMMCS). By the time we incorporated our company in 2019, our prototype was ready. Next, we proceeded with the piloting of our MVP under a state project in Sikkim.The app-based SMMCS was well-received in Sikkim for its ease and precision in generating, monitoring and storing relevant data that helps favourably control the microenvironment of greenhouses and mushroom growing units, etc. THE SMMCS was ready for the market. And that's where the real jitters started. We needed handholding and exposure to the standard business processes. The best institution we knew could help us was Assam Startup.



Toufik Ahmed

Assam Startup and the
Unravelling of Business Knowhow





Incubation under Assam Startup was both overwhelming and assuring. Overwhelming since it introduced us to multiple nuances of a startup business that we weren't particularly sure of. Assuring because we had a place to fall back on in times of crisis. What could be a better example than receiving the MASI grant from the Government of Assam in 2020 when we were reeling under the impact of COVID-19! In the same year, IIM Calcutta Innovation Park released us a grant of Rs. 7 Lakhs under the MeitY TIDE 1.0 program. During the pandemic, when our plan to roll out SMMCS came to a halt, the grants helped us build an IoT-based Smart Soil Health Management System that simplifies soil health testing and report generation.

When I look back, I realise how much learnings we've absorbed from those bootcamps and mentoring sessions at Assam Startup! How much it has sharpened our business sense! The recognition and visibility received as an incubated startup has lent credibility to our efforts.

Today, we are an empanelled soil testing agency under the Tea Board of India and have served various small tea gardens in Assam and Nagaland. Besides Sikkim, our SMMCS have been installed at Hajo and at Assam Agricultural University in Guwahati. We are on the verge of closing new deals in Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. Going to the fields, demonstrating our products' benefits to the farmers and receiving their positive reactions after use – that's what makes our journey satisfying and worth all the pain.

AUTOMOVILL TECHNOLOGIES

Unlocking Ease on Wheels: Your Service, Your Way; Anytime, Anywhere

A full-stack mobility startup offering a technology-driven platform to meet all vehicle service needs – right from general service, repairs, denting and painting, battery and tire replacement to insurance claims. The unified platform eliminates the hassle of searching for reliable service providers by offering a streamlined booking procedure and effective request management, linking users to the nearest or most fitting service provider. Operating across 20 cities in India, the startup boasts a workforce exceeding 60 employees and has indirectly generated employment for thousands of individuals nationwide.

Founding Year
2015

Founders
Mridu Mahendra Das, Chinmay Baruah & Sambu Ramana



A View through the **Founder's Eyes**



There is no greater exhilaration than confronting a challenge head-on, overcoming it and ultimately achieving success.

Hello, I am Mridu Mahendra Das, a man from the vernacular medium, building a pan-India company to solve a problem prevalent across the country.

Upon completing my engineering studies at Jorhat Engineering College, I spent 12 years working in the IT sector in Bangalore. Back in 2014-15, when the city was abuzz with new enthusiasm to embrace the transformations occurring within the Indian startup ecosystem, I too found myself quietly nurturing entrepreneurial aspirations. As I contemplated various ideas, an incident involving my car led me to a local service provider.The challenges I encountered prompted me to contemplate the scale of the issue and the necessity for an innovative solution. A year elapsed as I sought feedback from industry experts and stakeholders. Finally, I became certain that the time had come to establish Automovill Technologies.

Mridu Mahendra Das

The Evolution

My school friend, Chinmay Baruah, was sold to the idea. Together we began to shape the final product. However, for any working professional transitioning to entrepreneurship, they confront a gap between anticipated challenges and the actual hurdles during execution. As an engineer, my knowledge of organizational structures and regulatory compliance was rudimentary, which presented an obstacle during the company registration process. We were also confronted with the dilemma of recruiting suitable personnel. Nonetheless, we persevered and successfully launched our services, offering a technology-driven, comprehensive solution for all vehicle servicing needs. Within three years, we had established service processes, customer relations protocols and brought nearly 500 vendors on board.

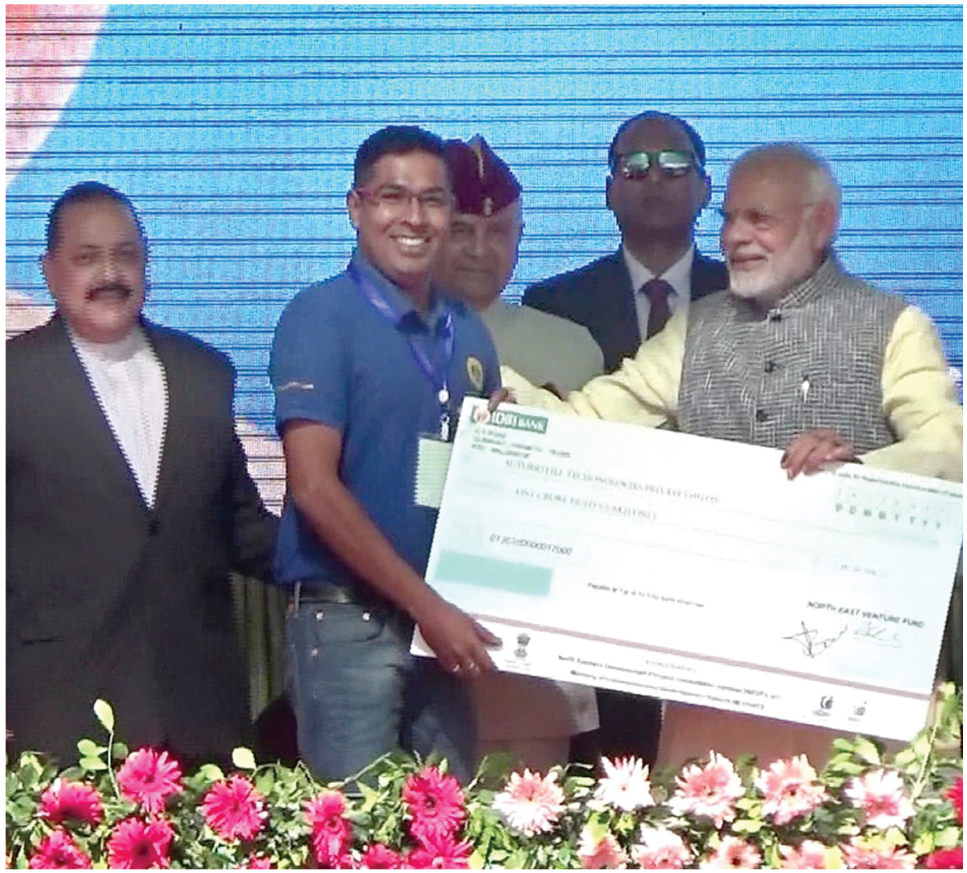
We launched our services nearly simultaneously in Bangalore and Guwahati. Despite residing in Bangalore, I have always held Assam close to my heart and desired it to be an integral part of my entrepreneurial voyage. I actively sought opportunities to engage with the state's ecosystem. And the most viable medium for me was Assam Startup.



Chinmay Baruah



Assam Startup and the Reconnection



I came to Assam Startup to reconnect with my state's ecosystem, but ended up building connections of a lifetime. Being in Bangalore I could not make as many connections as I did through Assam Startup.

Assam Startup and IIM Calcutta Innovation Park have shaped my journey to a great extent. The quality of mentoring received gave me fresh perspectives on building a company.

Our story of pivoting to vehicle and office sanitisation during COVID-19 made quite a bit of news. But very few may be aware that Assam Startup played a pivotal role. It was Assam Startup that facilitated our initial connection for sanitisation works under the Government of Assam. While numerous startups faced closure during the pandemic, Automovill was fuelled for growth, thanks to the MASI grant of Rs.18.5 lakhs. Assam Startup instilled in us the determination to persevere despite challenges. This very spirit has enabled Automovill to evolve into one of the top two automobile service providers in India and secure funds amounting to Rs.13.5 crores.

Today, Automovill operates in 20 cities across the nation and is poised to establish a vertical focused on electric vehicles. We have established agreements with a Japanese EV company and an India-based EV company. Our founding team has recently been further strengthened by the addition of Sambu Ramana.

As we navigate the path towards becoming a PAT-positive entity within the next two years, my appreciation for Assam Startup will forever remain unchanged.

Deroi Tea®
BRIGHTER INSIDE™

DEROI INNOVATIONS

Sparking a Tea Revolution: Freshness Unleashed, Pollution Erased

A disruptive tea processing invention that eliminates the use of coal and LPG fuels, thus retaining the original taste and freshness of orthodox teas. The startup has touched the lives of more than 1500 green tea enthusiasts, contributing to their pursuit of healthier routines, and has generated 30 direct and indirect employment opportunities, invigorating local communities.

Founding Year
2017

Founders
Surjya Prakash Borthakur & Sudarshan Deka



A View through the **Founder's Eyes**

Deroi Tea®
BRIGHTER INSIDE™



Innovation blossoms where it's least expected. Our story is a perfect example of this.

Hello, I am Surjya Prakash Borthakur, a passionate inventor in pursuit of a better world.

As an under graduate pursuing Electronics Engineering, my mind was filled with aspirations to become an inventor in the realm of Robotics. Sudarshan Deka, a childhood friend and robotics partner, shared the same passion for innovation. Our partnership, forged in high school, took an unexpected turn as we decided to tailor our skills to solve the problems in the tea industry.

Being born in a quaint tea town, Moran (Assam), I was decently aware of the tea manufacturing process. While every tea processing machine used combustible fuels and harsh airflow, I wished to reinstate our forefathers' delicate art of tea processing by marrying the age-old craft with new-age technology. In 2017, when Sudarshan and I set down to brainstorm, the discussion unanimously boiled down to devising an energy-efficient tea processing mechanism. Thus, the foundation of Deroi Innovations was laid.

Surjya Prakash Borthakur

Deroi Tea®
BRIGHTER INSIDE™

The Evolution

After several iterations, we arrived at an idea that had the potential to entirely eliminate the use of coal and LPG in tea manufacturing. Developing our revolutionary technology into a robust, industrial-grade prototype was no small feat. Yet, our determination pushed us forward, and we overcame obstacles one by one. After spending months designing the technology and fabricating a production line along the philosophy of sustainability, we set up our first tea manufacturing unit in Guwahati in 2021.

Launching our tea as consumer-ready products and crafting a compelling brand identity proved to be the next crucial hurdles. Our pursuit of knowledge to overcome the hurdles led us to Assam Startup.



Sudarshan Deka

Deroi Tea®
BRIGHTER INSIDE™

Assam Startup and the Commercial Unleashing of a Disruptive Innovation



As first-generation entrepreneurs, we craved targeted guidance. Assam Startup helped us find the missing pieces of the puzzle. Through various training programs, we learned to approach entrepreneurship as a science, structuring our venture and our path. The network they connected us with, stretching across India, became an invaluable asset.

One crucial lesson from the incubation program has been the art of communication. We learned the value of initiating conversations and leveraging the support network provided by Assam Startup and IIM Calcutta Innovation Park. As our understanding of entrepreneurship deepened, our approach became more systematic, yielding fruitful results. It led us to a crucial decision to not merely sell our technology but first become a unique tea manufacturer. This marked a paradigm shift, propelling us into the limelight of innovation.

The opportunity facilitated by Assam Startup to exhibit Deroi Tea at the IITF 2022 held at Pragati Maidan (New Delhi) remains our proudest accomplishment to date. Over 500 units of Deroi Tea were sold in just 10 days. The outpouring of support reaffirmed our belief that we were on the right path.

In the next two years, we want to instrument a visible shift of choice among the Indian tea consumers – from the regular tea to the clean, carbon-free and non-carcinogenic Deroi Tea. Knowing that a state-owned incubator stands strong to support our pursuit, we are confident about achieving this goal soon.

ENCAMP TOURISM

The Green Odyssey: Empowering Travellers, Enriching the Earth

A travel-tech startup marrying travel expeditions with environmental responsibility, with its AI-powered conversational travel assistance platform, for travellers to plan their itineraries, calculate the carbon footprint and contribute to any of the climate action projects displayed on the platform. The startup has created 25 direct jobs, provided close to 1000 indirect employment and served more than 10,000 travellers.





Founding Year	Founder
2019	Ratan Kumar

A View through the Founder's Eyes



I look at people spelling out ideas to solve problems and wonder why they aren't doing anything to realise those ideas!

Hello, I am Ratan Kumar – a lover of problem-solving ideas, an intuitive entrepreneur and a passionate environmental champion.

An MBA from Noida led my entry into the corporate world as a market researcher. Complying with the demand of my job, I spent my days delving into the innovations of futuristic companies. These ignited in me an intuitive urge to channel my creativity and carve my own path. I quit my job and came back home to start something of my own, but without any particular idea in mind. Uncertainty became my companion as I aimlessly explored Assam's less treaded landscapes. It was amid those journeys that the idea of Encamp Tourism was born.

Ratan Kumar

The Evolution

In 2019, I set out on a mission to revolutionise travel through sustainable practices, with a focus on making travelling hassle-free and nature positive. Taking the first baby step, we hosted 50 people at our tents pitched at Ziro Valley (Arunachal Pradesh) during its music fest. Thereafter, we began offering nature-based accommodation, riverside camps and waterfall camps in Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, and also started building customised travel itineraries in Northeast India. Encamp Tourism's original goal has been to transform travel into a climate -conscious adventure. Right from our early days, we made it a point to educate people on sustainability best practices while travelling.

My startup was a year old and had gained a decent traction. But I had a bigger dream – to build a digital travel assistance platform that helps travellers craft itineraries while measuring their carbon footprint. My dream needed validation and a beacon to show us the course toward realisation. That's when I applied for incubation at Assam Startup.





Assam Startup and the Validation of a Dream



Building a travel assistance platform not just required funds, but also validation and guidance from well-accomplished industry professionals. Assam Startup assigned us two mentors from IIM Calcutta Innovation Park, who reaffirmed my belief in the idea and advised me on the business strategy. The stringent focus on revenue growth and month-on-month reporting helped me inculcate business discipline. Support also poured in forms of media visibility, access to various programs and connects with strategic networks. The exposure received through Assam Startup opened a chain of new opportunities, like the support from software giant SAP Ariba, marking our biggest turning point. Thereafter, we received support from HDFC, CISCO and UNDP, and finally clinched our first seed round with NEDFi Venture Capital Limited worth Rs. 1 Crore. The MASI grant from the Government of Assam has been of great help as well.

Today, our travel assistance platform is up and attracting travellers from across the country. It's integrated with a carbon footprint calculator that measures total carbon footprint of the travel duration, suggests ways to cut down on the emission and displays climate action projects that the traveller can contribute to.

In the coming months, we hope to build our presence in Nepal and Bhutan. And as we add new thrills to this adventure, I invite you to join us, one sustainable step at a time.

KRAFTINN

Handmade Elegance for Homes with a Heart for Nature

A home decor brand, manufacturing exquisite lifestyle articles with locally available sustainable materials through its micro-factories, and supporting 60 artisans and 300 other local skilled workers in the process. Its range of lamps, bags, bookshelves and home décor artefacts are available on its D2C e-commerce site and leading online market-places, and also at a few retail showrooms across the country.

Founding Year
2015

Founders
Parikshit Borkotoky & Pramathesh Borkotoky



A View through the **Founder's Eyes**

kraftinn®



Hello, I am Parikshit Borkotoky – the accidental entrepreneur, in love with the accident like nothing else!

I was happily adjusting to the corporate grind, charting my way to a lucrative career in MNCs. You may call it destiny that I decided to join a startup company. Working closely with the startup introduced me to its dynamic world. The sense of ownership and indomitable spirit of startup founders piqued my interest. In the following days, my aspiration underwent a shift and I decided to wear the entrepreneur's hat. But an unsuccessful tryst with my first venture in New Delhi led me to decide my return to my hometown, Jorhat (Assam), and lay the ground for my second endeavour. Extensive research on the handloom and cane craft of my state brought me face-to-face with the mammoth potential of Assam's eco-friendly handicrafts for mass adoption amid the emerging trend of conscious consumption.

Parikshit Borkotoky

kraftinn®

The Evolution

In 2015, my brother Pramathesh Borkotoky and I founded Kraftinn with the idea to marry the environment-friendly handicrafts of Assam with the contemporary lifestyle demands. Our mission was to create a standardised, profit-driven system for manufacturing sustainable home decor products and accelerate the phasing out of non-disposable products, alongside utilising the skillsets of local artisans and making the products affordable in all aspects. A predominantly D2C and B2C e-commerce model, Kraftinn became one of the earliest startups from Northeast India to start selling on Amazon. We faced initial challenges like reorienting the bamboo artisans and building a team of craft workers, inventory issues due to high atmospheric humidity and logistics challenges given the region's geographical isolation, among others.Yet, we meticulously worked out solutions to the challenges and went on to serve customers across India and exported to two countries by 2021. The first phase was accomplished. It was now time for the next phase – Scaling up.

Pramathesh Borkotoky



kraftinn®

Assam Startup and the Scaling up Catalyst

Entrepreneurship is a lonely journey. Incubation under Assam Startup made the journey less lonely, introducing us to a startup community that is always eager to help.

Scaling up is a taxing process and can take a toll if charting a wrong course. Guidance from seasoned mentors is what every founder looks for in this critical phase of a startup. And that's exactly what we got from Assam Startup. The support from IIMCIP mentors helped us gain insights into the different aspects of business and chalk out a blueprint for expansion.

Meanwhile, we also raised Rs. 50 Lakhs from NEDFi Venture Capital Limited. While the fund was crucial in expanding our inventory and designs and strengthening our marketing, it also accelerated the process of launching our first experience centre at Jorhat. The centre's launch marked our shift to a hybrid model, combining online sales with experiential commerce. We also started diversifying our offerings in favour of our greater goal to promote sustainable lifestyle alternatives. Presently, we take pride in having catered to over 30,000 customers spanning across more than 3500 PIN codes.

To top it all, the story of the evolution of a homegrown sustainable lifestyle brand started reaching house holds in the region, thanks to the support from Assam Startup.





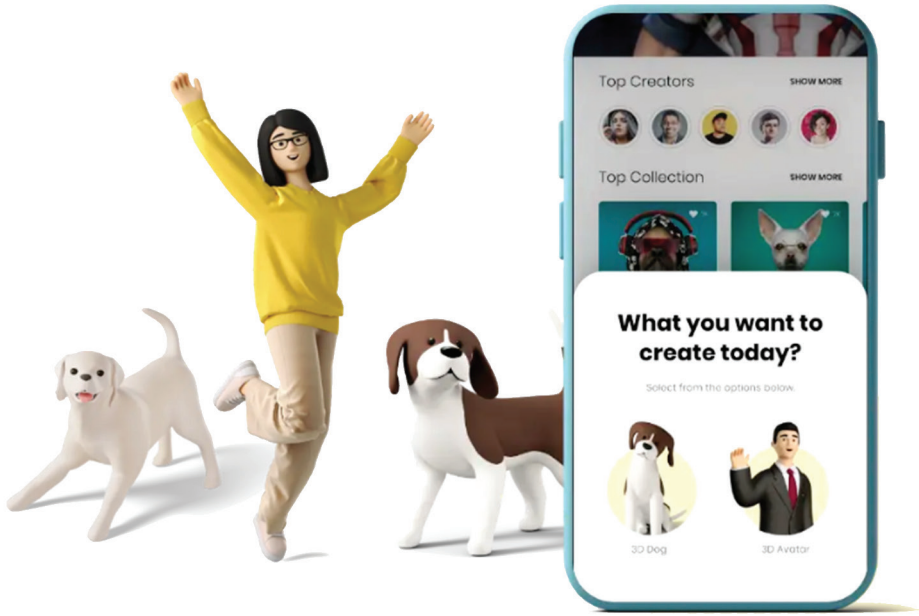
MY3DMETA

MY3DMETA

Taking the Metaverse by storm with the World's most powerful 3D Tech Platform

The world's first company to craft fully personalized, full-body 3D figurines from photographs, with 90% accuracy. It's also poised to transform the 3D industry through its newly launched proprietary AI/ML platform, 3DAiLY, which seamlessly converts 2D images into 3D models in real-time. The models can be exported to various platforms without added costs. These models are scalable, accurate, affordable and interoperable, which set them apart from the competition.





Founding Year
2016

Founder
Harsha P Deka

A View through the **Founder's Eyes**

MY3DMETA



You may have the best life trotting the globe. But coming back to your homeland and starting your entrepreneurial journey afresh in the face of new challenges is always special.

Hello, this is Harsha P Deka – an entrepreneur who started his journey abroad, but came back home to build a world-class company, create jobs for his countrymen and make his state proud.

My journey as an entrepreneur began during my time at Carleton University in Canada, where I pursued a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science. I started Myware Solutions Inc., in 2010 offering diverse services such as game development, multimedia, design, 3D modelling and VFX. Around that same period, losing a dear friend shattered me to pieces and I decided to gift a 3D figurine memorial to my late friend's family. Unfortunately, due to the absence of technology capable of generating 3D replicas with photographs, I had to abandon the idea. But I didn't abandon the idea of finding a solution to it.

In 2015, during an encounter with a well-equipped 3D portrait shop in the US, I inquired whether it was possible to craft a 3D figurine from photographs. The 3D modeller's response was discouraging. This incident, coupled with my involvement in animation, crystallized an idea that had been brewing in my mind. In another incident, when, upon my request, a seasoned 3D sculptor managed to create a 3D model from a 2D photograph, investing over 70 hours to achieve only 60% accuracy, it confirmed the massive potential of my idea to drastically enhance the time and cost efficiency of 3D modelling by using artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML).

Harsha P Deka

MY3DMETA

The Evolution

While my concept held immense potential, fulfilling it demanded a substantial dataset to train ML models effectively. It meant that I had to first create a huge number of 3D models and feed the data into the machine. However, the time investment of 70 hours for every 3D model creation posed a huge scalability challenge. In 2016, in my ardent drive to establish a scalable approach, I started My3DSelfie to build the database. Realizing the exorbitant cost associated with generating numerous 3D models for dataset collection, I started selling 3D figurines. And thus began the rise of My3DSelfie as the world's first company to craft fully personalised, full-body 3D figurines just from photographs.

However, the idea of building a breakthrough product without benefitting my country and the people of my state left me unsatisfied. Hence, in 2019, I decided to come back to India and my hometown, Guwahati. However, this decision exposed the challenges of rebuilding industry connections, cultivating investor relationships and mastering startup operations in my nation. Fortunately, my return coincided with the launch of Assam Startup – the nest.





MY3DMETA

Assam Startup and the Springboard for a Globally acknowledged Startup



Assam Startup has played a pivotal role in shaping our startup's trajectory. The ecosystem it offered, along with the resources, seemed like a perfect fit for our business growth. The networking and collaboration opportunities it held before me are unparalleled.

Assam Startup introduced me to grant opportunities by awarding Rs.15 lakhs under the MASI scheme of the Government of Assam. After four years of bootstrapping, we secured an inaugural funding round of Rs.50 lakhs from IIM Calcutta Innovation Park. This infusion of funds marked a significant milestone and propelled our startup's expansion, ushering us into the next growth phase. Incubation under Assam Startup opened the doors to new opportunities. We went on to raise a series of funding from NEVF, AccelNest, The Chennai Angels and STPI, taking the tally to Rs. 20 Crores.

In 2022, after nearly a decade, my vision came to fruition as My3DSelfie evolved into My3DMeta, developing a proprietary AI/ML solution for the creation of advanced 3D avatars and characters for metaverse, gaming and animation at strikingly reduced time, cost and effort.

Our platform, 3DAiLY, witnessed a worldwide launch recently. And we have inked commercial partnerships and PoCs with Sony, InMobi, Samsung, MetaSky, Metasimz, Epoch Gaming and CRED, as well as earned exclusive licenses for Prabhu Deva, Mohan Babu, Bob Ross and Charlie Chaplin.

Today, I confidently assert that just as Canva transformed 2D, My3DMeta is set to do the same for 3D.

Sprengal
Food Technologies Pvt Ltd

SPRENGAL FOOD TECHNOLOGIES

From Dreams to Dumplings: A Remarkable Journey of Empowerment

A food-tech startup carving a niche for its variegated range of momos and a smart business model. While the momos are prepared centrally in an FSSAI-regulated kitchen following stringent quality control measures, they are sold through 3 franchise outlets, 5 let-out kiosks and 2 company-owned outlets in Guwahati.



Founding Year
2020

Founders
Shahrukh Zaman Siddiki
& Rezaul Karim Chowdhury

A View through the Founder's Eyes

Sprengal
Food Technologies Pvt Ltd



Hello, I am Shahrukh Zaman Siddiki – the bedlamite who dropped out of college to chase his entrepreneurial dreams.

Once a dedicated student of chemical engineering, my journey took a pivotal turn when I unearthed my true aspiration—to become an entrepreneur. Fortunately, I wasn't alone in this pursuit. My friend, Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, shared the same fervent passion. But entrepreneurship was a dangerous dive to make. Following months of uncertainty and trepidation, we finally decided to take the big plunge. We took the audacious decision to drop out of college and chase our entrepreneurial dreams.

As we explored potential opportunities, our eyes opened to problems impeding the seamless operation of the restaurant businesses. We found that while nearly 30% of working individuals and business owners aspired to launch their own food ventures, a staggering 90% of these establishments shut down within a mere five-year span. The major reasons are the absence of structured processes and chef dependency, among others. The realisation set our creative wheels in motion. We pondered if a solution could be forged for restaurants—a method to curtail losses, ensure sustainability and boost Return on Investments—all while maintaining impeccable food quality and stringent hygiene standards.

Shahrukh Zaman Siddiki

Sprengal
Food Technologies Pvt Ltd

The Evolution

In 2017, we embarked on a journey to revolutionise food production through a centralised spoke system and create a super smooth supply chain. Our focus initially was on biryani, and that's how "Biryani Hotspot" was born. Our biryani venture received a fantastic response from customers, but it quickly became clear that crafting the perfect biryani involved juggling around 80 different ingredients and setting up the right infrastructure.

After incorporating our company in 2020, however, we had to shut down "Biryani Hotspot" due to the pandemic. But like everything else, the pandemic came to an end and things got back to normal. This time, we decided to expand our food offerings beyond biryani to encompass a range of items such as momos, burgers and other street-style snacks, and rebranded it as "Food Hotspot". Although we were in tune with the business, we realized there was a missing piece – a guide who could help us see the bigger picture and navigate toward building a sustainable enterprise. We found the missing piece of the puzzle at Assam Startup.





Rezaul Karim Chowdhury

Sprengal
Food Technologies Pvt Ltd

Assam Startup and the Winds of Change



Assam Startup has been the guiding light we had been looking for. While affording office space was a challenge in the initial days, Assam Startup's co-working space spared us from the hefty rent payments. It has also been instrumental in connecting us to a valuable industry network.

The mentors from IIM Calcutta Innovation Park have helped us immensely in spotting the gaps in our business and steering us toward the most profitable options. It was at the suggestion of the mentors that we decided to narrow down our menu and go all in on creating an exclusive momo brand, "Darjeeling Momos".

In our efforts to build a sustainable venture, we put our bet on a franchise model that allowed individuals to sell our quality-controlled momo from our centralised kitchen through their outlets. While innovation was our core, we also wanted to create a social impact. Guided by the mentors, we started focussing on promoting micro-entrepreneurship as a means of livelihood for the underprivileged, including men, women and people with disabilities. The "Darjeeling Momos on Wheels" was introduced as a result, providing branded kiosks and Darjeeling Momos to micro-entrepreneurs for selling at designated hotspots in Guwahati.

Today, I take immense pride in saying that we have employed 60 individuals in our centralised kitchen and 2 retail outlets, and created livelihood opportunities for 200 micro-entrepreneurs through the 3 franchise outlets and 5 kiosks in Guwahati. And we will be creating a similar impact in other towns of Assam as we are eyeing an expansion soon.

chfmart®

TGG TECHNOLOGIES

Redefining Hospitality Procurement, One Click at a Time

A one-stop platform for hotels and restaurants to acquire wholesale provisions at competitive rates. Eliminating the frustrations of extended waiting periods, disorganized billing, absent invoices, obsolete offers and sudden order cancellations, this platform has emerged as an invaluable aid to more than 350 restaurants, enhancing the culinary landscape across the region.



Founding Year	Founders
2020	Maninder Kalsi & Kavita Verma

A View through the Founder's Eyes



Hello, my name is Maninder Kalsi – an entrepreneur by head, heart and profession.

Before the pandemic, my life revolved around running my bustling restaurant, "Three Guys", in Guwahati. I, along with my wife, Kavita Verma, embarked on a culinary adventure, serving delectable dishes and creating memorable experiences. But amidst the culinary excitement, a realisation struck us like a lightning bolt - the procurement process in the HoReCa (hotel/restaurant/catering) industry was far from efficient. As restaurateurs, the juggling between multiple vendors for various supplies, each with its own pricing, quality and reliability, left us yearning for a better solution. Little did we anticipate that this challenging phase would transform us into problem solvers. We started mulling over the possibility of creating a digital platform that would streamline the procurement process, foster transparency and redefine the way hotels and restaurants sourced their essentials. Our personal pain points marked the seeding of TGG Technologies.

Maninder Kalsi

chfmart®

The Evolution

In March 2020, my spouse and I initiated the development of the much-contemplated platform. In a span of two months, we formally registered our company, TGG Technologies, and started developing the platform's backend. In 2021, our efforts came to fruition with the launch of Chfmart, an all-in-one online procurement platform for HoReCa.

ChfMart's launch was met with resounding success, amassing a revenue of Rs. 1.5 crores in its first year itself. The traction was a clear indicator that we were addressing a critical pain point in the industry. Our second year was even more exhilarating, as ChfMart' sannual revenue soared to an impressive Rs. 4.2 crores. The recognition and trust we earned from the hospitality community were immensely gratifying.



Kavita Verma



chfmart

Assam Startup and the Growth Catalyst



Incubation under Assam Startup has been a game-changer for us. It's the collective wisdom and insights of our mentors that has helped us crystallise our vision and navigate the complex terrain of the business world.

The mentorship sessions were invaluable, offering us the opportunity to bounce off ideas, seek guidance on strategic decisions and refine our business model. The interactions with seasoned industry experts and mentors from IIM Calcutta Innovation Park not only expanded our knowledge but also instilled a deep sense of confidence in our venture's potential.

Further, the network and connections gained through Assam Startup have been instrumental in shaping our trajectory. Collaborations, partnerships and business opportunities have blossomed from these connections.

Thanks to Assam Startup, we have been able to raise Rs.1.45 crores. This includes a seed investment of Rs.1 crore from NEDFi Venture Capital Limited (NVCL), along with grants amounting to Rs. 25 lakhs from the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS) through IIM Calcutta Innovation Park, and an additional Rs.20 lakhs MASI grant from the Government of Assam. With the capital infusion, we are on the brink of introducing ChfBook – a comprehensive platform designed to centralize restaurant management.

Assam Startup has been the cornerstone of our success. It has transformed our startup from a fledgling idea into a thriving enterprise, empowering us to overcome challenges, seize opportunities and leave an indelible mark on the hospitality procurement landscape.

THE TEA LEAF THEORY (WOOLAH TEA)

Sip Beyond Ordinary: Discover TrueDips, Unveil Happiness

Innovator of the world's first bagless tea dips – Truedips – using its patent -pending technology, striving to create the happiest tea experience and the happiest value chain in the world of tea. Unbroken tea leaves from the small tea gardens of Assam are compressed and crafted into exotic TrueDips, leaving no trace of plastics found in regular tea bags.

Founding Year
2016

Founders
Upamanyu Borkotoky & Anshuman Bharali



A View through the Founder's Eyes



You must have heard stories of engineers becoming entrepreneurs. But mine is a twisted tale of an adolescent's passion for engineering yielding to fate and leading him to Delhi University to pursue Commerce.

Hello, my name is Upamanyu Borkotoky – a once aspiring engineer turned entrepreneur.

On completing my postgraduation from Delhi University, I embarked on a 6-year corporate journey in New Delhi before returning to my hometown, Sivasagar (Assam). My return wasn't a mere retreat. It was a strategic move to gather experiences that would fuel my entrepreneurial aspirations, nurtured since my days in Delhi.

Destiny reunited me with my childhood friend, Anshuman Bharali, who was navigating a similar phase. Together, we initiated our optical lens manufacturing venture, which couldn't see much success. But we didn't lose heart. Recalling a moment in New Delhi that highlighted the exceptional quality of Assam's organic green tea compared to tea bags, I recognised the vast potential within the tea industry. A voice from within said: "Go for it! That's your calling!"

Upamanyu Borkotoky

The Evolution



After spending a year researching the tea industry we started our second venture, The Tea Leaf Theory, in 2016. It's a B2B platform facilitating the direct purchase and delivery of tea from small organic tea growers in Assam and Darjeeling.

We went a step ahead and started experimenting with organic production methods. Our tea gained traction, particularly within tea boutiques. But we aimed for wider recognition and sustainability. Just then we came across a report that said that one single tea bag releases 11.6 billion microplastics in a cup. Will you judge me if I say that we found our inspiration in that shocking discovery?

We set out to create a sustainable alternative that not only eliminates microplastics but also replaces tea-dust-filled bags with quintessential flavours. While the world was trying to create organic tea bags, we were fixated on creating a bagless alternative. Finally, after a year and a half of R&D, we created the world's first bagless tea dips – Truedips. This propelled the launch of our brand, “Woolah”, meaning happiness in Assamese.

‘Woolah’ alludes to our happiest value chain, providing organic micro-tea-growers, tea workers and packaging specialists with gainful earning sources. We procure fresh green leaves at 3X the price offered by inorganic tea manufacturers. Further, recognizing women’s proficiency in handwork, we endeavored to help them turn their skillset into a profitable activity by engaging them in our factory, ensuring they earn a minimum of Rs. 300 daily, surpassing industry norms.

We were confident about Truedips' commercial potential. We didn’t want to leave any loophole. We wanted to learn everything about the functioning of a startup, especially the game of valuation and funding. Our hunger to learn took us to Assam Startup.

Assam Startup and the Learning Curve

Assam Startup became our catalyst, fostering the scaling potential for Woolah Tea.

While we were already clocking good revenue, our selection at Assam Startup not only enhanced our financial standing but also established us as a prominent startup across the entire nation. The bootcamps held in the presence of prominent industry experts helped us analyse the loopholes in our business. We didn't just get connected to investors but were taught the dos and don'ts while pitching before investors. We went on to raise Rs. 2 crores from the Mumbai-based Gangwal Group.

The connections provided by Assam Startup for various exhibitions, including the EXPO 2020 Dubai, have garnered us much-needed visibility and recognition. And the community of startups we have got connected to remains priceless.

Today, we are raring to expand the markets to the US, Europe and the Middle East and we proudly boast of the 150 rural women who handcraft the Truedips with great love.

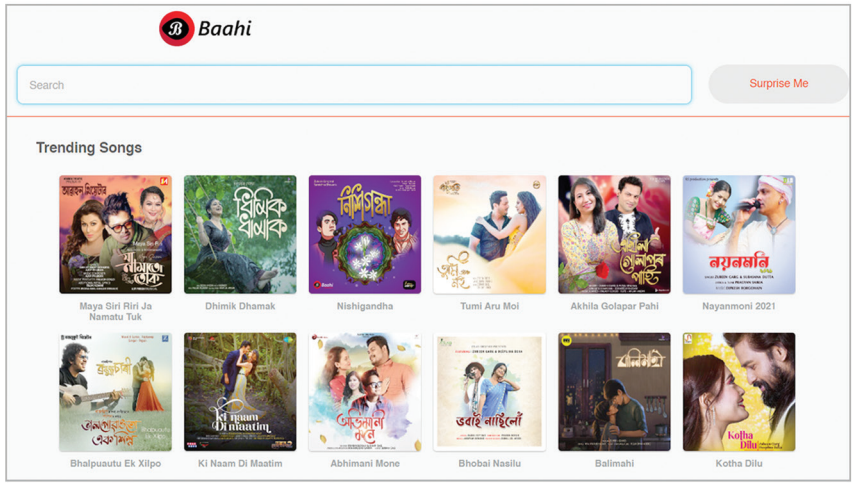


Anshuman Bharali

XOMOY INNOVATIVES

Amplifying the Melodies of Northeast India with Innovative Technology

Northeast India's first music streaming platform promoting regional music. With over 20,000 songs, 8000 artists and 500 record labels on board, the listeners are spoilt for choice.





Founding Year

2021

Founders

Mrinmoy Kumar, Biswajit Baruah, Krishanu Kashyap and Rittiz Dutta

A View through the Founder's Eyes



Hello, my name is Mrinmoy Kumar - an aspiring civil servant turned into an ambitious entrepreneur determined to take the music of Northeast India to every corner of the country.

I have always loved grooving to good music and sharing my playlist with others. While doing my B. Tech from Odisha, I was shocked and saddened to realise the limited availability of Assamese classics and other regional songs on the internet. It made me ponder upon the possibility of building a digital platform that provided easy access to the vibrant range of songs from Assam. As a computer engineer, though I had the basic knowledge of building such a platform, my dream lay in cracking civil services. It was, however, during my final year of engineering that I made up my mind to build the platform, leaving behind my civil services aspirations. This decision laid the foundation for Xomoy Innovatives.

Mrinmoy Kumar

Baahi

The Evolution

In 2019, I got three of my friends, Biswajit Baruah, Krishanu Kashyap and Rittiz Dutta, on board and started working on the prototype. It was also the perfect time to incorporate our company, “Xomoy Innovatives.” Finally, in 2020, following a number of iterations, we launched the MVP of Assam’s first exclusive music streaming platform – BAAHI. And we incorporated our company, Xomoy Innovatives, in 2021.

Our mission was clear: preserving and promoting Assam’s classic and modern regional music. But it was the content procurement and statutory license issues that confounded us. While we learned the process of buying rights from distributors and record labels, it demanded significantly large spending. This and server maintenance efforts got us reeling under capital constraints in the initial days.



Founders of Xomoy Innovatives

Baahi

Assam Startup and the Winds of Change

Assam Startup came as an anchor at a time when we were struggling to navigate the rough waves in our business.

While the capacity-building bootcamps opened our eyes to the multiple nuances of doing a startup business, the mentor assigned to us from IIM Calcutta Innovation Park has brought us a breath of respite with his compassionate handholding. His guidance has not just helped us build our business model, but also develop a viable Go-To-Market Strategy. The mentor's help in creating the pitch deck was crucial in leading us to successfully securing grants from STPI and NRL (iDEATION).

Thanks to the funds received, we could increase our spending on marketing. Incubation under Assam Startup has made us realise the importance of putting equal efforts into customer retention as much as in customer acquisition. Hence, we have started dedicating our efforts to studying recommendation engines and user behaviour. As a result, we have been able to increase our subscribers to two lakhs, a lion's share of which came in the last 6 months.

Today, BAAHI isn't only a music streaming platform, but also a catalyst supporting emerging artists by producing originals under the music production banner, "BAAHI Originals".

From a state of dilemma, we have reached a stage of clarity and definite directions. In the next year or two, we aim to expand to three new states in Northeast India and we now know how to do it.





ZERUND

ZERUND MANUFACTURING

Redefining Constructions with Carbon-Negative Bricks for a Better Tomorrow

A prop-tech startup using its proprietary technology to manufacture carbon-negative, lightweight, plastic-embedded bricks that save 15-20% of the cost and provide high tensile strength, insulation and earthquake resistance. It manufactures approximately 25 lakhs plastic-embedded bricks annually and has footprints in Northeast India, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Bhutan.

Founding Year
2018

Founders
David Gogoi, Rupam Choudhury & Mousam Talukdar





A View through the Founder's Eyes

ZERUND



Hello, my name is David Gogoi – an engineer and an outrageous dreamer, striving for a space among the largest brick manufacturers of India.

Back in 2017, as an engineering student, when I collaborated with my batchmates, Rupam Choudhury and Mousam Talukdar, on a semester project, I harboured a dream to make it big but had no concrete plan in place. By luck, combined with untiring research and the urge to create a promising project, we fell upon a voila moment when we accomplished innovating a sustainable brick-making process using plastic waste, cement, fly ash and organic chemicals. Our college project shaped up well. But we realized our innovation could do much more than just fetch us good marks. Our innovation had the potential to take the nation by storm. This realisation laid the foundation of our big dream. We called our dream Zerund Bricks.

David Gogoi

ZERUND

The Evolution

Fresh out of college, we incorporated Zerund Manufacturing in 2018, backed by certifications from the National Test House, the Public Works Department and our alma mater the Assam Engineering College.

Banking on a pre-seed capital of Rs. 20 lakhs committed by a local angel investor, we decided to get a fully-equipped plant on lease near Guwahati and started production immediately. Within seven months of inception, we were able to sell bricks worth Rs. 32 lakhs. But while the figures looked rosy, we were no exceptions to the struggles that every startup founder goes through in the initial days. The demand for Zerund bricks exceeded our capacity to deliver. We struggled with the stock maintenance. We were burning more cash than we wanted. We desperately wished for some structured support to help us dismantle the early roadblocks. Our quest took us to Assam Startup.





Founders of Zerund

ZERUND

Assam Startup and the Building Blocks of Progress

Our selection for incubation at Assam Startup marked the beginning of all good things for Zerund. Hardly three months after the onboarding, IIM Calcutta Innovation Park selected us for its NIDHI EiR Fellowship, which entitled us to a monthly fellowship grant of Rs. 30,000 for a year. The Fellowship was a huge motivation that also took care of our sustenance. Further, the MASI grant of Rs.15 Lakhs by the Government of Assam was especially life-saving during COVID-19.

We were engineers trying to be entrepreneurs without enough business knowledge in our kit. To be able to receive guidance from the best-in-class mentors sitting in Guwahati was something we had never imagined. Assam Startup didn't just help us understand the intricacies of fundraising and fund management but also connected us with well-known venture capitalists. The exposure received at Assam Startup powered us with knowledge and confidence to raise capital from renowned institutions like NEDFi, NRL, Gruhas Proptech, DLF Family Office, Anthill Ventures and Villgro, taking our funding tally to Rs.11.5 crores.

Having opened two more manufacturing units, each at Pathsala (Assam) and Mumbai, our next milestone is to become the largest brick manufacturer in the Eastern zone of the country. Assam Startup helped us pick up our pace. And now that we have started to run, we aren't going to stop for a second, even to celebrate our success.



#assamstartup

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