

Atal Innovation Mission Spearheads India's Frontier Innovation Push at Regional AIM SUMVAAD-North East Chapter 2026

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As India's Northeast emerges as one of the most strategically significant frontiers in the nation's innovation landscape, Regional AIM SUMVAAD–North East Chapter 2026, organised by Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog, brought together policymakers, state governments, industry leaders, academia, incubators and startup ecosystem enablers in Guwahati, Assam, to chart a collaborative roadmap for innovation-led growth across the eight Northeastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.

The conclave assumed particular significance as the Northeast continues to emerge as India's gateway to Southeast Asia and a region endowed with rich biodiversity, vibrant cultural heritage, bamboo resources, traditional crafts and a rapidly growing entrepreneurial ecosystem. Recognising these unique strengths, AIM's regional engagement reaffirmed the region's position as a key driver of India's next phase of innovation-led growth and an indispensable contributor to the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

The inaugural session was graced by Dr. Joram Aniya, Member, NITI Aayog, as the Chief Guest, alongside the Commissioner & Secretary, Government of Assam, who delivered the Special Address. In her address, Dr. Aniya reiterated the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of the Northeast as "Ashta Lakshmi"—eight states, each possessing unique strengths and immense potential to contribute to India's growth story. She highlighted the unprecedented national focus on the region, reflected in NITI Aayog's sustained engagement with all eight Chief Ministers and the significant investments made towards infrastructure, connectivity and economic development. Emphasising the transformative impact of the "Act East to Act Fast" approach, she noted that the Northeast today stands at the centre of India's development agenda and is poised to become a global hub for innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainable growth.

Welcoming the participants, Sumit Gakhar, Head (Finance), Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, underscored AIM's commitment to strengthening collaboration between state governments, innovation institutions, incubators and ecosystem stakeholders to unlock the region's innovation potential.

Mission Director, Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, Deepak Bagla, said, *"The Hon'ble Prime Minister has described the Northeast as Ashta Lakshmi- a region whose immense talent, cultural richness, natural resources and entrepreneurial spirit will play a defining role in India's journey towards Viksit Bharat @2047. At Atal Innovation Mission, we are working to transform this vision into opportunity by nurturing innovators, strengthening incubation ecosystems, and enabling young entrepreneurs to build solutions from the Northeast for India and the world. When innovation is rooted in local strengths and powered by Sabka Prayas, the Northeast will not only participate in India's growth story, it will help lead it."*

"The conclave witnessed active participation from representatives of all eight North Eastern State Councils, alongside the Department of Science and Technology (DST), the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Atal Incubation Centres (AICs), and Atal Community Innovation Centres (ACICs), during a roundtable discussion on "Mobilizing the Innovation Ecosystem Stakeholders in the Region." The discussions reflected the growing momentum behind collaborative innovation and reinforced the importance of aligning national initiatives with regional aspirations.

The day-long programme featured dedicated sessions on state innovation initiatives and thematic discussions centred on sectors where the Northeast holds distinctive competitive advantages. Dr. Tilak Chandra Bhuyan, Senior Scientist & Consultant, North East Cane and Bamboo Development Council (NECBDC), shared insights on commercialising bamboo and bio-resource value chains. Minha Riyaz Khan, Project Lead, PRIME Meghalaya, MBMA, highlighted opportunities in technology-enabled sustainable eco-tourism, while Dr. Sriparna Bhuyan Baruah, Director, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, Royal Global University, Co-founder, Margdarshak Advisory, and former Advisor, NEHHDC, deliberated on strengthening grassroots livelihoods through innovation in traditional handloom and handicraft clusters.

Strengthening the region's incubation ecosystem formed another key focus of the conclave. A panel moderated by Rachita Misra, Associate Director, AIC-Selco Foundation, brought together Col. Prabir Sengupta, Group CEO, IIT Guwahati; Roshan Farhan, Founder & CEO, MyriadAI and Gobillion; Moirangthem Seth, Founder & Managing Director, SNL Energy Solutions; and Prateek Deshmukh, Program Lead, Atal Innovation Mission, to discuss strategies for building resilient incubation ecosystems capable of supporting startups from ideation to scale.

Another panel, moderated by Dr. Tej Chingtham, CEO, AIC SMU TBI, explored pathways for unlocking finance, corporate partnerships and market linkages for startups across the Northeast. The discussion featured Ashish Agarwal, Senior Vice President-II & Head, New Economy Group, HDFC Bank; Pranta Pratim Singha, Head, Corporate Planning & Strategy, Numaligarh Refinery Limited; Siddhartha P. Lahkar, Manager, NEDFi; and Kautilya Basumatary, General Manager, Tata Foundation, Centre for Microfinance and Livelihood, who deliberated on strengthening the financial and institutional support ecosystem for emerging entrepreneurs in the region.

The programme concluded with a session on building resilient innovation ecosystems for enterprises and local development, moderated by Rachita Misra, featuring Fazle Illahi, Founder & CEO, ERES, and Seyielezo Putsure, Founder & Director, EduCentre, followed by a Vote of Thanks delivered by Prateek Deshmukh, Program Director, Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog.

Following successful engagements across the North, South, Central and East regions, Regional AIM SUMVAAD–North East Chapter 2026 marked one of the most strategically significant chapters of the SUMVAAD series. By bringing together policymakers, state governments, incubators, industry leaders, investors, academia and entrepreneurs on a common platform, the conclave reinforced Atal Innovation Mission's commitment to building an inclusive innovation ecosystem that reaches every corner of the country. Anchored in the unique strengths of the Northeast and driven by collaboration, innovation and entrepreneurship, the initiative reaffirmed the region's growing role in shaping India's journey towards Viksit Bharat @2047.



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