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Mission Golden Spice: Lakadong Turmeric

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Mission Golden Spice: Lakadong Turmeric

A turmeric grown on a few Meghalaya hillsides has nearly four times the world's average curcumin content. The government now wants it sold as a global luxury spice.

At a Glance

Four facts to hold on to.

01
7–10%

Curcumin in Lakadong, against 2–3% world average.

02
₹175.45 crore

Outlay of Mission Golden Spice.

03
21 July 2026

Mission launched.

04
₹80/kg

Farmer-price target, up from ₹30–40.

Lakadong Turmeric from Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya.
Curcumin The compound that gives turmeric its colour and potency.
MDoNER Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region.
Ashtalakshmi One flagship product per northeastern State.

Chapter 1: The Spice and the Mission

Must Know

What Lakadong turmeric is

- It is grown in Meghalaya's Jaintia Hills, centred on Lakadong village.
- Its curcumin content runs 7–10%, against a world average of roughly 2–3%.
- That makes it one of the most potent turmeric varieties known.

GI tag and the person behind it

- It received India's Geographical Indication (GI) tag, registered on 30 March 2024.
- This was Meghalaya's first turmeric GI.
- Agriculturist Trinity Saioo, a former school teacher, led the farmer movement behind its revival.
- She received a Padma Shri in 2021 for this work.

Mission Golden Spice

- On 21 July 2026, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma launched Mission Golden Spice.
- Its full name is the Integrated Lakadong Turmeric Value Chain Enhancement Project.
- It has a ₹175.45 crore outlay.
- It is anchored by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) and the North Eastern Council.
- It runs on a 5-year roadmap, 2025 to 2030, in two phases: Value Chain Strengthening, then Expansion and Scale-up.

The Ashtalakshmi approach

- The Mission is part of the “Ashtalakshmi” approach.
- Each of the eight northeastern States gets one flagship product, built into a global brand.
- Lakadong turmeric is Meghalaya’s.

Remember: Lakadong = Meghalaya. Curcumin 7–10%. GI: 30 March 2024. Mission: 21 July 2026, ₹175.45 crore.

> **Quick check 1.** Lakadong turmeric’s curcumin content is far above the world average for turmeric. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Chapter 2: Targets and Gaps

Good to Know

Income goal

- Farmers earn about ₹30–40 a kilo now.
- The Mission aims to raise this to nearly ₹80 a kilo by 2030.

Area and agencies

- The cultivated area is targeted to grow from around 2,500 hectares to nearly 7,500 hectares.
- The Mission converges with APEDA, the Spices Board, the National Turmeric Board, ICAR, NABARD and the Government of Meghalaya.

Processing

- It plans to build the northeast’s largest integrated organic turmeric processing and curcumin-extraction facility.

Gaps it targets

- Post-harvest losses.
- Missing cold-chain infrastructure.
- Weak branding.
- No structured system to earn money from the GI tag itself.

Women at the centre

- Women are described as the crop's "true custodians".
- The Mission places them at the centre of its farmer institutions and enterprises.

> **Quick check 2.** Lakadong turmeric is grown in Odisha's Kandhamal district. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Chapter 3: Soil, Brand and Market

Great to Know

Curcumin is tied to local soil

- Lakadong's high curcumin is closely tied to its soil and climate.
- Meghalaya's Chief Minister has noted that saplings grown outside the State consistently show lower curcumin levels.

Showcased abroad

- Prime Minister Modi recently showcased Lakadong turmeric at the G7 Summit, and drew interest from world leaders.
- Mission Golden Spice is meant to help the crop meet that global demand at scale.
- Turmeric is one of many region-specific Indian spices. See Spice Cultivation in India.

From name to income

- A GI tag alone only protects a name.
- Turning that protection into farmer income needs processing, branding and market access.
- This Mission funds all three.
- See Geographical Indications (GI) Tags in India for the full GI framework.

Exam Edge

Previous Year Questions

Do not mix up two GI-tagged turmerics, or quality with volume.

Chapter 4: Current Affairs

Great to Know

Launch, 21 July 2026

- Scindia launched Mission Golden Spice alongside Sangma. (Source: PIB)
- Scindia said the curcumin content is nearly four times the world average. He highlighted the role of women in production and processing. (Source: PIB)
- The goal is to nearly double farmer income, from ₹30–40 to close to ₹80 a kilo by 2030, and to triple the cultivated area. (Source: PIB)
- MDoNER Secretary Nivedita Shukla Verma said the Mission would address post-harvest losses, weak processing infrastructure and the lack of a system to monetise the GI tag. (Source: PIB)

> **Think it through: Why is a GI tag not enough on its own?**
>
> It protects the name. It does not process, pack or sell the spice. Farmers earn only when the value chain works.

Quick Q&A

Where is Lakadong grown?

Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya.

Curcumin content?

7–10%.

GI registered on?

30 March 2024.

Mission outlay?

₹175.45 crore.

Who led the revival?

Trinity Saioo, Padma Shri 2021.

Practice: Mission Golden Spice

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Geographical Indications (GI) Tags in India

Practice MCQs

1. Lakadong turmeric, prized for its exceptionally high curcumin content, is grown mainly in which Indian state?

A. Tamil Nadu

B. Odisha

C. Kerala

D. Meghalaya

See answer ↓

2. Which agriculturist received a Padma Shri in 2021 for promoting Lakadong turmeric farming among Meghalaya's farmers?

A. Trinity Saioo

B. Jyotiraditya Scindia

C. Conrad Sangma

D. Nivedita Shukla Verma

See answer ↓

3. On what date was Lakadong Turmeric formally registered with India's Geographical Indication (GI) tag?

A. 2021

B. 30 March 2024

C. 4 September 2009

D. 21 July 2026

See answer ↓

4. Mission Golden Spice, launched on 21 July 2026 with a ₹175.45 crore outlay, aims to raise Lakadong turmeric farmers' income from ₹30-40 a kilo to roughly what figure by 2030?

A. ₹50 a kilo

B. ₹175 a kilo

C. ₹120 a kilo

D. ₹80 a kilo

See answer ↓

5. Consider the following statements about turmeric during the year 2022–23:

I. India is the largest producer and exporter of turmeric in the world.

II. More than 30 varieties of turmeric are grown in India.

III. Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are major turmeric producing States in India.

Which of the statements given above are correct? (UPSC CSP 2025, GS Paper I)

A. I and II only

B. II and III only

C. I and III only

D. I, II and III

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **D.** It is centred on the Jaintia Hills, especially Lakadong village and its neighbouring areas. ↑ Q1
2. **A.** A former school teacher, she led the farmer movement behind the crop's revival, well before its GI tag or the new Mission. ↑ Q2
3. **B.** This made it Meghalaya's first turmeric GI, and the state's third GI tag overall. ↑ Q3
4. **D.** The Mission also aims to nearly triple the area under cultivation, from about 2,500 to 7,500 hectares. ↑ Q4
5. **D.** The correct answer is I, II and III. India is the world's largest turmeric producer and exporter, growing over 30 varieties, mainly across Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu. ↑ Q5

Quick-check answers

1. **True.** ↑ 1
2. **False.** ↑ 2

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