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Mission Golden Spice: A Value Chain for Lakadong Turmeric

22 July 2026 ·

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Mission Golden Spice: A Value Chain for Lakadong Turmeric

22 July 2026 · 4 min read ·

✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

On , the Union Minister for Development of the North Eastern Region (**DoNER**), **Jyotiraditya Scindia**, along with Meghalaya Chief Minister **Conrad Sangma**, launched **Mission Golden Spice**, a **Rs 175.45 crore, five-year (2025-30)** mission to build a global, GI-tagged value chain for **Lakadong turmeric**.

THE SPICE AT THE CENTRE

Lakadong turmeric, grown in the **Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya**, is prized worldwide for its exceptional quality. It is **Geographical Indication (GI) tagged** and carries one of the highest **curcumin** contents of any turmeric on earth, ranging from about **7 to 12 per cent**, compared with the 2 to 3 per cent typical of ordinary varieties. Curcumin is the bioactive compound that gives turmeric its colour and its medicinal and nutraceutical value, making Lakadong a natural candidate for premium global markets.

WHAT THE MISSION AIMS TO DO

Mission Golden Spice is designed to move Lakadong turmeric up the value chain, from a raw farm commodity to a branded, processed, export-ready product. Its key features are set out below.

FEATURE	DETAIL
Outlay	Rs 175.45 crore
Duration	Five years (2025-30)
Implementing ministry	Ministry of DoNER
Phases	Phase 1: value-chain strengthening; Phase 2: expansion
Area target	Expand cultivated area to about 7,000 hectares (from around 2,500 hectares)
Beneficiaries	17,500-plus farming households
Women participation	About 99 per cent in processing

A Two-Phase Design

The mission runs in **two phases**. The **first phase** concentrates on strengthening the existing value chain, improving cultivation practices, post-harvest handling, grading and processing infrastructure. The **second phase** focuses on expansion, scaling up cultivated area and deepening market linkages so that Meghalaya's farmers can command premium prices in domestic and export markets.

WOMEN AT THE CORE

A striking feature of the mission is its **mandate** for about **99 per cent women participation in processing**. This channels the initiative through **women-led Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)** and community enterprises, embedding gender empowerment into the economics of the spice trade. By placing processing and value addition in the hands of women, the mission aims to keep a larger share of the final price within local households rather than with distant traders.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR UPSC AND DEVELOPMENT

Mission Golden Spice is a compact case study in **GI-led premiumisation** of Indian agriculture. Several themes converge:

- **GI system as a development tool.** The GI tag protects the identity of Lakadong turmeric and lets producers capture a premium, showing how intellectual property can drive rural incomes.
- **Agri value chains.** The mission moves farmers beyond raw production into processing, branding and exports, the classic route to higher farm incomes.
- **North-East development.** It advances the government's focus on the North Eastern Region as a growth frontier, using a local strength rather than transplanted models.
- **Nutraceutical and spice exports.** High curcumin content positions Lakadong for the fast-growing global market in natural health products.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 3: Indian economy and agriculture; food processing and value addition; Farmer Producer Organisations; inclusive and regional development; the role of Geographical Indications in the economy.

Prelims pointers:

- **Lakadong turmeric** is from the **Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya** and is **GI-tagged**.
- Its **curcumin content** is about **7 to 12 per cent**, among the world's highest.
- **Mission Golden Spice:** outlay **Rs 175.45 crore**, duration **2025-30**, implemented by the **Ministry of DoNER**.

- Mandates about **99 per cent women participation** in processing and targets **17,500-plus** households.

★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGE PEDIA

A Geographical Indication (GI) identifies a product as originating from a specific place, where a given quality or reputation is essentially attributable to that origin; GIs in India are governed by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.

The first product to get a GI tag in India was Darjeeling Tea (2004-05).

The Ministry of DoNER was created to accelerate the socio-economic development of the eight North Eastern states.

Curcumin is the principal curcuminoid in turmeric, valued for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) aggregate small farmers to improve bargaining power, access to inputs, credit and markets.

Sources: Press Information Bureau, Ministry of DoNER, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, news reports on the launch of Mission Golden Spice (July 2026).

Source: Mission Golden Spice: A Value Chain for Lakadong Turmeric — Ujiyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

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