Haldi and Litchi Controversy

Why in news?

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Two stories have renewed discussions on **scientific rigour and ethics.** The stories were around haldi (turmeric) and litchi.

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What is the the Haldi controversy?

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- The substance that gives haldi its bright yellow hue is **curcumin.**
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- They have innumerable virtues like anti-inflammatory, anti-malarial, anti-cancer and, as a piggyback on nanofibres to regenerate bone tissues.
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- Recently, American scientists have debunked the medicinal value of curcumin in a reputed journal.
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- They concluded that there was no evidence regarding therapeutic benefits of curcumin and it is a waste of money on researching it to find a new drug.
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- Curcumin may not make for a classical drug going strictly by the tenets of medicinal chemistry, but it certainly qualifies as an **‘adjunct drug’** to treat some infectious diseases.
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- So, summarily dismissing curcumin research as wasteful would be like burying a lot of remarkable science around Haldi.
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What is the Litchi controversy?

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- Turns out, **eating Litchi and then not eating an evening meal, could be fatal.** It kills a lot of children in Muzaffarpur region of Bihar, the litchi capital of India.
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- Recently, a revelation was made in Lancet. Litchi fruits are laden with **naturally occurring toxins** like hypoglycin A and methylenecyclopropylglycine.
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- These could **trigger low glucose levels** and metabolic derangement among children. The toxins embedded in the fruit reverses all its inherent sugariness.
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- The dispute began when a set of scientists alleged that the Lancet study **did not follow a basic ethical practice in science** i.e., acknowledging similar previous findings.
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- It is called as ‘scientific misconduct’. Truly, the Lancet did swung into action to figure out what went wrong in this case.
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Source: Business Line

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