

# Herald Cafe



DID YOU KNOW?

- 1 Tirphal is sometimes called the 'lemon chilli' of India.
- 2 The Portuguese named it Limao Pimentose, meaning 'peppery lemon'.
- 3 The plant has cone-shaped spines, making it tricky to harvest.
- 4 Contains Sanshool, a natural anaesthetic that tingles the mouth.
- 5 The dried husks were once used as bullets in pipe guns.

FACTS AND FEATURES OF TIRPHAL

"The spice is obtained from a tree with cone-shaped spines on the stems (a deciduous shrub). Tirphal has become part of Konkani and Saraswat cuisines due to its unique flavour profile and availability in the region," said Maria D'Souza, a botany professor.

Tirphal, the native spice of India, grows along the western coastal belt where Konkani cuisine originated. It is botanically named *Zanthoxylum rhetsa*, as given by botanist de Condolle. The *Zanthoxylum* genus also includes the Sichuan pepper of China and the Japanese pepper.

Miguel Braganza, horticultural consultant said, "Tirphal was called Limao Pimentose by the Portuguese in

Goa because it has a combination of lemony and chilli flavours. The warrior Kodava tribe or Coorgi people of Karnataka also use Tirphal, possibly due to local influence. The Tirphal was also used as a bullet in the pipe-gun called fottas. The spice causes a burning sensation at the point of contact."

NUTRITIONAL AND HEALTH BENEFITS OF TIRPHAL

Not a mere flavouring agent, this spice is rich in nutrients and offers numerous health benefits. Dietician Dr Viveka Barros said, "Tirphal contains essential oils that stimulate salivation and gastric juice secretion, enhancing appetite and aiding digestion. Its mild numbing effect reduces gut irritation and eases bloating. It has been traditionally used to combat intestinal worms and cleanse the gut." According to her, Tirphal acts against harmful gut bacteria without disturbing beneficial microbes. It contains flavonoids and alkaloids that enhance blood circulation and help detoxify the liver and gut. "Traditionally used in steamed soups and meat broths to clear sinuses and reduce throat irritation during the monsoons and winters," she said.

Nutritionist Sheryl Alfonso added, "Its exact mechanism of action requires more research, but consuming Tirphal in curries or as a water extract will enhance immune cell activity and be anti-inflammatory."

UNIQUE FLAVOUR OF TIRPHAL

Tirphal has a distinctive and sharp flavour which tingles the tongue, lemony, slightly peppery, with a mild numbing effect. This unique flavour profile complements the flavours of seafood immensely, which are central to the Konkani cuisine. It enhances without overpowering, adding aroma and taste to every dish it touches.



Tirphal carries the weight of tradition, taste, and time-tested wisdom in every bite. It's not just a spice tossed into a pot, it's a signature of coastal identity, passed down through generations. Lending its zing to a monsoon curry and soothing the gut after a heavy meal, its role in Konkani cuisine is deep rooted. In an age where local ingredients are being rediscovered and valued for their cultural roots, Tirphal stands tall as a reminder that flavour can be deeply tied to generations of wellness and taste. As chefs, nutritionists, and home cooks alike continue to explore regional richness, Tirphal offers a perfect example of how one spice can reflect a region's culinary depth.

TIPS TO USE TIRPHAL (TEPPAL/TEFLA)

- By Dr Viveka Barros
- Always use teppal in moderation, 1 to 2 pods are enough for an entire dish.
- Crush or bruise the spice to release its oils, but avoid eating it directly; it can numb the tongue.
- Discard the spice before serving, especially in curries and stews.



CULINARY USES OF TIRPHAL

Tirphal is both a flavour enhancer and a traditional remedy. Renowned chefs highlight its role in balancing taste and aiding digestion across a range of regional dishes. Chef Saurabh Puri elaborates on the various dishes that use this magic ingredient, "It enhances the rich coconut-based Bangdyache Hooman (mackerel curry), Sardines Hooman and Sungtache Hooman (prawn curry), and even lends subtle flavour to Tallele Bangle (fried mackerel). Tirphal also shines in vegetarian and seasonal dishes like Bimbliche Tonak (bimbli curry), Alambe Tonak (wild mushroom curry), Karatechi Bhaji (bitter gourd stir-fry), and Kirlu Tonak (bamboo shoot curry), where it balances sour and earthy tastes."

Assavri Kulkarni, a heritage food chef, said, "Mackerel and certain other fish are high in mercury. Adding Tirphal to it helps balance the taste and makes it more palatable and easier to digest." According to her, this is one of the main ingredients in Uddamethi, Khatkhate, Saurak, and Teflagalun Dal as well. She said, "It is not ingested anyway, it is a flavouring agent, unlike kokum, which you can consume."



VENERATING THE SAINT OF MIRACLES



DISAPPEARING PLACES: EXPLORING INDIAN DESTINATIONS AT RISK DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

SWIPE RIGHT

Katy Perry ambushed by fan during Sydney concert

Pop star Katy Perry had an unexpected scare during her concert in Sydney when an overzealous fan stormed the stage mid-performance as she was performing her hit 'Hot N Cold'. In a video circulating on X, Perry is visibly startled as the fan jumps on stage and throws an arm around her. Perry quickly stepped away while the man continued dancing and even performed the Fortnite dance. Two security guards immediately intervened. The chaotic scene momentarily disrupted the show, but Perry turned the moment into a light-hearted one, telling the audience, "Well, there's never going to be another show like this. So just enjoy it, Sydney."



Jimin and Jungkook complete military service

BTS stars Jimin and Jungkook officially completed their 18-month mandatory military service on Wednesday, marking a heartfelt reunion with fans. The K-pop idols appeared in uniform at Yeoncheon, north of Seoul, where they posed and saluted a large crowd of supporters. The emotional moment was widely shared by ARMY, their fan group. Jimin, 29, expressed his thanks, saying, "It's been quite a long time since Covid-19 and then the military. Thank you so much for waiting." Jungkook, the youngest BTS member, admitted he felt shy returning to the spotlight, "I didn't even put on makeup," he joked. Both stars shared hopes of continuing their musical journey and thanked fans and fellow soldiers for their support.



Salman Khan's lean and toned transformation is turning heads online, sparking buzz and admiration. The 'Sikandar' actor recently appeared in a set of viral photos shared by his 'Race 3' co-star Saajan Singh, where he sports a fitter frame.

## FREDERICK FORSYTH - THE MASTER OF ESPIONAGE FICTION

Frederick Forsyth, author of *The Day of the Jackal*—widely regarded as one of the greatest spy thrillers of all time, has died after a brief illness. A British author and former journalist, he was best known for his gripping, meticulously researched spy and political novels, which continue to be appreciated in Goa as well

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**HEARTFELT TRIBUTES FROM AUTHORS**

Celebrated author Frederick Forsyth leaves behind a remarkable literary legacy, known for his gripping political thrillers and intricate storytelling. Renowned for thrillers like *'The Day of the Jackal'*, he has been honoured by several authors for his transformative impact on the genre. Author of over 20 books, his works have influenced generations of readers and writers alike across the world. The 86-year-old author died after a brief illness.

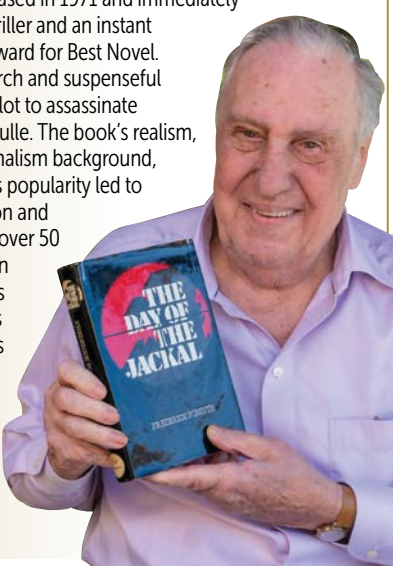
British writer of spy fiction and a screenwriter, Charles Cumming posted on social media, "When I was a young boy the only books in my father's house were three thrillers by Frederick Forsyth: *'The Fourth Protocol'*, *'The Fist of God'* and *'The Dogs of War'*. When I eventually joined the massed ranks of British spy novelists at the turn of the century, it was obvious that Forsyth

was a totemic figure. If Buchan and Fleming had pioneered the adrenalized adventure story, and Ambler and le Carré had demonstrated how those stories could also be novels of political and social authenticity, Forsyth single-handedly invented a kind of documentary realism rooted in authentic experience and matchless research. Shortly before the pandemic I was lucky enough to meet the great man. Based on public reputation I was expecting Forsyth to be a pompous reactionary bore, but nothing could have been further from the truth. It's been heartening to read the tributes following his death."

Gregg Hurwitz, an American novelist, screenwriter, and comic book writer, posted, "RIP Frederick Forsyth, one of our all-time great thriller writers. We had the honour of honouring him as the @internationalthrillerwriters Thrillermaster in 2022. His *Day of the Jackal* was a huge inspiration for my fourth Orphan X novel, *Out of the Dark*."

THE POPULARITY OF THE DAY OF THE JACKAL

*'The Day of the Jackal'* was released in 1971 and immediately became a landmark political thriller and an instant bestseller and won the Edgar Award for Best Novel. Praised for its meticulous research and suspenseful narrative, it follows a fictional plot to assassinate French President Charles de Gaulle. The book's realism, influenced by the author's journalism background, revolutionised the spy genre. Its popularity led to a successful 1973 film adaptation and global translations. Still in print over 50 years later, it remains a staple on "best thriller" lists and continues to influence writers and readers around the world. The book has been published in multiple languages, making Forsyth a household name worldwide. It also had a huge impact on modern thriller and espionage authors including Lee Child and Robert Harris.



FREDERICK FORSYTH'S INFLUENCE IN GOA

Goan writer, Cecil Pinto from Aldona is a fan of *'The Day of the Jackal'*, having read the book many years back. "I don't have the book that I read then but I have a copy of the book. I run an orphanage for pre-loved books in Aldona and I have thousands of novels. What I liked about Frederick Forsyth is the detailed descriptions, and how the story fitted into the historical events of that time," says Cecil.

At the Dogears Bookshop in Margao, readers especially those who love the political espionage and crime thriller genre always pick a book of Frederick Forsyth. He is very popular even in Goa for this very niche set of readers.

"Frederick Forsyth is credited for having reinvented the thriller/espionage genre. His book, *'The Day of the Jackal'*, published in 1971, was a taut

political thriller that redefined the genre. His other bestsellers include *'The Odessa File'*, *'The Dogs of War'*, *'The Devil's Alternative'*, and *'The Fourth Protocol'*. His books explored Cold War politics, international arms deals, and covert intelligence operations, and captured the geopolitical anxieties of their time with startling prescience," says Leonard Fernandes who co-founded The Dogears Bookshop in Margao.

Diviya Kapur, founder of Literati Bookshop, Calangute, has books by Frederick Forsyth but unfortunately never had the chance to have any of his books discussed at the monthly book discussions. "We didn't have any book discussions about his works in the past. His books were very old from the 70s and he gained popularity from the 80s onwards. The last novel of his which did quite well was *'The Afghan'* which is 2006 which is already 20 years back. His books were landmark books and books will always sell. The younger readers will not know him but the *'Day of the Jackal'* and *'The Odessa File'* were books that made him very popular," says Diviya.

