

Dudhsagar, an ocean of milk (specially in full flow), is a scenic postcard in the showcase of the verdant Sahyadris. But few people are aware and barely anyone dares to venture the region, where several 'dudhsagars' flow like so many streams.

Though the Dudhsagar, we all know about, has a mystique of its own and lies on a path well-trodden by tourists and picnickers, another region 40 kms to the north in Chorla ghats, where several 'seas of milk' cascade down into idyllic valleys, remains shelved in obscurity.

Though these eye-catching waterfalls dot the hills on the border areas of Goa as also Karnataka and Maharashtra, they are not only within driving distance but also have their doorway leading to this tiny state. And their luxuriant flow spills into Goa's lifeline—the Mandovi.

However, one can drive to a point where one can view the majestic cascades from a distance and they mostly lie in virgin and unexplored terrain. Hardly any research or documentation of the flora and fauna has been carried out, barring some work by environmentalists like Nirmal Kulkarni of Green Cross and Rajendra Kerkar of the Swami Vivekanand group, Querim.

While a row has erupted over the proposed diversion of the River Mhadei, the project would lead inexorably to the extinction of many of these scenic waterfalls ... unseen and unsung.

The flora and fauna they support, as life goes on quietly in the picturesque valley, will feel the shuddering impact of the horrendous drying up and incursion of saline waters if the project goes ahead.

The peaks and the tree cover attract heavy rainfall. And the water cascades down the hills in the form of streams and waterfalls while nature makes merry with the gushing flow. Most of the waterfalls are stunning to behold, specially during the monsoon, though some of them dry up by January.

LADKEM

A galaxy of waterfalls adorn the hills here in Chorla ghat but Ladkem, which is located in Goa, is perhaps the crowning glory of this region.

The most beautiful cascade originates in Kankhumbi and after the sheer drop flows onward as a tributary called Nanora river and joins River Mhadei in

Dhavam, Satari.

The perennial source plunges into the depth of a sylvan valley, which is said to be the most untouched valley in Goa, with evergreen forests and lots of reptilian biodiversity, according to Kerkar, who is also the secretary of *Mhadei Bachao Abhiyan*. A lot of other wild life can also be found here.

The water plunges into a virtually wide-mouthed pot of a valley which is beautifully green but hardly accessible. Kerkarsays one can walk into it from Hivrem in Satari.

The valley is much bigger than the one below Dudhsagar and makes for a breathtaking view

in turns meets river Mhadei. This waterfall dries up around February. Though it has a short drop, it has a nice rocky ambience.

It is said that a dozen children from Surla committed suicide here many years ago when their elders refused to take them along to some place while making preparations for the Holi festival.

VAZRAPOYA

It is located at Gawali, Karnataka and has a slightly lesser height than Ladkem. The valley is also smaller but it makes an awe-inspiring sound as it spills over. As it originates in Degaon, it forms the main part of River Mhadei and flows into Krishnapur

seas of MILK

*You don't have to fly
thousands of miles across the
globe to witness the majesty of
a waterfall because, as
Paul Fernandes explains,
there are plenty of these
beauties dotted across the
borders of this little state*

from Paikacho Soddo, a former police outpost in Surla—a slice of Goa tucked into Karnataka, as it were.

A hill resort was proposed here, as it has a rich potential for promoting eco-tourism, but the project was later scrapped.

Downstream, it is known as River Nanora, which is fed by a small rivulet from Parvad.

BARAZAN

It is another smaller waterfall, which splashes down from Karnataka, originates in Chorla and feeds the Nanora river, which

and then crosses Goa's border at Kumthol and Caranzol.

It is perennial but when a *bundh* is constructed by villagers upstream for their crops, the flow decreases. It is a beautiful waterfall, accessible from Chapoli near Jambotti. Diversion will spell disaster for this waterfall.

S A D A WATERFALL

Another waterfall in the Chorla ghat is the Sada waterfall.

which originates in the idyllic village of the same name — a hamlet with 30 houses. It has many unique features such as a historic fort, belonging to medieval period, a temple, a cave and other historic remains. It has a profuse flow during monsoon and joins the Valvanti river but dries up around November.

ZOLLVONACHO VOZOR

Originates in Surla, like Barazan, and joins Mhadei. It is risky to enter the area during the monsoon. It is more accessible when the monsoons recede but the waterfall itself reduces and dries up around December.

KHARVATICH VOZOR

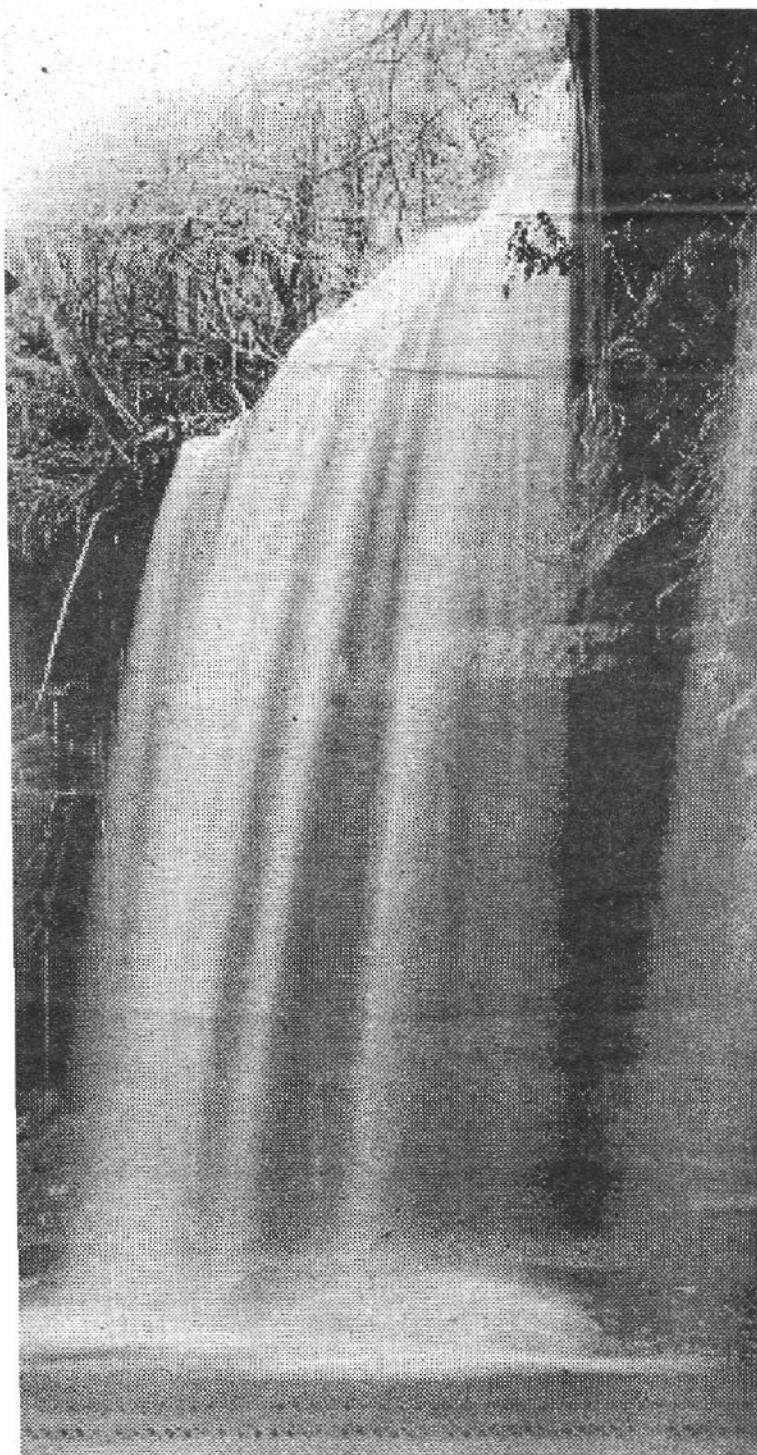
It has the same name as a tree with bark which is used traditionally as polishing paper. Its location is in the dense jungle of Sada village. This river also joins Valvanti river and the waterfall dries around November.

The three waterfalls mentioned above can be seen from a single spot on Chorlaghat-Belgaum road. However, even their heights are not documented.

VAZRA SAKHLA

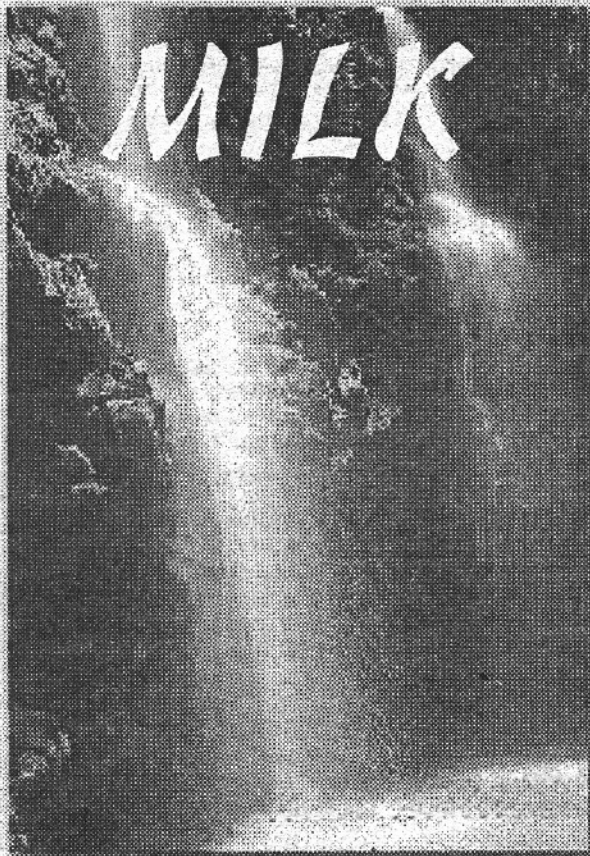
A perennial waterfall which adorns the steep northern face of

(...continued on Pg II)



Seas of

MILK



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the Chorla ghat. Upstream, villagers of Chorla refer to it as the Haltara nullah. In recent times, the villagers erect a vasant bandhara during January, and the flow is reduced to a trickle. It is strategically located; originates in Karnataka, falls into Maharashtra and after crossing Virdi, enters Goa.

VAZRA SAKHAL

This waterfall originates in Ambkehlol in Chorla, Karnataka and cascades into Goa in Shirol village and forms what is known the Thorli Valvanti river. It meets River Mandovi at Sarmanos.

It dries up around February and the flow is reduced due to the construction of a *vasant bhandara*.

GUNGURDEM

It is located in Goa and originates in Surla but is half the height of Ladkem. When it spills over the top, the water falling on basalt stones produces a sound like that of anklets.

The fall runs into Hivrem village and joins a small rivulet there. It also offers a panoramic view of Mhadei wild life sanctuary and dries up around December-January. It is accessible from Surla. On the way to Gungurdem, one can see smaller seasonal waterfalls. However, their names are not known.