

Dudhsagar Falls, Location, Formation, Geographical Features, Significance

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Dudhsagar Falls is one of the highest waterfalls in India and among the most spectacular waterfalls of the Western Ghats. Formed by the **Mahadayi River (known as the Mandovi River in Goa)**, it descends from a height of about **310 metres (1,017 feet)** in four distinct tiers along the **Goa-Karnataka border**. The name Dudhsagar, meaning **“Sea of Milk”**, is derived from the milky white appearance created by the water cascading over rocky cliffs during the southwest monsoon.

Dudhsagar Falls Location

- **Dudhsagar Falls** is located on the **Goa-Karnataka border** in **South Goa district**.
- It is formed by the **Mahadayi River**, which is known as the Mandovi River after entering Goa.
- The waterfall lies within the **Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary** and **Mollem National Park**.
- It is situated on the western escarpment of the **Western Ghats**, where the Deccan Plateau descends sharply towards the Konkan Coast.
- The famous railway bridge across the waterfall forms part of the Braganza Ghat section of the South Western Railway, connecting Castle Rock (Karnataka) with Kulem (Goa).

Dudhsagar Falls Formation

Dudhsagar Falls was formed by the combined action of tectonic uplift and long-term river erosion. The Mahadayi River **originates in the Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka and flows westwards towards the Arabian Sea**. As the river reaches the steep western escarpment of the Western Ghats, it encounters a sharp change in elevation and plunges over resistant crystalline rocks, forming a tiered plunge waterfall. Over thousands of years, continuous river erosion has deepened the gorge, while the resistant rocks have preserved the steep cliff and the waterfall's distinctive four-tiered structure.

Dudhsagar Falls Geographical Features

Dudhsagar Falls possesses several distinctive geographical characteristics.

- It has a total **height of about 310 metres**, making it one of the highest waterfalls in India.
- The waterfall descends through four distinct tiers, creating a spectacular cascade during the southwest monsoon.
- It is formed by the **Mahadayi-Mandovi river system**, one of the major west-flowing river systems of the Western Ghats.
- The surrounding landscape consists of rugged hills, deep valleys, dense evergreen forests and rocky escarpments.
- Heavy monsoon rainfall significantly increases the discharge of the river, giving the waterfall its characteristic milky-white appearance.

River Significance

Dudhsagar Falls forms part of the Mahadayi-Mandovi River Basin, an important west-flowing river system of the Western Ghats.

- The river originates in the Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka as the Mahadayi River and is known as the Mandovi River after entering Goa.
- It flows westwards across Goa before draining into the Arabian Sea near Panaji.
- The river supports drinking water supply, irrigation, inland navigation and estuarine ecosystems in Goa.
- The river is associated with the Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal (MWDT), which adjudicated the interstate water-sharing dispute involving Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra.
- The dispute centres on Karnataka's Kalasa-Banduri Nala Project, which proposes diverting water from the Mahadayi basin to the **Malaprabha River** (a tributary of the Krishna River) for drinking water supply. Goa has opposed the project due to concerns over reduced downstream flows and ecological impacts.

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/dudhsagar-falls/>

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