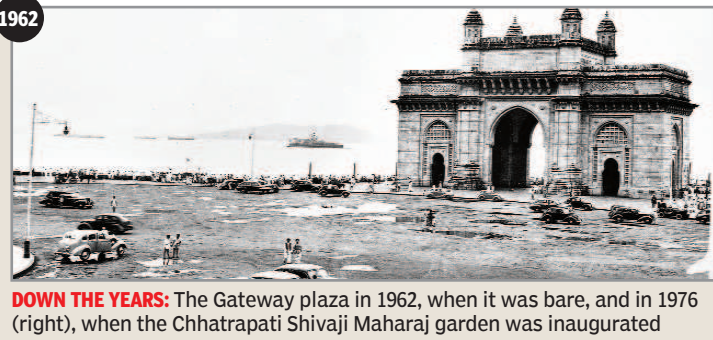


### Slice of The Raj

When ships enter Mumbai's harbour, the Gateway of India welcomes them. The iconic monument was conceptualized and built during the British Raj to commemorate the visit of King George V and Queen Mary to Bombay. The foundation stone was laid on March 31, 1911, nine months prior to the royal visit, by then Governor of Bombay Sir

George Sydenham Clarke. Architect George Wittet's design for the historic monument was sanctioned in August 1914. For five years, up to 1919, land on which the monument was to be constructed was reclaimed, and new sea wall was built. The foundations were completed in 1920, and construction was finished in 1924. The Gateway of India was inaugurated on December 4, 1924.



**DOWN THE YEARS:** The Gateway plaza in 1962, when it was bare, and in 1976 (right), when the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj garden was inaugurated



Times Archives

### Interesting Facts

- The last British troops to leave India, the First Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry, passed through the Gateway on February 28, 1948
- It cost the exchequer around Rs 21 lakh to build
- The monument's significance to Mumbai and India has made it susceptible to terror attacks. On August 25, 2003 a bomb exploded at the Gateway of India killing 16 people. The structure, however, remained intact

## Grand Plans To Transform The Iconic Plaza Were Hit By Squabbling, Govt Involvement & Security Concerns After 26/11

# GATEWAY NOT QUITE A GETAWAY

Clara Lewis | TNN

The Gateway of India stretch is a pedestrian plaza today. But four years ago, before its makeover, the plaza area was a narrow strip. The garden on the plaza was large with lawns, but barricaded. Parking was chaotic and a toilet block was bang in the middle of it. While all this is in the past and more space has been created for people to enjoy the waterfront, the quality of the historical precinct's restoration was dented by ego clashes and government interference, rue residents. The government also restricted public movement in some areas after 26/11.

Several of those involved or affected by the redevelopment process have called it either a "disappointment" or a "bitter" experience. "They chopped off a lot of trees, the lawns were destroyed, the parking is gone. Today we cannot walk there; tourist vehicles are parked in bylanes and there is horrendous noise even in the afternoons. It's a total mess," said Meher Sanjana, a resident and member of the Colaba-Cuffe Parade Residents' Association.

The Gateway of India—a remnant of the Raj—is a his-

liver an extraordinarily high quality of work. There are constraints working with government contractors. You have no control as you are not signing the cheques. I am disappointed with the way the work was executed, though we tried very hard," she said.

The idea to restore the Gateway was mooted by the UDRI, which signed a memorandum of understanding with the BMC. The Indian Merchants' Chamber had offered to pay for the restoration as it was its centenary year. UDRI asked Correa to draw up a restoration plan. Around the time the plan was presented to the BMC and the heritage committee approved it, INTACH said it was the plan Correa had prepared for them in the '90s. But UDRI maintained that the new plan drawn up by Correa was different. This led to a bitter battle between the two groups and the state stepped in.

INTACH, in the meantime, approached Das to prepare an alternate plan. The state set up an empowered committee to go through the two plans, and selected Das's plan. The BMC was to bear the expenditure. As the plan was being implemented, it was chopped and changed several times by officials.

### BRICKBATS

- Trees were chopped and the size of the garden was reduced
- As per INTACH's plan, ticket-vending kiosks and food stalls were to be set up under a raised garden, but the government decided against it after Navy raised objections
- All kiosks lie empty, taken over by "all kinds of elements"

### HIT BY TERROR

- Government authorities insisted on a car park, but after 26/11 sealed it. However, they have made no alternative arrangements, forcing visitors to park in bylanes
- Garden was initially open to the public, but has been barricaded by police for security reasons

### BOUQUETS

- With the plaza opened up, more space has been created for the general public
- Car owners can no longer park near the monument or in the plaza, which now belongs to the public
- The toilets have been neatly tucked away behind the garden, and are no longer an eyesore

As per the initial INTACH plan, the ticket-vending kiosks for ferry tickets and food stalls were to be set up under a raised garden. However, the government decided against it as the MHCC had raised objections. The raised garden was to be like an amphitheatre that would have provided a magnificent view of the monument and the sea as well as accommodate amenities underneath. "We still managed three little tiers. Our weather does not permit an open plaza, you need shaded gardens. We could not avoid the visual block due to space constraints, that is why we thought of the raised garden," said Mehta.

The historic monument is a terror target. On August 25, 2003, a bomb exploded at the Gateway, killing 16 people. The plaza witnessed terror on November 26, 2008, when four gunmen attacked the Taj. At the time of planning, the government had insisted that a car park be a part of the makeover. But post 26/11, it has been sealed. The garden, which was opened for the public, has been barricaded.

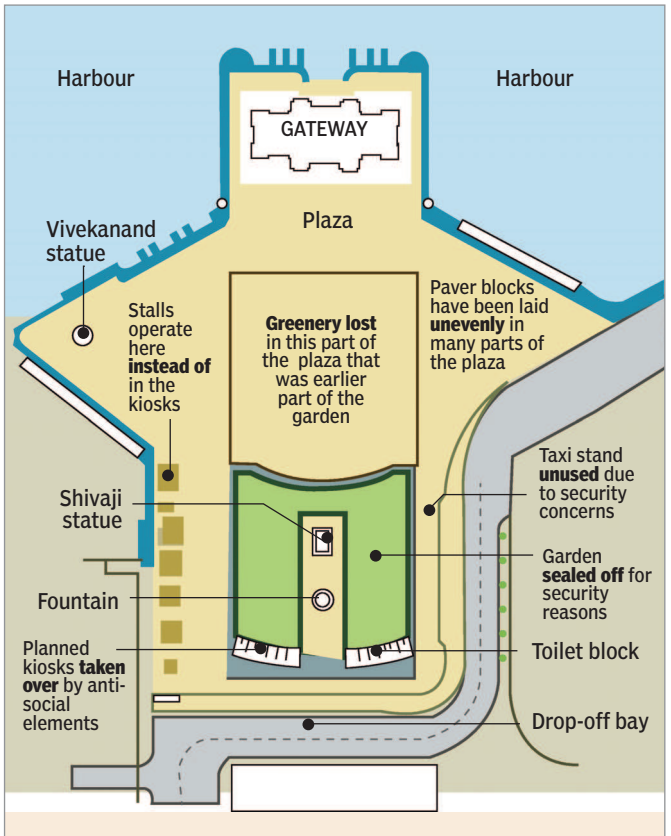
Meanwhile, the kiosks continue to be empty, and the ticket as well as food counters are where they were. The BMC has not moved them as arrears for the present location have not been paid. Four years after the plaza was inaugurated, the BMC is yet to take a decision on these issues. INTACH members said they planned to approach the municipal commissioner to shift the ticket counters to the kiosks. Mehta said they were forced to create the kiosks at this location, "and now they are lying empty and all kinds of elements have taken them over. We were forced to create a car park, and now after 26/11, it is not being used."

Das said that one of the biggest gains of the redevelopment was that it opened up a large public open space and



**PAIN AND GAIN:** The Gateway plaza makeover led to half the garden being removed (the bare lawns at right) to create more walking space

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS: WHY THE PLAZA DOESN'T PLEASE



put an end to the "anarchy" there. "There were toilet blocks in a traffic island and another in the middle of the plaza," he said. The redevelopment resulted in a proper parking lot and a garden but security threats sealed these off. The plans executed were different from those he submitted, said Das. "Due to pressures from the state-empowered committee and otherwise, the plans were compromised. Poor implementation of public projects (there was a single bid) is a fact," said Das, adding that he was concerned about these issues.

► 'People's movement', P 6



Shirram Vemkar

### MAKEOVER ALONG THE HARBOUR

**Area** 3,428 sq m

**Restored area** | The entire precinct starting from MTDC ticket booths and Aarey Kendra up to 20 metres from the monument | From the lighthouse on the left to opposite the old Taj Hotel on the right

**Work period** | Feb 2007 to May 2009

**Makeover cost** | Rs 5 crore (approx)

**Development and maintenance** | After the state government approved the INTACH plan, work was undertaken by the BMC, which is responsible for the plaza's maintenance

### Bitter Squabble

The idea to restore the Gateway was mooted by the Urban Design Research Institute (UDRI), which signed an MoU with the BMC. Around the time the plan was presented to the BMC and the heritage committee approved it, Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) said it was their plan, which Charles Correa had prepared for them in the 1990s. But UDRI maintained that the new plan was different. This led to a bitter battle between the two groups. INTACH, in the meantime, approached architect P K Das to prepare an alternate plan. The empowered committee, set up by the state government, to go through the two plans, selected INTACH's plan for implementation



**Tasneem Mehta** | CONVENOR, INTACH

Earlier, there used to be a lot of greenery and shade. Today, there are only stones on which you cannot walk easily. People cannot believe that there were earlier around 180 trees in the vicinity of the Gateway. What you have today are only stumps. Anti-social elements have taken over the kiosks.

**Remu Javeri** | CHAIRPERSON, COLABA TOURIST WELFARE ASSOCIATION

The quality of work is not good. There are constraints when working with government contractors. You have no control as you are not signing the cheques. I am disappointed with the way the work was executed, though we tried very hard

### TOI Interactive

'IF WE MAKE OUR CITY CLEAN & BEAUTIFUL, IT GIVES US THE OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE'

**Q. Has the Gateway plaza makeover fallen short of expectations? Should there be efforts to open the garden, increase parking, use kiosks properly & relay paver blocks?**

**EMAIL** [speakout@timesgroup.com](mailto:speakout@timesgroup.com) with 'Gateway' in the subject line

**SMS** Type **SO** <space> **GATEWAY Y OR N** <space> your views and name. SMS to **58888**

**LOG ON** to [timesofindia.indiatimes.com](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com) & visit the Speak Out section

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**At Bandra, promenades that are today popular with the public were created by residents out of lands that were once neglected. We asked readers if more Mumbaiers should embark on such initiatives to create public spaces. Here are some of your responses:**

Yes, I strongly urge all Mumbaiers to embark on similar initiatives to develop recreational areas for people from all walks of life. Such development would prevent encroachment and preserve natural assets like mangroves. But the concern expressed by Mr Anil Joseph (chairperson, Perry Road Residents' Association), regarding increased traffic due to more people wanting to use the promenades, is very valid. Organizers may want to consider this point along with creating adequate parking for vehicles and preventing roadside eateries from blocking main roads.

— Manu Thakur

Yes, after all it's not just our house which should look good, it is important we make our city clean and beautiful. It makes our city look good, promotes a healthy environment and gives us the opportunity to live a healthy lifestyle. Big thumbs-up!

— Jasmeet

### FISHING FOR PROFIT AT WATERFRONTS

#### Marina Beach, Chennai

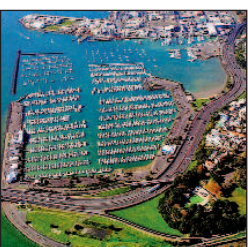
Chennai's 13-km long Marina beach, with a 6-km long promenade, is one of the longest urban shorelines in the world. In 2008, the government sanctioned funds for the promenade's ambitious makeover complete with landscaping, seating arrangements, walkways, plazas, etc. The promenade has 14 sections weaved in a zigzag pattern. Each section has been given a unique makeover so that no two are alike, but architects and planners have taken care to ensure that it is a continuous walking stretch from the Triumph of Labour Statue to the Kamaraj Statue. The walkway ensures a clear view of the beach from the road. Each of the 14 sections has an amphitheatre for



visitors to sit and enjoy the beach. To ensure that the revamped sections do not jar with the rest of the neighbourhood, the architecture reflected that of nearby buildings. The renovation was completed in 2009 at a cost of Rs 259.2 million.

#### Auckland Waterfront, NZ

Auckland city's waterfront is undergoing a massive makeover. On an 8-km stretch, authorities and planners have launched a number of projects, which have been staggered depending on their location. The goal is to maximize the economic potential of the beautiful waterfront and create spaces for the public. The plan includes bringing back historic trams to constructing a continuous pedestrian walkway and cycleway connecting different parts of the waterfront. Beaches will be re-sanded and landscaped. The entire plan is made available on [www.waterfrontauckland.co.nz](http://www.waterfrontauckland.co.nz) for residents to review. Other ambitious projects in the pipeline include a new island and developing a 4.2-hectare public open space in the next five to 10 years. Reports in the local media say that the Auckland's waterfront project is expected to support 20,000 new jobs in key industries and will be a 'major economic driver'.



#### Dundee Waterfront, Scotland

The £1 billion 'transformation' of the Dundee Waterfront along the River Tay is one of the UK's biggest development projects, which began in the year 2000, and is expected to go on till 2031, though the official website has charted plans till 2017. Dundee is Scotland's fourth largest city. The focus of the first phase of the project, which is already completed, was infrastructure and included strengthening a railway tunnel. With an eye on the waterfront's economic potential, in 2010, Scotland marked Dundee Port as one of the 'key sites for offshore wind manufacturing and maintenance', reports the projects' homepage [dundeewaterfront.com](http://dundeewaterfront.com). Creating a space for residents is an integral part of the makeover. Planners will be pulling down a structure to create 19,000 sq m of new open space, which can be used by residents for recreation and events. The waterfront will have residential and commercial property, open spaces and recreation facilities.



#### New York City Waterfront, US

New York City's waterfront will be revitalized through a series of projects aimed at maximizing economic development, environmental preservation and public use. According to the local media, this is NYC's first waterfront plan in two decades, and more than US \$3 billion has been earmarked to 'reunite New Yorkers with their water'. The plan includes 130 short-term projects, such as developing more than 50 acres of waterfront parks, building esplanades and so on. Last year, the first 600-foot section of the East River Waterfront (ERW) Esplanade from Wall Street to Maiden Lane was opened to the public. Around \$165 million has been earmarked to develop the ERW alone, and is scheduled for completion in 2013. The two-mile esplanade will have a pedestrian walkway and a bicycle pathway. Boosting the economy of the area is an important part of the blueprint.

