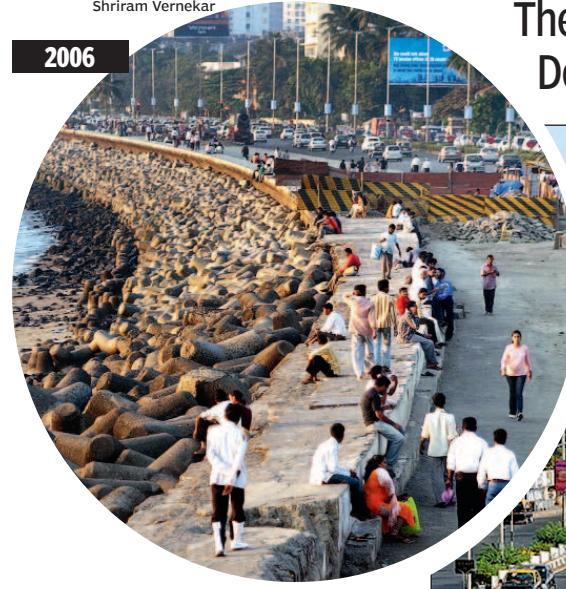


Shriram Vernekar

2006



Chittaranjan Tembhkar | TNN

**T**he difference is stark. It initially took Rs 1.4 crore and Rs 1.5 crore to develop the Bandra Bandstand and Carter Road promenades, respectively. Meanwhile, it took Rs 27 crore to beautify Marine Drive. A glance at these promenades reveals an anti-septic, mainly tiled stretch at Marine Drive, while lively, greened walkways wind along the Bandra coast.

Officials of the government-run MMRDA insist that redeveloping the 3-km downtown promenade isn't the same as revamping the 1.2-km and 1.25-km neighbourly stretches in Bandra, but residents and experts say the iconic south Mumbai stretch has been given a colourless facelift. Architect P K Das, who worked on the Bandra projects, says the MMRDA needed to involve local residents more to give the work life and colour.

There is an agreement that Phase II of the revamp would help reflect the character and life of the area, but no concrete steps have been taken to implement it. Ratan Batliboi, architect for the completed Phase I, says, "The best part of the makeover was Phase II, but I have no idea when it will take shape." Phase II involves Art Deco restoration, an eco-walk, subways, amphitheatres, sunset point, underground parking, viewing decks, etc.

Residents remember a time when they had their own plan to revamp the promenade, but the government stepped in with the grand Rs 127-crore plan, of which only 21% (Rs 27 crore of Phase I) has been implemented. Phase I mainly involved creating a tiled footpath, some bus shelters and plant beds. The Rs 100-crore Phase II has now been clubbed with the Nariman Point and CST makeovers, which are unlikely to see the light of day in the near future..

A Marine Drive Council, comprising 13 different resident associations, was formed, but the residents are ignored even today, says Nayana Kathpalia, Marine Drive resident and co-convenor of NGO CitiSpace. "The residents are stakeholders of the project. Why is the state government linking the Marine Drive makeover to the Na-

TIMES IMPACT: P 11

## The State Govt Announced Grand Plans To Revamp The Marine Drive Promenade, But So Far Has Delivered Only A Characterless Waterfront. The All-Important Phase II Remains In Cold Storage

Pics: Uma Kadamb



**COSMETIC IMPROVEMENT:** The Marine Drive makeover lacks soul, feel many experts. This could have been avoided if residents were a bigger part of the project. Seen below are artist sketches of what the promenade was expected to look like. (Top left) A view of the stretch while work was in progress

# LIFELESS FACELIFT FOR QUEEN'S NECKLACE

## PROMISES, PROMISES...



**DREAM ON:** When the Marine Drive makeover was first announced in 2005, the MMRDA was supposed to deliver pockets of green patches at Chowpatty, a fountain with seawater, sleek street furniture, a viewing lift in the Air India building and memorial parks with statues. Mumbai is still waiting for all this

## What's second phase status? ask residents

Chittaranjan Tembhkar | TNN

Even as Marine Drive residents want a say in the second and more elaborate phase of the stretch's beautification, they continue to have "absolutely no clue" about the project's current status.

Chandresh Shah, president, Marine Drive Residents' Association, said that just last week, they had appealed to the BMC officials to take residents into confidence if and when they plan to start work on the Rs 100-crore project.

"There has been no initiative or communication on this front from the BMC authorities since the past two and half years," he said.

When the first phase had kicked off, residents had raised objections to a plan to reduce the footpath's size and create parking lots. They had later protested and stopped work, and got the MMRDA to alter the plans. "We had got it rectified last time. We hope this time, the BMC does not repeat the mistake. It is really upsetting that by the time the second phase starts, the first would have become very old."

Shah also said that the proposed Shivaji statue and memorial in the sea off Marine Drive would attract a huge crowd and, consequently, hawkers and other commercial interests. It may be recalled that chief minister Prithviraj Chavan recently clarified the project would come up off Marine Drive and not Worli. The state has already appointed Team One Architect as consultants for it.

"The promenade would become a commercial hub with a huge increase in tourists flowing in. The hawkers, cleanliness and security would then become major issues," said Shah.

Anil Bhatia, former hockey player and honorary secretary of the Marine Drive Council, a unified body of all the 13 residents associations, said the state government had formed the council for better coordination. "There are absolute no open spaces between D Road, where I live, and Marine Lines station. There used to be open spaces when we were children, but they have been converted into stadiums. The other gymkhana and spaces are booked all the time for marriage parties

**Anil Bhatia, HONORARY SECRETARY, MARINE DRIVE COUNCIL**

Why is the state government linking the Marine Drive makeover project to the Nariman Point makeover? We have been hearing about the latter for ages and it remains just a dream on paper. Marine Drive has a separate character and life of its own and its needs are different from those of other areas. I think the Drive should be treated separately, being as it is close to residents' hearts and not a lifeless entity

**Nayana Kathpalia, RESIDENT OF MARINE DRIVE AND CO-CONVENOR OF NGO CITISPACE**

A policy decision was taken a few years ago that the second phase of the Marine Drive revamp should be handled by the BMC. Hence, the local residents who want to know about pending work must follow up with BMC authorities and not the MMRDA

**Dilip Kawathkar, SPOKESPERSON FOR THE MUMBAI METROPOLITAN REGION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

## 21% OF WORK DONE

### FIRST PHASE (COMPLETE)

**Area covered:** NCPA at Nariman Point to Girgaum Chowpatty



**Total length:** 3km

**Estimated cost:** Rs 30 crore

**Actual cost:** Rs 27 crore, because Churchgate vista, Parsi Gate and eco-walk were shifted to Phase II

**Sea wall:** Cost: Rs 4.94 cr | Strengthened with concrete tetrapods, rocks and boulders. Repairs to vertical wall and substructure damaged by waves. Minor modifications with granite

**West footpath:** Cost: Rs 7.97 cr | Paver blocks, granite and concrete kerb stones laid

**East footpath:** Cost: Rs 2.69 cr | Paver blocks, flower beds and railings installed

**Service ducts:** Cost: Rs 3.25 cr | RCC duct for future cables or pipelines under east footpath

**Median:** Cost: Rs 1.73 cr | Revised with concrete, including pedestrian crossovers

**Bus shelters:** Cost: Rs 26 lakh | Islands with landscaping. Sit-outs at bus-stops on west footpath

**Chowpatty:** Cost: Rs 1.19 cr | Beach walkways have paver blocks and landscaping. Not well maintained

**Area below Princess St flyover:** Cost: Rs 72 lakh | A garden with sit-out facility developed with landscaping. Not well maintained

**Landscaping:** Cost: Rs 1.96 cr | Small lawns, trees, shrubs, flowerbeds. Not up to the mark

**Lighting:** Replaced the existing light fixtures with modern fixtures, enhancing the architectural and landscaping features of Marine Drive

### SECOND PHASE (YET TO BEGIN)

**Estimated cost:** Rs 100 crore

**Nariman Point breakwater promontory:** It will extend 280 meters into the sea, culminating in a stepped amphitheatre

**State capital complex:** Approximately 7 acres of hard and soft landscaping will be a grand forecourt to buildings such as the Mantralaya and Vidhan Bhawan. High-speed and low-speed traffic will be segregated to aid pedestrians heading to office and public gatherings

**Art Deco precinct:** Conservation of the second-largest stretch of Art Deco buildings in the world

**Subways:** Planned at four major pedestrian crossings, with entry points having landscaping. Will have toilets and drinking water. Opera House subway will also have retail space

**Chowpatty open-air amphitheatre:** Birla Kreeda Kendra will become an open-air theatre-cum-sunset gallery. Bhelpuri-wallahs will be relocated

**Churchgate vista:** Low-level walkway along the sea wall at the Veer Nariman Road intersection

**Parsi Gate:** Revamping pillars and steps

**Eco-walk and parking:** Stainless steel panel displaying information and landscaped walkway. Sprucing up parking areas near gymkhana on east footpath

**Street flyover:** move to refurbish Art Deco buildings

**April 2006:** The 130-crore Marine Drive refurbishment plan – which envisaged new sidewalks, special illuminations and street furniture, and an open air amphitheatre – is inaugurated

**January 2008:** The first phase, which was supposed to end in January 2007, is finally ready

**February 2008:** MMRDA hands over the second phase to BMC which has heritage committee to deal with heritage issues and also may have the knowledge and the machinery to deal with underground utilities

**April 2008:** Heritage experts raise objections and ask authorities to keep the promenade beautification simple. They also oppose the

**Status:** But, BMC is yet to come out with a design or a tender for the second phase

## TRACKING THE PROGRESS

**December 2004:** Work on strengthening sea wall begins as part of Phase I of Marine Drive makeover

**October 2005:** MMRDA announces Rs 130-crore makeover. Phase I is to cost Rs 30 crore, Phase II Rs 100 crore. BMC gives no commitment on sharing costs

**January 2006:** Beautification of Marine Drive starts with 10 metres of the promenade near Princess



**move to refurbish Art Deco buildings**

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**TOI Interactive 'GATEWAY PLAZA HAS THE POTENTIAL FOR BETTER BEAUTIFICATION'**

**Q. Does the Marine Drive revamp lack colour? Should the state consult with residents and immediately begin work on the ambitious Phase II of the project?**

**EMAIL** speakout@timesgroup.com with 'Marine' in the subject line

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

**LOG ON** to timesofindia.indiatimes.com & visit the Speak Out section

● You can also share your views in the 'Mumbai' section of timesofindia.indiatimes.com ● Or log onto 'The Times Of India' page on Facebook

**We asked readers if the Gateway plaza makeover has fallen short of expectations. Should there be efforts to open the garden, increase parking, use kiosks properly and relay paver blocks? Here are some of your replies:**

**S**ome institution or body of architects should initially lay down a set of standards with specific requirements for materials, timelines, post-completion maintenance etc before any makeover is attempted in future. — Kiran

**T**he Gateway plaza has the potential to be beautified in a much superior way. I think this initiative should be preferably undertaken by INTACH with the help of an established heritage conservation architect.

Relaying of paver blocks is a must, a car park will be convenient, a lawn will add to the visual delight. There should be 24-hour security. — Bikram Banerjee

**W**hen abroad, I have always seen how passionately other countries preserve, beautify and maintain their historical places. The Gateway makeover has fallen way short of expectations. Genuine efforts must be made to beautify the garden and

use kiosks for the intended purpose, and maintain these. — Hemangi Sawant

**A**'drop-off zone', which is parallel to Mahakavi Bhushan Marg (Adam's Street), was created to ensure taxis and cars don't stop in the middle of the road.

Instead, the zone has been turned into a car park for AC taxis and VIP cars. The original road has been narrowed down to half its width. Innumerable

carriages, taxis and huge tourist buses are allowed to park, thereby blocking half the road. To make matters worse, a BEST bus stop has been put up in a corner. Nowhere in the world will you have a bus stop without a pavement.

— Cyrus Heerjee

There are projects being thought of that would mar the serenity of the area. For example, if the Shivaji statue comes up, the promenade would become a commercial hub with a huge increase in tourists flowing in. The hawkers, cleanliness and security would then become major issues

**Chandresh Shah, PRESIDENT, MARINE DRIVE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

In the first phase, we (residents) did some changes. Now six years have passed. Certain portions of the Drive at Nariman Point have become a hawkers' zone. I think the time has come for the government to take initiative. There are absolutely no open spaces between D Road, where I live, and Marine Lines station. There used to be open spaces when we were children, but they have been converted into stadiums. The other gymkhana and spaces are booked all the time for marriage parties

**Anil Bhatia, HONORARY SECRETARY, MARINE DRIVE DRIVE COUNCIL**

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MARAKAVI BHUSHAN MARG (ADAM'S STREET), was created to ensure taxis and cars don't stop in the middle of the road. Instead, the zone has been turned into a car park for AC taxis and VIP cars. The original road has been narrowed down to half its width. Innumerable carriages, taxis and huge tourist buses are allowed to park, thereby blocking half the road. To make matters worse, a BEST bus stop has been put up in a corner. Nowhere in the world will you have a bus stop without a pavement.

— Cyrus Heerjee