

Gateway revamp plan gets civic panel nod

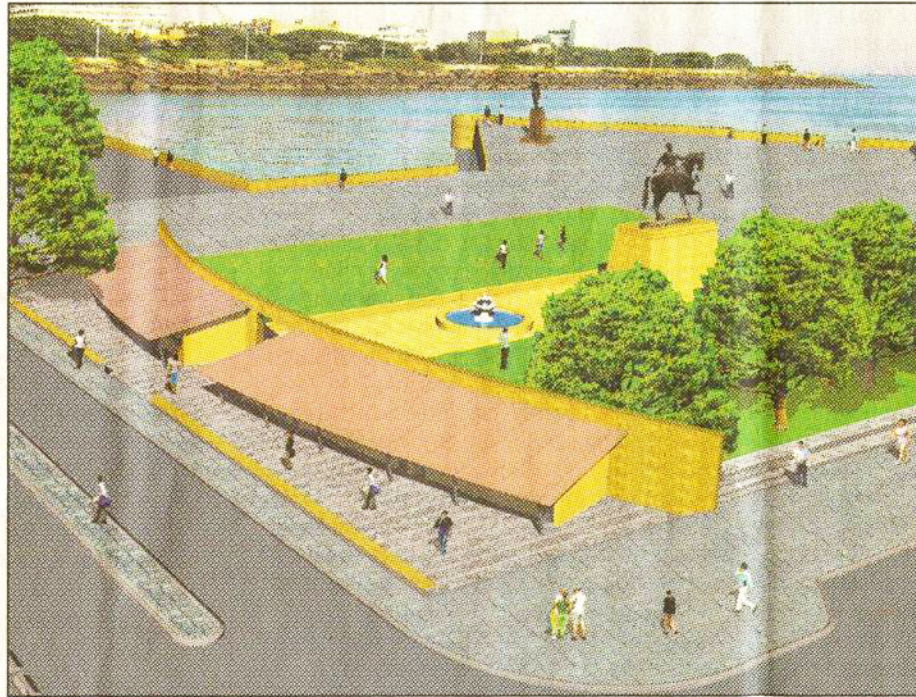
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The Gateway of India precinct makeover plan got its initial boost on Wednesday with the civic standing committee clearing the Rs 4.5 crore phase 1 of the project.

While the Grade 1 heritage monument itself would remain untouched, phase 1 would include expanding the pedestrian space in the precinct as well as relocating all the public amenities at a facility centre.

The facility centre to be located behind the Shivaji statue will house all the existing ticket counters that currently clutter the pathway to the precinct. It will also have public toilets, a police chowky, a BMC conservancy chowky, an MTDC stall and the existing Aarey stalls.

"The plan is to create more area for public movement. For this, we will have to remove the barricade around the garden at Gateway and include some of it in the paved portion. In a nutshell, the phase 1 of the plan will look at enhancing pedestrian movement over vehicular movement and at augmenting the public facilities," said P K Das, ar-



MAKEOVER: An artist's impression of the proposed revamp of the Gateway of India

chitect for the Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage (Intach), which has been awarded the contract for draw-

ing up Gateway revamp plan.

Even though the work of executing the plan was awarded to Prime Engi-

neers on Wednesday, standing committee member Ravindra Pawar opposed the idea. "The plan makes no provision for parking based on the argument that most people who come to Gateway use public transport or tourist vehicles. The cars belong to those who visit the nearby Taj hotel. How can they go ahead with the plan without permission from the traffic department?" asked Pawar. Satish Mathur, joint commissioner of police (traffic), said he was yet to get a copy of the plan.

According to Das, the precinct would be made into a no-parking zone. "The world over, no monument allows parking in its precinct. The Taj hotel has provisions for underground parking which it has closed down for some reason and many of its cars are parked outside. All this would be cleared up soon. Parking space for tourist buses and cars will be taken care of in phase 2," said Das. He added that phase 2 would look at whether the area from the museum to Regal theatre can be converted into a BMC parking zone.

"Also the BMC is proposing to build an underground parking lot near Regal theatre," said Das.