

= Gateway of India =

The Gateway of India is a monument built during the 20th century in Mumbai City of Maharashtra state in Western India . It is located on the waterfront in the Apollo Bunder area in South Mumbai and overlooks the Arabian Sea . The structure is a basalt arch , 26 metres (85 feet) high . It lies at the end of Chhatrapati Shivaji Marg at the water 's edge in Mumbai Harbour . It was a crude jetty used by the fishing community which was later renovated and used as a landing place for British governors and other prominent people . In earlier times , it would have been the first structure that visitors arriving by boat in Mumbai would have seen . The Gateway has also been referred to as the Taj Mahal of Mumbai , and is the city 's top tourist attraction . The India Gate in New Delhi is similar to the Gateway of India in Mumbai . The structure was erected to commemorate the landing of King George V and Queen Mary at Apollo Bunder , when they visited India in 1911 . Built in Indo @-@ Saracenic style , the foundation stone for the Gateway of India was laid on 31 March 1911 . The final design of George Wittet was sanctioned in 1914 and the construction of the monument was completed in 1924 . The Gateway was later the ceremonial entrance to India for Viceroys and the new Governors of Bombay . It served to allow entry and access to India .

The monument has witnessed three terror attacks from the beginning of the 21st century ; twice in 2003 and it was also the disembarkation point in 2008 when four gunmen attacked the Taj Mahal Palace & Tower .

= = History = =

The Gateway of India was built to commemorate the visit of King George V and Queen Mary to Mumbai , prior to the Delhi Durbar , in December 1911 . However , they only got to see a cardboard model of the structure since the construction did not begin till 1915 . The foundation stone was laid on March 31 , 1911 , by the governor of Bombay Sir George Sydenham Clarke , with the final design of George Wittet sanctioned on March 31 , 1914 . The gateway was built from yellow basalt and concrete . Between 1915 and 1919 , work proceeded at Apollo Bundar (Port) to reclaim the land on which the gateway and the new sea wall would be built . The foundations were completed in 1920 , and construction was finished in 1924 . The gateway was opened on December 4 , 1924 , by the Viceroy , the Earl of Reading .

The last British troops to leave India following the country 's independence , the First Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry , passed through the Gateway on their way out in a ceremony on February 28 , 1948 , signalling the end of British rule .

= = Design and structure = =

The Scottish architect George Wittet combined the elements of the Roman triumphal arch and the 16th @-@ century architecture of Gujarat . Its design is a combination of Hindu and Muslim architectural styles ; the arch is of Muslim style while the decorations are of Hindu style . The gateway is built from yellow basalt and reinforced concrete . The stone was locally obtained , and the perforated screens were brought from Gwalior . The gateway faces out to Mumbai Harbour from the tip of Apollo Bunder .

The central dome is 48 feet (15 metres) in diameter and 83 feet (25 metres) above the ground at its highest point . The whole harbour front was realigned in order to come in line with a planned esplanade which would sweep down to the centre of the town . On each side of the arch , there are large halls that can hold 600 people . The cost of the construction was ? 2 million (US \$ 30 @,@ 000) , borne mainly by the Imperial Government of India . Due to a paucity of funds , the approach road was never built , and so the gateway stands at an angle to the road leading up to it .

= = Significance = =

It is the place where the viceroys and governors used to land upon their arrival in India . Though

built as a welcome to King George V for his visit of 1911 , then an event of grand significance for British India and the British empire , today serves as a " monumental memento " of British colonial rule over India . Built right next to the Taj Mahal Palace & Tower hotel , for British arriving for the first time to India , the gateway was a symbol of the " power and majesty " of the British empire .

Opposite the gateway stands the statue of Shivaji , the king who used guerilla warfare to establish the Maratha empire in the Sahyadri mountain range in the 17th century , as a symbol of Maratha " pride and courage " . The statue was unveiled on 26 January 1961 on the occasion of India 's Republic Day . The other statue in the area is that of Swami Vivekananda , by renowned sculptor Sitaram S. Arte .

There are five jetties at the gateway . The first jetty is exclusive to the Atomic Research Centre , the second and third are used for commercial ferry operations , the fourth is closed and the fifth is exclusive to the Royal Bombay Yacht Club .

After the 2008 Mumbai attacks , there has been a proposal to close all these jetties and replace them with two newer ones to be built near the Bombay Presidency Radio Club nearby . The second and third jetties are the starting point for tours of Elephanta Caves , which is a 50 @-@ minute boat ride away by ferry . Other routes from the Gateway include ferry rides to Alibaug and Mandwa ; these ferries are said to carry passengers above their certified capacity due to their popularity .

The Gateway of India is a major tourist destination and a popular gathering spot for locals , street vendors and photographers . In 2012 , Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation moved the " Elephanta Festival of music and dance " from its original location at Elephanta Caves (where it had been celebrated for 23 years) to the Gateway due to the increased capacity offered by the venue . The Gateway can host 2 @,@ 000 to 2 @,@ 500 people , whereas Elephanta Caves could host only 700 to 800 people .

A bomb planted in a taxi exploded near the gateway in the 2003 . The gateway was also the site of a major bomb @-@ blast in August 2003 and was the disembarkation point of the terrorists participating in the November 2008 terror attacks when four gunmen attacked the Taj Mahal Palace & Tower . Public movement in certain areas was restricted after the 2008 attacks .