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India's First and Longest Sea Ropeway

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India's first and longest sea ropeway project that will **connect Mumbai with the Elephanta Caves**, is scheduled to start by the end of the year 2019.

- The **8-km ropeway** will begin from Sewri in Mumbai's east coast and end at Raigad district's Elephanta Island.
- **Need:** The caves see an annual footfall of nearly seven lakh visitors and are one of the must-visit places around Mumbai. Presently, it takes around an hour for the 10-km cruise from Mumbai and vice versa.
- The **14-minute ride by 30-seater cable cars** will give a major boost to tourism.
- It is Rs. **700 crore PPP (Public-Private Partnership) project** which will be **executed by the Mumbai Port Trust**, under the Ministry of Shipping.



Elephanta Caves

- The **Elephanta caves**, located on the Elephanta Islands (in the Arabian Sea), off Mumbai, was declared a **world heritage site** by UNESCO in 1987.
- Known locally as **Gharapuri Caves**, these were constructed about the mid-5th to 6th centuries AD.
- The **seven caves** constitute one of the most striking collections of rock-art in India.
 - There are two groups of caves. To the east, Stupa Hill (named because of a small brick Buddhist monument at the top) contains two caves, one of which is unfinished, and several cisterns.
 - To the west, the larger group consists of five rock-cut Hindu shrines.

- The main cave is universally famous for its **carvings to the glory of Shiva**, who is exalted in various forms and actions. The cave consists of a square plan mandapa whose sides measure about 27 m.

Source: IE