



Press Release

Date: May 30, 2016

### **Indian Embassy building received blue plaque installation**

YANGON: Today one of the YHT's blue plaques was installed at the Indian Embassy building on Merchant Road in Kyauktada Township in downtown Yangon.

This is the first Indian heritage building in Yangon to receive blue plaque in recognition for their significant role in the city's history.

Completed in 1914, the building was originally constructed as the offices of the Calcutta-based insurance firm, Oriental Life Assurance Company. Since 1957, the building has been occupied by the Indian Embassy and plays a vital role in the revival of Indian culture in Yangon by hosting a number of cultural events. It was renovated in 1999-2000.

The five story building is one of the tallest heritage buildings in Yangon. The original company's signage can still be seen on the Merchant Road façade of the building.

The founder and chairman of Yangon Heritage Trust, Dr Thant Myint-U, said that India and Myanmar have a very special relationship, going back millennia and the two modern nations came of age together, through their anti-colonial movements.

"This handsome century old building is important less because it once housed the Oriental Assurance company, and more because it has been home to the Embassy of India since the 1950s," he said.

"There are so many places in downtown Yangon that can be regarded as a shared heritage between India and Myanmar, for example places linked to the many visits of Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, and Pandit Nehru in the early 20th century. The embassy and Ambassador Gautam Mukhopadhaya have been great supporters of the Yangon Heritage Trust and we hope that this strong partnership will continue."

"As we install this blue plaque today, we should also think about the future of the empty lot next door at 555 Merchant Street. Making sure any new building there respects the historic setting through good design and a height control," said Dr Thant Myint-U.

YHT's commemorative Blue Plaque is a part of the Trust's work to promote the city's unique cultural and built heritage and the importance of conservation in making Yangon liveable while it also highlights renowned residents who contributed to the city. Yangon Heritage Trust hopes that the introduction of commemorative Blue Plaques will make Yangon's history accessible to people of all age and backgrounds.

Royal Philips agreed to contribute US\$ 75,000 for the Yangon Blue Plaques initiative. Aside from the highlighting key cultural heritage locations, the contribution will also support the research and curation of historical sites, and creation and installation of Blue Plaques that will share the historical relevance and background of notable people and places across the city.

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**Yangon Heritage Trust** is an independent centre of excellence working to promote and integrate Yangon's unique urban heritage into a 21st century vision of Yangon as one of Asia's most liveable cities. Yangon Heritage Trust advocates for heritage protection, develops clear and sustainable policy options, engages with government, business and civil society, communicates its ideas to the widest possible audience, undertakes specific conservation projects, and facilitates research and training.

For more information on Yangon Heritage Trust:

*Shwe Yinn Mar Oo,*

Media and Communications Manager

Tel: 951 240544, Mobile: 959 73055187

Email: [info@yangonheritagetrust.org](mailto:info@yangonheritagetrust.org)

[www.yangonheritagetrust.org](http://www.yangonheritagetrust.org)

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