



Press Release

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Blue Plaque unveils at historic Lokanat Building

YANGON: As one of the historic prestigious buildings in Yangon, Lokanat building, which is located at the corner of Pansodan and Merchant road, received blue plaque commemoration today.

This Italianate style building which was built around 1906 is famous for its tenant on the first floor, the Lokanat Art Gallery where the original tiles imported from Manchester over a hundred years ago, are still in place. It is now occupied by the Internal Revenue Department and a variety of private businesses.

Originally known as “Sofaer’s Building”, this was designed by Issace A. Sofaer, a Jewish trader from Baghdad, and was built by a then famous architect, Thomas Swales. In 1930s the building was renamed as “Randeria Building” after it had been bought by the family of Indian Surti traders. After World War II, the building was transferred into government hands and housed various departments including the Forestry Department on the top floor and a government store run by Ministry of Industry No.1 on the ground floor.

The Lokanat building used to be one of the most important business addresses in Yangon where people bought Egyptian cigarettes, Munich Beer, and candies from England. The building also housed legal and financial offices such as the Bank of Burma and the China Mutual Life Insurance Company. Also located in this building were offices of Reuters Telegram Company, a German Photographer, a Greek leather merchant and a Filipino hairdresser, and this illustrates the cosmopolitanism of Yangon at that time.

This building is an example of diverse uses of living heritage in Yangon’s downtown and one of the top attractive sites for walking tourists.

The commemorative Blue Plaque is a part of Yangon Heritage Trust's efforts to highlight historical buildings and renowned residents who contributed to the narrative of the city. Yangon Heritage Trust believes that the introduction of commemorative Blue Plaques will make Yangon's history accessible to people of all age and backgrounds.

The plaque in the Central plaque is the eighth Blue Plaque of YHT's initiative following City Hall, AYA Bank Headquarter, Armenian Church, Central Fire Station, General Post Office, Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank and Central Press.

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.

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.

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