

## **Factsheet on the Jawaharlal Nehru Bust and Commemorative Marker**

To reaffirm historical ties between Singapore and India, Singapore's Emeritus Senior Minister Mr Goh Chok Tong and India's Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh unveiled the Jawaharlal Nehru Bust and Commemorative Marker at the Asian Civilisations Museum Green (ACM Green) on 20 November 2011.

Jawaharlal Nehru was a statesman well-loved and revered by his people and admired by the world. He was a visionary leader who transformed India into a modern industrial economy, empowered women and ethnic minorities, and worked hard to improve the well-being of children in India.

A tribute to Jawaharlal Nehru's achievements, the marker details his early life, political activities, his influence on the people of India, his links to Singapore and his role in enhancing the relations between the two countries. (Please refer to ANNEX 1 for more details)

Other than a text panel, the Jawaharlal Nehru marker comprises a bronze bust of his likeness, which was created by renowned sculptor and painter Professor Biman Bihari Das from India, and commissioned by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations. The marker also features Jawaharlal Nehru's signature and a famous quote by him etched at the back of the marker.

This is the fifth addition to the National Heritage Board's *Friends to Our Shores* series of markers (please refer to ANNEX 2), which commemorates eminent personalities from abroad who had a connection to Singapore. These markers also highlight Singapore's unique and significant role in regional as well as world history.

A result of the joint efforts of the High Commission of India and NHB, the marker reflects the close bilateral ties between Singapore and India, and will bring our people and visitors together to share and learn about our history.

## Text on the Jawaharlal Nehru Marker

### **JAWAHARLAL NEHRU (1889-1964)**

*“We have to labour and to work, and work hard, to give reality to our dreams. Those dreams are for India, but they are also for the world, for all the nations and peoples are too closely knit together today for any one of them to imagine that it can live apart.”*

The first Prime Minister of the Republic of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was a leader who was loved and respected by all Indians and admired by the world for his ideals and statesmanship.

Nehru was born on 14 November 1889 in Allahabad, India, to Swarup Rani and Motilal Nehru, a lawyer active in India’s national movement. At fifteen, Nehru went to England to study at Harrow School and later, at Trinity College, Cambridge. He returned home in 1912 to begin a career in law. In 1916, he married Kamala Kaul. Their daughter and only child, Indira Priyadarshini (1917-1984), later served as India’s Prime Minister from 1966 to 1977 and 1980 to 1984.

Nehru abandoned his legal practice to join the Indian National Congress (founded in 1885) in its campaign for the end of British rule. Outraged by the Amritsar Massacre of 1919 and inspired by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948), the Father of the Nation, Nehru immersed himself in the nationalist cause. He campaigned tirelessly to mobilise the people of India against British rule. He was imprisoned by the British on many occasions for his non-violent activities in the cause of India’s independence.

### **PRIME MINISTER OF THE WORLD’S LARGEST DEMOCRACY**

After the Second World War, Nehru renewed the call for an India free from British rule. As President of the Indian National Congress, he led an interim government through tumultuous negotiations for full independence. He and Gandhi tried to prevent the partition of India, but failed. On 15 August 1947, India became independent. On the eve of that historic occasion, Nehru declared:

*“At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation long suppressed finds utterance.”*

As Prime Minister, Nehru drove the transformation of a largely agrarian economy into a modern industrial power. Paving the way for India’s long-term strength in science and technology, his government established many institutes of higher learning.

Children were a source of personal joy to 'Chacha' or Uncle Nehru, who worked hard to improve the health, welfare and future of his country's youth. To this day, Nehru's birthday is celebrated as Children's Day in India.

Wishing to avoid entanglement in the Cold War, Nehru was a founder of the Non-Aligned Movement. He believed in Asian solidarity and convened the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi, in 1947. He was a strong and eloquent champion of the right of peoples to self determination. He supported Asian-African solidarity and played a leadership role at the Bandung Conference.

Nehru died in office on 27 May 1964. His death was mourned by India and the world. His legacy to India is a secular democracy. His legacy is his dream of building a more just and equal world.

### **“WHERE ASIAN UNITY IS FORGED”**

Nehru was a good friend of Singapore. A keen traveller, he first visited Singapore on 26 and 27 May 1937 as part of a pan-Malayan tour. During this trip, he spoke to a gathering at Farrer Park and to the Indian Chamber of Commerce, urging the local Indian community to be united and pay more attention to education.

Nehru's second visit to Singapore on 18 March 1946 at the start of an eight day tour of Malaya, came amid preparations for India's independence. Invited by Lord Louis Mountbatten, then Supreme Allied Commander of South East Asia and later the last British Viceroy of India, Nehru succeeded in persuading Mountbatten to repatriate the members of the Indian National Army under British internment back to India. Nehru briefly visited the former Indian National Army memorial at the Esplanade (where a plaque now stands) and in a press interview, stated:

*“Singapore has attracted me for long as a great cosmopolitan city where the various peoples of Asia are all represented... Singapore will become the place where Asian unity is forged. In the future, the peoples of Asia must hold together for their own good as well as the good and freedom of the world.”*

Nehru's final visit to Singapore was a State visit from 17 to 19 June 1950, during which he laid the foundation stones for the Singapore Indian Association's headquarters at Balestier Road, as well as the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Hall at Race Course Lane. He also opened a new dormitory at the Ramakrishna Mission at Bartley Road. Nehru then spoke at the Jalan Besar Stadium, calling for peace and conciliation in a region where decolonisation was in progress. It was here, that thousands led by then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, gathered on 30 May 1964 for a condolence service to honour the memory of “a staunch friend” who led India to freedom and won the hearts of millions to his vision of harmony and justice in a post-colonial world.

Quote and Signature of Jawaharlal Nehru on the Nehru Marker

"LONG YEARS AGO  
WE MADE A TRYST  
WITH DESTINY, AND  
NOW THE TIME COMES  
WHEN WE SHALL  
REDEEM  
OUR PLEDGE..."

*Jawaharlal Nehru*

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU  
(1889-1964)

### About NHB's 'Friends to Our Shores' Markers

The National Heritage Board (NHB) is committed to bringing heritage to our people and making it an enriching part of their lives through our museum exhibitions and outreach programmes. Amongst the many outreach programmes that NHB organises to reach out to the community is the *Friends to Our Shores* series of markers, which commemorates eminent personalities from abroad who had a connection to Singapore, by erecting a marker dedicated to the person.

This programme is part of NHB's efforts at cultural diplomacy to enhance bilateral relations and forge closer heritage collaborations with our regional and international neighbours. To be eligible for commemoration, the individual must be revered by his or her people back home, had contributed much to the country of origin and had links to Singapore, either as a visitor or diplomat.

Highlighting the significant role that Singapore has played in regional as well as world history, this series aims to increase Singaporeans' understanding of our history and how we are intricately linked to the region.

Started in 2004, four personalities have been featured other than Jawaharlal Nehru. They are: Joseph Conrad, a Polish-born English writer (2004); Ho Chi Minh, father of modern Vietnam (2008); Dr Jose Rizal, national hero of the Philippines (2008); and Deng Xiaoping, the architect of China's policies of economic reform and openness to the world (2010).

- **Joseph Conrad marker (2004)** – a Polish-born English writer who made Singapore and the whole of Southeast Asia better known to the world. This plaque was officially unveiled by H.E. Aleksander Kwasniewski, President of the Republic of Poland, on 24 February 2004.

Refer to: [http://heritagetrails.sg/content/516/Joseph\\_Conrad\\_Plaque.html](http://heritagetrails.sg/content/516/Joseph_Conrad_Plaque.html)

- **Ho Chi Minh marker (2008)** -- On 20 May 2008, Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Gia Khiem unveiled a heritage marker dedicated to Ho Chi Minh – the father of modern Vietnam, at the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) Green. This was held to commemorate the 35th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Singapore and Vietnam. On 28 September 2011, a bust of Ho Chi Minh was added to the marker. The bust was jointly unveiled by Singapore's Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts Dr Yaacob Ibrahim and Vietnam's President Truong Tan Sang.
- **Dr Jose Rizal marker (2008)** – In an affirmation of the strong friendship between the Republic of the Philippines and Singapore, President S R Nathan unveiled a

heritage marker dedicated to Dr Jose Rizal, the national hero of the Philippines, on 19 June 2008. The ceremony at the ACM Green was witnessed by the Philippines' Secretary of Education, Mr Jesli Lapus and Chairman of the National Heritage Board Professor Tommy Koh.

- **Deng Xiaoping marker (2010)** – Unveiled on 14 November 2010 in conjunction with the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations between Singapore and China, the Deng Xiaoping marker is the fourth in the *Friends to Our Shores* series.

For this series of markers, the NHB works closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the respective foreign embassies.

To give each marker a unique identity, each marker usually includes an artwork created by an artist from the country of origin. This also provides the overseas counterparts a platform to showcase their artists. For example, the Joseph Conrad and Jose Rizal markers include a medallion crafted by a leading sculptor from Poland and the Philippines respectively. The artwork is sponsored by the respective embassies located in Singapore. A famous quote by the personality and his/her signature are also incorporated into the marker.

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