



PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE  
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster  
and  
Minister for the Arts.

7th August 1980

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP  
The Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

*Prime Minister*

*Yes*

*Content to be a patron of  
the Festival of India, if  
Lt Cunningham thinks this  
useful?*

*Dear Prime Minister*

*MMP 2/8*

THE FESTIVAL OF INDIA

As you may know there are plans to organise a Festival of India in Great Britain during 1982. It will be a joint venture between the British and Indian Governments, and will consist of a series of exhibitions, events and performances reflecting many aspects of Indian civilisation from prehistoric times to the present day and represents close collaboration between Indian and British institutions, scholars and artists. It is well over thirty years since an Indian exhibition of any scale has been seen here and during that time new evidence has come to light which emphasises the richness and glory of India's cultural heritage.

The Arts Council and various other bodies such as the British Museum, the British Library, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Commonwealth Institute will collaborate in the Festival to achieve the widest possible manifestation of Indian arts, crafts, history and culture by means of a series of overlapping exhibitions and performances. The British were in India for over two hundred years, but there is a post-Independence, post-World War II generation of Britons and Indians looking for a new understanding of one another. The Festival will show that the whole civilisation and culture of India is not only worth knowing for its own sake, but has much to offer the world both in art, in philosophy and a way of life. It will mark an important step in the new relationship between India and Britain.

The Festival of India will be a major event in the artistic world in 1982 and its importance to India is underlined by

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the fact that we understand that Mrs Gandhi would be prepared to accept an invitation to become a patron, Your support would be invaluable and I wonder if you would be prepared to be a joint patron. Your acceptance would add to the prestige of the Festival and give enormous pleasure to all those involved in staging the various events.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Foreign Secretary.

John A. L.