



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

26 October 1983

Dear John,

CHOGM

Your letter of 11 October asked for details of the ceremony in New Delhi at which the Prime Minister will present the Bhartiya Jnanpith Awards. This letter covers also a number of other points on which we would welcome your advice.

Bhartiya Jnanpith Award Ceremony

/ As you will see from the enclosed letter to the Prime
/ Minister from the Managing Trustee of the Bhartiya Jnanpith -
to which I enclose a draft reply - previous presenters of the
Award have included several Presidents and Prime Ministers of
India. The Prime Minister's participation on this occasion has
already attracted favourable comment in the Indian press.
Details of the ceremony on 28 November are as follows.

The ceremony will be held at the ASIAD auditorium which seats about 2,200. The organisers expect it to be full. Guests will include the diplomatic corps, academics, businessmen, celebrities from the Indian literary world, press and government representatives. Indian radio and television will cover the event. But Mrs Gandhi has still to confirm that she will be present. The programme will be:

1. 1730 Prime Minister received by President, Trustees of the Bhartiya Jnanpith (BJ), and others. Garlanding on dais.
2. 1733 Invocation to Goddess of Wisdom (Hindi).
3. 1737 Welcome speech by President, BJ (Hindi).
4. 1740 Speech by Indian Foreign Minister as Chairman Award Selection Committee (Hindi).
5. 1745 Dr Narayana Monon, Member Section Board introduces Mrs Varma, the Award winner (English).
6. 1750 Reading of Citation (Hindi).

/7.



7. 1753 Garlanding of Mrs Varma, Presentation of citation and cheque, with coconut and shawl, by the Prime Minister.
8. 1756 Speech by Mrs Varma (Hindi).
9. 1806 Speech by the Prime Minister (English).
10. 1816 Thanks by BJ Trustee (English)
11. 1820- Interval: Select group of BJ Trustees
1830 and others (20-30) have tea with Prime Minister.
12. 1830- Cultural programme.
1900
13. 1900- Thanks, presentation of bouquet and
1905 photograph.
14. 1905 End of function.

Agree?

Yes no

The BJ Trustees have asked if the Prime Minister would stay on for the cultural programme (serials 12-14 above) which will be an integral part of the occasion with the setting to music of some of Mrs Varma's poems performed by distinguished musicians. Previous presenters of the Award have always stayed on. There might be adverse comment if the Prime Minister declined. We therefore recommend she agrees to stay.

Agree?

Yes no

The organisers have asked if the Prime Minister would agree to the ceremony of the Tilak (the marking of the forehead with a dab of red powder) in addition to the garlanding (serial 1). The ceremony is the traditional greeting for guests, as the Prime Minister will know from her visit to India in 1981. It would be well received if she agreed.

Agree?

Yes - a
comment
should - we will
have a word.
no

Our High Commission has suggested that the Prime Minister bring a British shawl for the presentation ceremony (serial 7). The Prime Minister will be expected to put it around Mrs Varma's shoulders herself. Use of a British shawl would be a fitting gesture, which would be noted by the audience and media. I should be grateful for advice.

A draft speech for the Prime Minister will be forwarded to you by 1 November.

Other Engagements

Sir Robert Wade-Gery has also asked whether the Prime Minister would be prepared to undertake other engagements while in New Delhi. There are, in order of priority, the following possibilities:



- Me*
- (a) address a meeting of the Indian National Science Academy on a topic in the general field of government promotion of the sciences. The Academy is the nearest equivalent to the Royal Society, with which it has close and effective links. A number of its senior members are themselves FRS. They would be particularly pleased if the Prime Minister, following her election as an FRS, would agree to address them.
- No.*
- (b) Attend a round table discussion of Indian business and economy, and Britain's role in the Indian market, with a small number - around half a dozen - of leading Delhi businessmen.
- Will do*
- (c) Attend a reception for two dozen or so members of the British business community and their wives.
- (d) Attend the opening by Mrs Gandhi of a textile exhibition at 0930 on 22 November, though this would follow close upon the Prime Minister's arrival in New Delhi. This suggestion came from the Indian Foreign Ministry.

We consider that the first two of these suggestion are much the better. The first, in particular, would provide an opportunity to project Britain's achievements in technology and science. The second would enable the Prime Minister to present the Government's economic policies and underline the importance we place on the Indian market. I should be grateful to know whether the Prime Minister would be prepared to consider either of these suggestions, if time can be found within what is already a very full programme.

Press Message

Finally, Sir Robert Wade-Gery has recommended that the Prime Minister send a message to the Indian press (which the High Commission would distribute midday) for publication on the eve of the Commonwealth Meeting. Such press messages are usual in India. She sent one at the time of her visit in 1981, and one on this occasion would help publicise British attachment to the Commonwealth and our wish to strengthen ties with India. I enclose a draft.

Agree / message?

Yours ever,

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

Peter Ricketts

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

31 October 1983

Thank you for your letter of 26 October about the Bhartiya Jnanpith Award Ceremony.

The Prime Minister agrees:

- (a) to stay on for the cultural programme.
- (b) to the ceremony of the Tilak.
- (c) to bring a British shawl for the presentation ceremony. She envisages bringing a cashmere shawl for this purpose. We shall make arrangements for its acquisition.
- (d) that the press message enclosed with your letter may be issued in her name (subject to the replacement of the first sentence of the third paragraph with: "I am sure that my present visit to India will be most valuable". The Prime Minister thought that the original wording might seem a little presumptuous in view of the State visit).

The Prime Minister has not yet taken a decision on the other engagements recommended by Sir Robert Wade-Gery. I shall be in touch with you about these in due course.

A. J. COLES

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

भारतीय ज्ञानपीठ



Ashok Kumar Jain
Managing Trustee

B/45-47, Connaught Place
NEW DELHI - 110 001

September 27, 1983

Your Excellency,

The Trustees of Bharatiya Jnanpith Foundation are happy that your Excellency is visiting India this November to participate in the Conference of Commonwealth Heads of Government. We are grateful that you have so graciously indicated your approval to be the Chief Guest and to present the Jnanpith Award, India's highest and most prestigious Annual literary prize to this year's Awardee, Mrs. Mahadevi Verma, the renowned poetess and writer, on 28th November, 1983 at New Delhi.

I enclose a brief note on ^{*}
Bharatiya Jnanpith and also on the Award Winner, Mrs. Mahadevi Verma.

Details of the programme will be finalised through proper channels to suit your Excellency's convenience.

With assurances of our highest consideration,

Yours sincerely,

(A.K. Jain)

* also see booklets inside file cover.

Her Excellency
Mrs. Margaret Thatcher,
Prime Minister of United Kingdom,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON.

Enc:

JNANPITH AND IT'S AWARD

Jnanpith award is India's highest and most prestigious literary award which attempts to discover and re-emphasise cultural values. It reflects contemporary struggles and also our aspiration which find common expression in current writings in 15 Indian languages.

A list of the award winners is given on pages 8 and 9 of Souvenir for 1983. The last one was presented to Smt. Amrita Pritam, the renowned Punjabi poetess, by the President of India, Shri Giani Zail Singh.

Late Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India, was the first Chairman of the Selection Board. Presently Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, a reputed linguist and writer, who is also the Minister for External Affairs of the Government of India, heads the Selection Board as its Chairman.

Founded in 1944 by the renowned industrialist, late Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain and his illustrious wife, Mrs. Rama Jain, Jnanpith has brought to light scores of rare works of Indology written in ancient and medieval languages, retrieving them from decay and extinction. Some of these texts inscribed on palm leaves are works

of philosophy, cosmography and mythological lore,
etc.

The 18th Annual award is to be presented to the eminent poetess and writer, Smt. Mahadevi Verma (76). Her contribution to the development and enrichment of modern Hindi poetry has been of immense value and impact. This year the award will be presented to her at a special function to be held in Delhi in November 1983. Jnanpith Award Presentation function is always a memorable occasion because of its authentic literary and cultural aura. Some of the choicest pieces of her poetry will be presented in the form of an Audio Visual programme by renowned artists on the occasion.

Awards have so far been presented by some of the most outstanding personages of India. 3 Presidents of India, 2 Prime Ministers and 2 Chief Justices have been among the Chief Guests to present the award, besides the two distinguished women - Mrs. Rukmani Arundale and Mrs. Mahadevi Verma herself.

MAHADEVI VERMA
AND HER LITERARY ACHIEVEMENTS

Born in 1907 in Uttar Pradesh, Mahadevi Verma attracted one's attention from her early years. She was mellow-natured, inwardly pensive, sophisticated in her own way, and bearing an innate warmth towards petty live creatures and the un-noticed ones around.

She did her M.A. in Sanskrit in 1933 with merit. Besides Sanskrit literature, she studied philosophy deeply and with a sentimental attachment. She has always had live and active interest in art, so much so that it were her own brush and pencil which adorned her two major poetical works, YAMA (The Night) and DEEPSHIKHA (The Lamp's Flame).

Her first collection of poems came out in 1930. And then another and yet another followed in regular succession. Significantly, she did not confine herself to poetry alone. She adopted prose also as her medium. And, not unexpectedly, her prose has the charm of poetry. It has depths of thinking and variations of style.

She has to her credit some 20 works : almost each one of them being a milestone, both in respect of

the subject matter and freshness of the literary idiom. Some of her prose works have really no equal, even as her poetry is an epitome of lyric beauty and painful awakening of life's total reality.

Mahadevi is one of the front-rank pioneers who brought in a new trend in modern Hindi poetry known as Chhayavadi -- broadly the Western Romantic poetry. It marked, instead, a new awakening to an eternal sense of oneness of life where Man and Nature stand in the mutual relationship of 'reflection' and 'reflector'. Sometimes it is Nature which mirrors Man and his transient joys and intransient sorrows, and at others it is vice versa. Mahadevi holds that, however close this relationship, it cannot satiate the spirit of Man unless the self is emptied completely.

Winner of a number of literary awards, she was honoured with the national title of 'Padmabhushan' in 1956 and the 'Bharat Bharati Award' in 1983. On her was conferred the D.Litt (Honoris causa) by the Vikram University of Ujjain, in 1979.

Mahadevi Verma is held in high esteem throughout the Indian literary world. Besides a number of scholarly studies on her life and literature

published during the last twenty years, research scholar from U.S.A., Ms. Karine Schomer, has done recently her Ph.D. thesis on Mahadevi. This has been published by the California University.



file Kb

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 October 1983

CHOGM

As you know, the Prime Minister has agreed to present an Indian literary award in Delhi on Monday, 28 November.

BW

I should be grateful if you could let me have, by 1 November, details of the ceremony, an indication of how long the Prime Minister will be expected to speak for and a suitable draft.

A. J. COLES

John Holmes Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

RW

PRIME MINISTER

CHOGM

The attached letter deals with three subjects:

(a) The Literary Award Ceremony at which you have agreed to make a speech. Could you indicate your decisions on the various points I have noted in the margin?

(b) Some suggestions from Robert Wade-Gery as to other engagements which you might undertake in Delhi. I think you will need to bear in mind that, following Grenada, CHOGM is going to be a livelier and more demanding Meeting than it would otherwise have been. If you want to take up any of Robert's four suggestions, perhaps you would again indicate in the margin.

(c) A message from you to the Indian press to be published on the eve of the Meeting. A text is attached. Are you content with it?

A. J. COLES

28 October 1983

I am delighted to be returning to India once more, this time for the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government. It is my fourth visit to a country which has always deeply interested me.

We in Britain cherish greatly our membership of the Commonwealth, that unique family of nations bound together by shared values and links of friendship. Our regular meetings whether of Heads of Government, or of the many other Commonwealth bodies now flourishing, symbolise the warmth of the association. Such meetings advance cooperation in many fields, between nations, between organisations, and between individuals. This is one of the main strengths of the Commonwealth relationship. I am confident that under the Chairmanship of your Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, the Commonwealth Meeting in New Delhi will make a ~~real~~ *strong* contribution to the Commonwealth ideal.

I also hope that my visit will help strengthen the close ties between the United Kingdom and India. In particular I look forward to discussions with Mrs Gandhi, who brings to her consideration of affairs such experience and vision. ~~It is my strong conviction that the frequent contacts between us and between our two governments and people will further intensify in the months and years ahead.~~

Today India is one of the world's leading industrial nations. Her resources, both material and human, ~~give~~ *represent* India an enormous potential for the future. India has also pioneered work at the frontiers of science and technology. In these and other areas there is great scope for collaboration between our two countries. Such collaboration benefits us both, and promotes our shared objectives of economic growth. Today Britain is one of India's largest trading partners and for many years we have made the largest net bilateral aid contribution to India's development. It is in the interest of both countries to strengthen further this economic cooperation within the Commonwealth framework.

I send through your pages my warm wishes to the Government and people of India.

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Just



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 November 1983

CHOGM

I can now give you replies to a number of outstanding questions.

With regard to your letter of 26 October, the Prime Minister has decided that she does not wish to address a meeting of the Indian National Science Academy. Nor does she wish to attend a round table discussion of Indian business and the Indian economy. She would be prepared, if this was thought desirable, to attend a Reception for members of the British Community and their wives.

The Prime Minister has also indicated that if Mrs. Gandhi very much wished her to, she would attend the opening of the Textile Exhibition at 0930 on 22 November. Bearing in mind that this event occurs shortly after our arrival in New Delhi, I very much hope that the Prime Minister will only be asked to attend this event if Mrs. Gandhi herself genuinely wishes her to (I have no doubt that any Indian if asked will claim that Mrs. Gandhi does so wish).

28F /
15F /
Your letter of 28 October reverted to the question of a bilateral meeting between the Prime Minister and Mrs. Gandhi on 22 November. In the light of the arguments advanced in your letter, the Prime Minister has now agreed that we should seek to arrange such a meeting. I should be grateful if you would do so. With regard to a possible bilateral meeting with Mr. Hawke (your letter of 21 October), the Prime Minister can accept the Australian suggestion of a working breakfast at 0800 on Wednesday, 23 November (on the assumption that Mr. Hawke does not bring his arrival forward to 22 November).

A. J. COLES

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P.F. Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

Q/F Kile

*with AJC
Compendium: CNOGM*

28 October 1983

Dear Sir,

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter of 27 September and to say how much she is looking forward to the award ceremony on 28 November.

I understand that our High Commission in New Delhi is in touch with you about the arrangements for the occasion.

Yours sincerely

A. J. Welles.

Shri A. V. Jain.

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:
PS/The Prime Minister

Reference

DEPARTMENT: **TEL. NO:**

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

Shri A V Jain
Managing Trustee
Bhartiya Jnanpith
B/45-47 Connaught Place
New Delhi - 110001

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

CAVEAT.....

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter of 27 September and to say how much she is looking forward to the award ceremony on 28 November.

I understand that our High Commission in New Delhi is in touch with you about the arrangements for the occasion.

A. S. C. ²⁸/₁₀

Enclosures—flag(s).....