



India
TWP

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 December 1981

FESTIVAL OF INDIA

You wrote to Michael Alexander on 3 December.

Message for Gala Concert Programme

The Prime Minister found the draft enclosed with your letter rather too formal. She has approved the alternative text enclosed with this letter. The Prime Minister agrees that the wording of Mrs. Gandhi's proposed message is rather unsuitable. If it proves possible to agree a joint statement with the Indians, more on the lines of the text approved by the Prime Minister, this will be acceptable (though the Prime Minister will doubtless want to have a final look at the wording).

Invitations to Gala Concert

The Prime Minister agrees to the invitations being issued in the joint names of herself and Mrs. Gandhi.

Festival Souvenir Book

The Prime Minister agrees to put her name to an article and has approved the text enclosed with this letter.

A. J. COLES

R.M.J. Lyne, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

RLH

PROPOSED MESSAGE BY THE PRIME MINISTER

Tonight's concert launches the Festival of India, a six-month long presentation of the art, music, science and technology of a great country and civilisation.

Countless people in the United Kingdom will share my own keen sense of anticipation and pleasure at this prospect. It is an unprecedented and perhaps unrepeatable opportunity to look afresh at a country which has deeply affected not just our history but our way of life and perception of the world. The British impact on India has been equally profound. Between some countries cultural links are little more than officially inspired cultural exchanges. Between Britain and India the cross-fertilisation of ideas and values is a living and creative process between peoples. The Festival will portray and celebrate that process. It is an event of great importance. I believe it will lead to a new awareness in the United Kingdom of the spirit and the meaning of India.

I commend the Festival programme to those who are already enthusiasts for the civilisation of India and to those who wish to acquire a knowledge and understanding of it. I wish all concerned a splendid success.

THE FESTIVAL OF INDIA - A CULTURAL RE-EVALUATION

1. The Festival of India which opens in London on 22 March 1982 is an event without parallel in the history of cultural interchange between India and the United Kingdom. Over a period of six months it will bring together exhibitions which illustrate aspects of the Indian heritage from earliest times to the present day. It will range from the way of life of a typical Indian village, specially recreated at the Museum of Mankind, to a display of the development of Indian science and technology at the Science Museum. Painting and sculpture, modern art, design, the performing arts, folk art, photography and film will all be represented at museums and galleries throughout the capital and in other parts of the United Kingdom.

2. I am particularly pleased to have been invited to become joint patron of the Festival with the Prime Minister of India, Shrimati Indira Gandhi - and not just because it will allow me to extend my own acquaintance with Indian culture, all too briefly but wonderfully glimpsed on my visits to India. This Festival is an important symbol of the close links between our two countries and of the mutual regard which we have for one another's achievements. It will give a new generation of Britons from all walks of life and a variety of ethnic backgrounds an insight into the best of Indian civilisation and increase their understanding of the influence it has had on the United Kingdom.

3. India has always exerted a powerful fascination for the British. At the time of our contacts in the late 16th and early 17th centuries our interest, was at first essentially mercantile. But later, as we came to know the subcontinent better, we came to appreciate its people and civic order, its magnificent architecture, its luxuriant sculpture and frescoes, and its many other wonders. Perhaps one could also say that India, by its very contrast with our own culture, evoked in us a new perception of ourselves. At one time we were impressed by the richness and opulence of imperial India. At another, as we sought our own historical roots, it was the depth and spread of Indian civilisation and its impact on the European tradition which excited us. And during periods of turmoil, in our values we have turned to the Indian philosophical tradition for a new
/ appreciation

appreciation of meaning and harmony in human affairs.

4. But these perceptions represented only partial fragments of an India too complex and too diverse for us to grasp as a whole. This Festival gives us the opportunity to see the Indian experience with fresh eyes and fresh understanding. India's culture is not static; it is continuously developing and has its own dynamic relationship with the West. We shall see something of that cross-fertilisation of artistic ideas in the exhibitions of modern art, industrial design, graphic art, photography and film. We shall also see it in contemporary music, for the Gala Concert which opens the Festival will feature the renowned musician Ravi Shankar giving the first European performance of his Second Sitar Concerto, accompanied by the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

5. Nor should we forget India's outstanding achievement in the world of scientific endeavour. She has pioneered developments in medicine and agriculture and has a foremost position in nuclear energy, satellite technology and computer science. I am glad that this aspect of India will also be well represented in the Festival.

6. The Festival of India will enable us the more fully to appreciate a country whose effect on our own way of life has been incalculable. It remains for me to extend my thanks to the organisations which have so generously given their sponsorship and to the many individuals here and in India who have devoted much effort to preparing and mounting the Festival. Success will attend their efforts.

PRIME MINISTER

Apr '81
Apr article.
no

Festival of India

I attach a retyped version of the article (for the souvenir book produced by Air India) which you amended over the weekend. May this now issue?

I take it that there is no misunderstanding about the message. Your minute criticising its contents is written on Mrs. Gandhi's proposed message (see Flag A). The FCO draft for your message is at Flag B. But I think this is arid too and therefore submit my own draft at Flag C. Would you be content to authorise a message on these lines?

Sorry - The message to which my comments referred in the one draft

A. J. Cole 2/12

7 December 1981

Sorry it was written on A. A has nothing to do with us and is neither a letter nor a message. not.

MRS GANDHI'S PROPOSED MESSAGE FOR THE OPENING GALA CONCERT PROGRAMME

" History brought Britain and India together politically and economically. This relationship affected the scholars, statesmen and the common people of the two countries in numerous ways. Yet for various reasons our two peoples made little attempt to understand each other in depth. Perhaps the very inequality of the political link came in the way. Now that the world situation is entirely changed and memories of that uncomfortable period are fading, there is opportunity for a new effort of mutual understanding.

The Festival of India is an endeavour to present the arts of India to the people of Britain. The scale and the time will permit only of a quick glimpse into the complexity, persistence and creativiity of the culture of India, which is remarkable for its insight into the unity of all that exists. The initiative for this Festival came from the Prime Minister and cultural leaders of the United Kingdom. We appreciate this gesture and hope that tonight's concert, and the Festival as a whole, will forge a new link in the relationship between Britain and India."

*This word do. When
no enthusiasm in
60 June 1954
not*

B

PROPOSED MESSAGE BY THE PRIME MINISTER FOR THE OPENING GALA CONCERT PROGRAMME

" The Festival of India is an unprecedented event of major importance in relations between India and Britain. It aims to present, through a wide range of exhibitions and artistic events, the rich diversity of India's historic culture. But it is also an opportunity to demonstrate India's outstanding achievements in the modern era in science, technology and many other fields. It is thus a unique opportunity for our two nations to consolidate their mutual respect and understanding. It will look to a promising future as well as to the historic past.

I am delighted to be a joint patron with the Prime Minister of India of this Festival, which will run until the autumn of this year. I am grateful to the Government and people of India for their co-operation which had made this occasion possible. May I wish the organisers in both India and Britain every success. Tonight's Concert ^{marks} ~~makes~~ the opening of a Festival which will add an important new dimension to relations between India and Britain."

5 3
C

PROPOSED MESSAGE BY THE PRIME MINISTER

Tonight's concert launches the Festival of India, a six-month long presentation of the art, music, science and technology of a great country and civilisation.

Countless people in the United Kingdom will share my own keen sense of anticipation and pleasure at this prospect. It is an unprecedented and perhaps unrepeatable opportunity to look afresh at a country which has deeply affected not just our history but our way of life and perception of the world. The British impact on India has been equally profound. Between some countries cultural links are little more than officially inspired cultural exchanges. Between Britain and India the cross-fertilisation of ideas and values is a living and creative process between peoples. The Festival will portray and celebrate that process. It is an event of great importance. ~~(in our overall bilateral relationship)~~ I believe it will lead to a new awareness in the United Kingdom of the spirit and the meaning of India.

I commend the Festival programme to those who are already enthusiasts for the civilisation of India and to those who wish to acquire a knowledge and understanding of it. I wish all concerned a splendid success.



1

10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

John - you will
see how much we
need - good
sub-ordinator before
the draft is
submitted - to
No. 10!

Do you agree

(a) to the draft statement
for the concert programme

(b) to the article for the
Souvenir Book

(c) to invitations for the sale
concert being issued in your
name and that of Mr. Sandli.

2. On (a), Mr. Sandli's message is
not very felicitous. We would
try for a joint statement instead.

A. J. C. 12



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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

3 December 1981

Dear Michael,

Festival of India

During her visit to India in April the Prime Minister invited Mrs Gandhi to visit the United Kingdom at the time of the opening (March 1982) of the Festival. Mrs Gandhi has not yet formally accepted but it is likely that she will do so and will make the opening of the Festival a part of an official two or three-day visit to Britain. We shall be writing separately about arrangements for the visit and about attendance at Festival events, but there are one or two other issues connected with the Festival on which we need early decisions.

Message for Gala Concert Programme

It has already been agreed in principle that the Festival should be opened at a Gala Concert at the Royal Festival Hall, on the evening of 22 March.

Mrs Jayakar, Chairman of the Indian Advisory Committee to the Festival, who visited Britain in June and called on the Prime Minister, has proposed that the printed programme for the concert should include two short statements by the two Prime Ministers. The attached statement has been supplied to the Festival Office as being the message that Mrs Gandhi has in mind. We think that it would be more appropriate for joint patrons to agree a joint message. Indeed, this would seem to be one way of improving on the rather unsuitable wording in the first paragraph of Mrs Gandhi's proposed message. We propose to ask the High Commissioner to approach the Indians again with the text of what we have in mind, in an attempt to secure their agreement to a joint statement or, failing that, to two more suitably matching statements.

We submit for the Prime Minister's approval the draft of a statement intended for her personal signature. This could be slightly recast for joint signature if the Indians agree.

/Invitations to Gala Concert



Invitations to Gala Concert

✓ We should also like the Prime Minister's agreement to invitations to the Gala Concert being issued in the joint names of herself and Mrs Gandhi.

Festival Souvenir Book

/ A souvenir book of the Festival is being produced by Air India which will contain full information about Festival events and a collection of articles by specialists on a wide range of subjects germane to aspects of the Festival. The articles contributed by Indian authors will be vetted by an editorial board set up by the Indian Government. They have proposed, and Mrs Gandhi is said to have agreed, that the two Prime Ministers should each contribute an article of about 1,000 words. We should like the Prime Minister's agreement to putting her name to such an article, and attach a draft.

*Yours ever,
R M J*

R M J (R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street

THE FESTIVAL OF INDIA - A CULTURAL RE-EVALUATION

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2. I am particularly pleased to have been invited to become joint patron of the Festival with the Prime Minister of India, Shrimati Indira Gandhi - and not just because it will allow me to ^{extend} ~~show~~ my own acquaintance with Indian culture, ^{all too briefly but wonderfully} ~~so intriguingly~~ glimpsed on my visits to India? This Festival is an important symbol of the closeness ~~of the~~ links between our two countries and of the mutual regard which we have for one another's achievements. ~~I believe it will be a vital opportunity to give a new generation of Britons from all walks of life and a variety of ethnic backgrounds an insight into the best of Indian civilisation and increase their understanding of the influence it has had on us in the United Kingdom.~~

3. ~~There is another reason why I think this Festival is of special significance at the present time. India has always exerted a powerful fascination for the British. At the time of our first contacts in the late 16th and early 17th centuries that interest, if we are to be frank, was essentially mercantile. But later, as we came to know the subcontinent better, we came to appreciate its in other ways -- for its magnificent~~

^{at first}
^{our}
people and
civilisation

(architecture

~~out~~
architecture, its luxuriant sculpture and frescoes,
and its many wonders.
~~its civic order.~~ Perhaps one could also say that
India, by its very contrast with our own culture,
evoked in us a new perception of ourselves. ~~That~~
~~perception took different forms at different periods.~~
At one time we were impressed by the richness and
opulence of imperial India, ~~as we ourselves grew from~~
~~a small island of farmers and seafarers to an imperial~~
~~power.~~ At another, as we sought our own historical
roots, it was the depth and spread of Indian
civilisation and its impact on the European tradition
which excited us. And during periods of turmoil,
in our values we have turned to the Indian philosophical
tradition for a new appreciation of meaning and
harmony in human affairs.

4. ~~My point is not that any of these perceptions were~~
~~wrong~~ *But we* ~~indeed many of the exhibitions we will see~~
~~testify to their reality~~ *only* ~~but that they represented~~
partial fragments of an India too complex and too
diverse for us to grasp as a whole. The key to this
Festival is that the time has now come for us to
~~re-evaluate the Indian experience, to see it with~~
fresh eyes and fresh understanding *↑* ~~as a cultural whole.~~
~~That does not just mean a concern with the past,~~
~~impressive though its achievements undoubtedly were.~~
India's culture is not static; ~~nor does it exist~~
~~in a vacuum~~ it is continuously developing and has
its own dynamic relationship with the West. We shall
see something of that cross-fertilization of artistic
ideas in the exhibitions of modern art, industrial
design, graphic art, photography and film. *We shall also* ~~and indeed~~
see it in contemporary music, for the Gala Concert which
opens the Festival will feature the renowned musician
Ravi Shankar giving the first European performance
of his Second Sitar Concerto, accompanied by the
London Philharmonic Orchestra. *N.P.* ~~Nor should we forget~~
~~that India's~~ *our heritage* ~~achievement also embraces the world of~~
scientific endeavour, ~~the only difference being that~~
~~the values of science know no ethnic or national~~
~~boundaries.~~ India is now a leading member of the
world scientific community. ~~It has split the atom.~~

*With this Festival
we have a
This Festival gives
us the opportunity*

She has →

has a foremost position in
nuclear energy, satellite technology

~~sent satellites into space~~, pioneered developments in ~~and~~ medicine, agriculture and ~~energy~~. I am glad that this ~~aspect~~ of India will also be ^{well} represented in the Festival.

5. ~~I am convinced that~~ The Festival of India will ^{enable us} ~~have~~ ^{great} ~~major impact on our understanding of~~ a country whose effect on our own way of life has been incalculable.

It remains for me to extend my thanks to the organisations which have so generously given their sponsorship and to the many individuals here and in India who have devoted much effort to preparing and mounting the Festival.

~~I wish it every success.~~ Success will attend their

efforts.

Use more fully to appreciate.