

India

GRS 170
CONFIDENTIAL
FROM DELHI 100730Z NOV
TO ROUTINE FCO
TELEGRAM NUKBER 821 OF 10 NOVZMBER 1980

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1. I SAW MRS GANDHI ON SUNDAY EVENING AHEAD OF MY RETURN TO LONDON. MOST OF THE CONVERSATION WAS ABOUT THE VISIT OF THE PRINCE OF WALES AND ALSO ABOUT INDIAN DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS. IN ADDITION SHE ASKED ME TO CONVEY PERSONALLY HER WARM GOOD WISHES TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND TO SAY THAT SHE WAS VERY GLAD TO ACCEPT MRS THATCHER'S INVITATION TO BE A JOINT SPONSOR WITH HER OF THE FESTIVAL OF INDIA.

2. MRS GANDHI'S STAFF HAVE TOLD ME SEPARATELY THAT THEY THINK SHE IS IN PRINCIPLE READY TO COME TO LONDON IN FEBRUARY 1982 TO ASSIST AT THE OPENING OF THE FESTIVAL. MRS GANDHI DID NOT MENTION THIS TO ME HERSELF AND OF COURSE THE PRIME MINISTER'S INVITATION TO HER TO COME TO LONDON DURING THE FESTIVAL WAS NOT SPECIFIC AS TO TIMING. HOWEVER, NUMBER 10 AND THE FESTIVAL ORGANISERS MAY WISH TO BEAR IN MIND THAT ACCORDING TO PRECEDENT THE BUDGET SESSION OF THE INDIAN PARLIAMENT WOULD BEGIN ABOUT 18 FEBRUARY. ACCORDINGLY IT MIGHT BE PRUDENT TO PLAN THE OPENING OF THE FESTIVAL FOR THE FIRST HALF OF FEBRUARY. INCIDENTALLY, I HOPE THE MAIN PART OF THE EXHIBITION, INCLUDING THE HAYWARD GALLERY, WILL STILL BE OPEN IN JUNE 1982. THIS IS THE PEAK PERIOD FOR INDIANS VISITING LONDON.

3. I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL IF MRS GANDHI'S GOOD WISHES AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S INVITATION COULD BE CONVEYED TO MRS THATCHER. MRS GANDHI ALSO NOTED WITH PLEASURE THE CHEQUERS LUNCH FOR THE INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER.

THOMSON

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OID
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MR DONALD

[NOT ADVANCED]

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