FACT SHEET

IMPORTANT NEWLY DISCOVERED ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS
ADDED TO NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART'S

SCULPTURE OF INDIA: 3000 B.C. - 1300 A.D.

OBJECTS TO BE ON VIEW BEGINNING WITH VISIT TO GALLERY
OF PRIME MINISTER RAJIV GANDHI
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 1985

OBJECTS
Two recently discovered sculptural pillars and their three crossbars dating from the
First Century A.D., from Sanghol, northwest of Delhi, have been added to the
exhibition, Sculpture of India: 3000 B.C. - 1300 A.D., which opened May 5, 1985 and is
on view in the Gallery's East Building through September 2, 1985.

The objects were created in Mathura, the leading center of Indian sculpture from the
First Century to the middle of the Fifth Century A.D., and then buried in Sanghol.
There is no clear evidence to indicate why the objects were buried there;
archaeologists can only speculate they were buried for reasons of safety.
Knowledge of their existence was subsequently lost until this year.

DISCOVERY
On February 2, 1985, G. B. Sharma from the Department of Archaeology of the State of
Punjab and his colleagues discovered the remains of a Buddhist stupa, or reliquary
mound, in Sanghol. As they were conserving the stupa, the archaeologists found a large
number of railing pillars and crossbars concealed in a nearby pit.

DESCRIPTION
One pillar depicts the motif of a goose, who, mistaking drops of water falling from
the wet hair of a lady for pearls, opens his beak to swallow them. The lady has just
finished her bath and is wringing her hair, her head gently tilted. The other pillar
is satirical and depicts a young woman riding on the back of an obese man with coarse
and wrinkled features. The three crossbars bear lotuses, symbolic of Water Cosmology,
the ancient Indian religious concept that water is the source of all that exists. The
sculptures are carved from a spotted red sandstone typical of Mathura work.

LENDER OF WORKS
The objects are being loaned to the exhibition by the Directorate of Archaeology.

FESTIVAL OF INDIA
Prime Minister Gandhi's visit to Washington inaugurates the Festival of India, a year
of cultural, scientific and educational exchanges between the United States and
India. Prime Minister Gandhi and Mrs. Reagan are the honorary patrons of the Festival
of India.

END

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director
(Information Officer), or Carolyn Amiot, Information Office, National Gallery of