

WORLD SIKH NEWS

Sikh Film Fest: Introducing the world to turbanology 14 New York shows on history, arts, politics, contemporary life

WSN Bureau

23 September 2009



NEW YORK: 'Turbanology', a film highlighting the West's reaction to the Sikh turban and the plight of the community after the 9/11 terror attacks, drew popular attention at the two-day Sikh International Film Festival here.

In its seventh year, the Sikh film festival received 50 entries and screened 14 films on the history, arts, politics and contemporary life of the community in two days.

The Best Documentary Award went to 'A Warrior's Religion', portraying South Asian youth gangs and related violence among youth. Its director, Mani Amar, grew up in Vancouver and hopes for world peace. "But that's what I really want. I really want to fight for peace," Amar said.

The Indian envoy to the UN, Hardeep Singh Puri, praised the Sikh community for its efforts at home and abroad while giving away awards at the festival. "The Sikh community both here and in India is recognised for its hard work and commitment," Puri said.

Consul General of India Prabhu Dayal added that the Sikh community was also recognised for its excellence. 'Unravelling' won the Best Short Film Award and was about a man who fought in World War II and his relation with his grandson. The film reflected the complexities of war, personal loss and India's colonial legacy.

Its director Kuldip Powar has made several films on Asian life in Britain. While accepting his award he said that Sikhs had to fight two battles before filmmaking. "The first is to convince your family that having anything to do with art is good. The second battle is to get funds for non-mainstream films."



A favourite in the pack was '1984' and 'Via Dolorosa' by UK-based Singh twins that depicted the political corruption and the human rights abuse after the Indian Army took over Harmandar Sahib in 1984. The sufferings of the community were portrayed apropos the Christian tradition of Via Dolorosa, or the pain suffered by Jesus Christ.

'Bhangra Generation' and 'Flying Sikhs' were some of the films that drew popular response. While the former was on the impact of Bhangra on second-generation South Asians in the West, the latter was on the history of Sikh pilots in the Indian and British Air Force.