

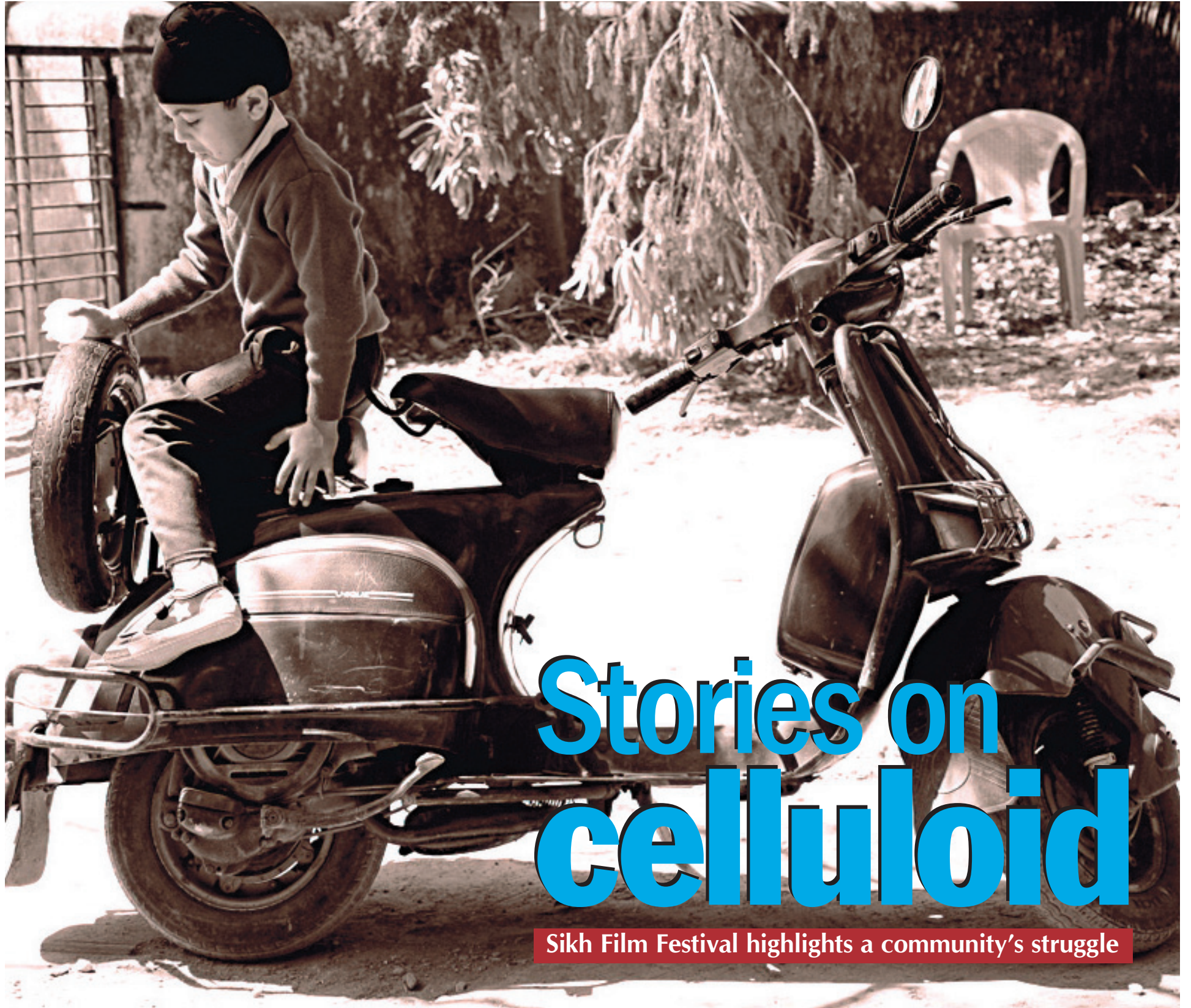
# India *in* New York<sup>®</sup>

A GUIDE TO EVENTS AND ENTERTAINMENT FROM INDIA ABROAD

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## Stories on celluloid

Sikh Film Festival highlights a community's struggle

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# Honoring the best



Jaspal Bindra



Navtej Sarna



Gurinder Chadha

ARTHUR J PAIS

British-Indian director Gurinder Chadha, who is working with Academy award winning music director A R Rahman and lyricist Stephen Schwartz on Dreamworks Animation's first musical set in India, was to be honored at the Sikh Heritage Gala, October 15, in New York.

Chadha, who is looking forward to taking her best-known film *Bend It Like Beckham* as a musical to West End in London (and also eyeing Broadway), was to be honored in the arts category. Indian diplomat and author Navtej Sarna was to be recognized in the vision category and Jaspal Bindra, chief executive officer, Asia, Standard Chartered Bank, was to receive the leadership award.

Chadha began her career in the United Kingdom as a

news reporter for the British Broadcasting Corporation and made documentaries for the British Film Institute and Channel Four. She directed several documentaries and the popular 1995 two-part drama *Rich Deceiver* for the BBC.

*Bend It Like Beckham* was a coming of age story about friendships formed outside racial barriers. It made a star of Keira Knightley in no time.

Chadha's other successful films include the Aishwarya Rai Bachchan starrer *Bride and Prejudice* that fused Jane Austen with Indian and Western musicals, and the teen comedy *Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging*.

The gala event was to take place at Ciprianni at 55 Wall Street. Sarna's book *The Zafarnama*, a translation from Persian to English of Guru Gobind Singh's letter to Aurangzeb, was to be released at the festival. Sarna studied commerce and law at Delhi University and joined the

Indian Foreign Service in 1980. He is India's Ambassador to Israel and has served as a diplomat in Moscow, Warsaw, Thimphu, Geneva, Tehran and Washington D C. His book *The Exile* is based on the life of Maharaja Duleep Singh, the son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, one of India's greatest Sikh rulers.

Bindra, group executive director and a member of the board of Standard Chartered, is based in Hong Kong. He joined Standard Chartered in 1998 and has held senior positions in the Group such as global head of client relationship for Wholesale Bank and CEO for India. Before joining the bank Bindra was with UBS investment banking. He began his career with the Bank of America in 1984 and worked with them across treasury markets and consumer banking in India and Singapore. He has received a lot of media attention for his work as chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Council at Standard Chartered.

Bindra, who has a master's degree in business management from Xavier Labor Relations Institute, Jamshedpur, has actively sought out better positions for women at the bank.

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## Films about the dark, and the light

Singh, living as neighbors in New Delhi. Kuldeep has always looked upon Jagjeet as his younger brother. The film set in 1984 shows a day in the life of the friends during the 1984 riots in which one friend is killed.

In another short film, *The Reunion*, directors Angad Bhai and Ethan Russell show what happens when two friends who share a common background reunite after several years. One is a Sikh who cuts his hair after being brutalized during a hate crime, and the other has kept his hair since birth. The film deals with issues Sikhs face when trying to assimilate into American society.

Angad Bhai, who has a degree from Cornell University in English and Economics, is a special education teacher at a NYC public school. He plays the turbaned Sikh in the film.

In the short film *Jeevika*, director Anureet Kaur looks at a segment of the Punjabi population unaffected by the information-technology revolution as they are immersed in shepherding and making jaggery.

In the hour-long documentary *Glut The Untold Story of Punjab*, directors Smaran Sahu and Sahil Bhagat say 73.5 percent of Punjab's youth is addicted to drugs.

David R Gray's films on Arctic explorations and early Sikh immigrants in Canada are titled *Searching for the Sikhs of Tod Inlet*, *Beyond the Gardens' Wall* and *Canadian Soldier Sikhs*.

In *Canadian Soldier Sikhs: A Little Story in a Big War*, Gray focuses on ten Sikh men

In the hour-long documentary *Glut The Untold Story of Punjab*, directors Smaran Sahu and Sahil Bhagat say 73.5 percent of Punjab's youth is addicted to drugs

who are enlisted, trained, and transported to France in World War I.

'This film will bring to life the fascinating and unknown story of a group of Sikh men who enlisted in the Canadian army,' Gray says, adding these 'volunteers fought for a country which denied them even the basic rights of citizenship. It follows one injured

soldier back to Canada on a hospital ship. Images of his war grave and the story of how his war medal has survived bring a personal touch to the film.'

There was no information published on the role of Sikhs in the Canadian armed forces in World War I. In order to assess the potential for creating a documentary film

on the Canadian Sikhs in WWI, Gray and a small group of researchers spent several weeks at the Library and Archives Canada, the Directorate of History, and the Canadian War Museum archives.

The search was tough and it took nearly a year to gather basic information for the documentary.