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5th Annual Chicago South Asian Film Festival, Presented by Zee Cinema, Brings Together the Best of Talent and Filmgoers to Chicago

Four-Day Festival of Dynamic Film Selections, Intimate Film Discussions and Events launches SAFA Awards and Brings Art, Culture, and Entertainment to Chicago and Evanston

Chicago, IL – September 22, 2014 – The 2014 [Chicago South Asian Film Festival, presented by Zee Cinema](http://www.csaff.org), treated film enthusiasts and artists alike to a weekend of art, culture and entertainment at the Showplace ICON Theater in South Loop and the Evanston Public Library. The fifth annual festival kicked off the four-day event with opening night on Thursday, September 18th. Over the next three days, the Festival showcased over 30 carefully curated shorts, documentaries and feature independent films, red carpet events, after parties, VIP dinners and the especially enjoyable post film discussions with the actors, directors and producers of films like *Liar's Dice*, *Monsoon Shootout*, *Brahmin Bulls*, *Algorithms*, *M Cream* and *Ankhon Dekhi*.

On the heels of a successful four-day event, the Festival proudly shared the news of its opening night film and the film that it premiered in Chicago, *Liar's Dice*, as India's official submission to the [Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences](http://www.oscars.org) for the Oscar's foreign language category. *Algorithms*, another audience favorite, has been nominated for the Grierson Award, the most prestigious documentary awards in the UK, for Best Newcomer Documentary.

Several notable filmmakers and actors were in attendance throughout the weekend to support the best of multicultural cinema. Included were: Nawazuddin Siddiqui (*Liar's Dice*, *Monsoon Shootout*, *The Lunchbox*, *Gangs of Wasseypur*), Rajat Kapoor (*Ankhon Dekhi*, *Dil Chahta Hai*, *Monsoon Wedding*), Imaad Shah (*M Cream*, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, *Tasher Desh*), Sendhil Ramamurthy (*Brahmin Bulls*, *Heros*, *Covert Affairs*, *Beauty and the Beast*), Ian MacDonald (*Algorithms*), Mahesh Pailoor (*Brahmin Bulls*), Manish Mundra (*Liar's Dice*), Ric Gazarian (*Hit The Road India*), Shahnawa Zali (*Mohammad*), Ashok Vish (*Boy Named Boris*), and Sai Prasad (*Color of War*). The Festival was honored to have the Honorable Chicago Consul General of India, Dr. Ausaf Sayeed, in attendance as well.

The 5th annual event introduced the South Asian Films in America (SAFA) Awards to recognize South Asian films and talent and honor the achievements that they have made to the art of cinema on a platform that is exclusive to Chicago. On opening night, the first SAFA Award for Outstanding Artistic Achievement was presented to independent film circuit favorite and now the lead actor in an Oscar submission, Nawazuddin Siddiqui. An Indian film actor, Siddiqui's list of credits include *New York* (2009), *Peepli Live* (2010), *Kahani* (2012), *Talaash* (2012), *Gangs of Wasseypur* (2012), *The Lunchbox* (2013), *Bombay Talkies* (2013) and his latest, *Kick* (2014). On receiving the honor, Nawazuddin shared "When you win an award at an international platform, it goes on to prove that your work is being appreciated across the globe. As an actor, it's a very heartening feeling." He has also won a Screen Award, Zee Cine Award, and Stardust Award among others during the course of his blossoming career.

Festival Director and Co-Founder, Amit Rana, stated: "It was truly an honor to host such prominent talent from the South Asian film world. Our goal has always been to show our audience high caliber films while providing them a full Festival experience from red carpets to intimate Q&A's with artists. I'm extremely proud of

the strides the Festival has made in its five years and we have some exciting initiatives in store for 2015 and beyond, especially with Zee Cinema as our Presenting Sponsor. We look forward to further expanding CSAFF within our cinema, community, culture and, of course, Chicago.”

The Festival once again hit its stride as an experience for all international cinema enthusiasts. The value of the Festival's mission to provide a diverse cinematic experience through South Asian films for filmmakers and moviegoers alike with the warmth and personal touch that is unique to Chicago, was recognized by the attending artists and audience who praised the warm reception and daring film selection.

The twittersphere was buzzing with #CSAFFestival and @CSAFFestival tweets:

Actor/Director Rajat Kapoor tweeted: ‘thank you @CSAFFestival for a wonderful screening of #ankhondekhi in chicago- and the warmth of your hospitality. thank you..’

Director Ian MacDonald tweeted: Super screening of #Algorithms @CSAFFestival yesterday. Thx to everyone who came and to @deemelinda for moderating Q&A.

Chicago's Vocolo on WBEZ tweeted: Find out what to see at the @CSAFFestival this weekend (and discover the hotness of Sendhil Ramamurthy) tumblr.co/ZLTJEW1R6OtSw

Festival audience members tweeted:

Really enjoyed myself @CSAFFestival. @brahminbulls and #MonsoonShootout were amazing! Kudos to the staff for such an awesome fest!

My highlight @CSAFFestival was the intense, understated, affecting & real performances by @Nawazuddin_S. in #LiarsDice & #MonsoonShootout.

A diverse selection of short films, documentaries and features whose themes explored topics from women's and LGBTQ issues to politics to the dynamics of human emotions brought multitudes to Showplace ICON Theater and Evanston Public Library. The Festival presented multiple World, U.S. and Chicago premieres:

U.S. Premiere:

Algorithms (Director: Ian McDonald): U.S. Premiere; Documentary; India

Int. Café- Night (Director: Adhiraj Bose): U.S. Premiere; Short Film; India; Naseeruddin Shah, Shernaz

Mitraa (Director: Ravi Jadhav): U.S. Premiere; Short Film; India; Veena Jamkar, Sandeep Khare, Mrunmayee Deshpande Patel, Shweta Basu Prasad, Naveen Kasturia

Munnariyippu (Director: Venu): Feature; U.S. Premiere; India; Mammooty, Aparna Gopinath

Crossing Bridges (Sange Dorjee): U.S. Premiere; Feature; India; Anshu Jamsenpa, Phuntsu Khriem

Rangzen-Freedom (Director: Gaurav Saxena): U.S. Premiere; Short Film; India; Tenzin Dayoe, Sonam Phunsok

World Premiere:

A Boy Called Boris (Director: Ashok Vish): World Premiere; Short Film; United States; Max Kolby, Brian Gildea, Jose Amor

Mohammad (Director: Shahnawaz Ali): World Premiere; Short Film; Qatar

Chicago Premiere:

Liar's Dice (Director: Geethu Mohandas): Chicago Premiere; Feature; India; Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Geetanjali Thapa, Manya Gupta

Ankhon Dekhi (Director: Rajat Kapoor): Chicago Premiere; Feature; India; Sanjay Mishra, Rajat Kapoor, Seema Pahwa

Blouse (Director: Vijayeta Kumar): Chicago Premiere; Short Film; India; Sumeet Vyas, Imran Rashid, Ronjini Chakraborty, Preeti Sharma

Brahmin Bulls (Director: Mahesh Pailoor): Chicago Premiere; Feature; India; Sendhil Ramamurthy, Roshan Seth, Cassidy Freeman, Justin Bartha

M Cream (Director: Agneya Singh, Aban Raza): Chicago Premiere; Feature; India; Imaaduddin Shah, Ira Dubey, Auritra Ghosh, Raaghav Chanana, Barry John, Tom Alter

Color of War (Director: Sai Pawar): Chicago Premiere; Short Film; United States; Matt Pohlkamp, Tristan Coe, Jon Peterson, Scott E. Myers

Fandry (Director: Nagraj Manjule): Chicago Premiere; Feature; India; Somnath Avghade, Kishor Kadam, Sanjay Chaudhri, Suraj Pawar Payeshari

Veil (Director: Sreemoyee Bhattacharya): Chicago Premiere; Short Film; India; Joey Debroy, Daminee Basu

Tamaash- The Puppet (Director: Satyanshu Singh, Devanshu Singh): Chicago Premiere; Short Film; Kashmir; Zahid Ahmed Mir

Phoring (Director: Indranil Roychowdhury): Chicago Premiere; Feature; India; Ritwick Chakraborty, Sohini Sarkar, Shankar Debnath, Akash Adhikary

What Remains (Director: Sarita Khurana): Chicago Premiere; Short Film; United States; Ananya Kumar-Banerjee, Sumitra Rajkumar

Zee Cinema, the presenting sponsor of CSAFF, will be airing a 90-minute television special that will spotlight the 30+ films in the Festival's selection. The special aims to bring the art of independent filmmaking to a wider audience while showcasing the beautiful and vibrant home to the Festival, Chicago.

Major sponsors for 2014 include: Zee Cinema, Showplace ICON Theater, Evanston Public Library, Saavn, Hotel Allegro, Chicago Sister Cities: Delhi Committee, Gallery Bar, Bombay Wraps, Trikone Chicago, NetIP Chicago, IABA, Kriti Festival, Fiery Tiger Entertainment, Parikh Law Group, Bookwallah, Press & Trend PR and Rahul Rana Photography

For all CSAFF 2014 details please visit: www.csaff.org

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About CSAFF

[Chicago South Asian Film Festival, presented by Zee Cinema](http://www.csaff.org), is dedicated to fostering a diverse cinematic experience through South Asian films. The Festival was founded in 2010 and is organized by the Chicago South Asian Arts Council Inc. The Festival is held in late September and includes a stellar selection of films and guests, panel discussions, opportunities for filmmakers and film lovers to connect, musical performances, tributes to major artists and galas. In 2014, the Festival introduced the South Asian Films in America (SAFA) Awards, an Award honoring South Asian Films and Artists exclusively in Chicago. Our audience is the largest growing ethnic group in America, particularly Chicagoland, and the Festival is committed to providing a groundbreaking cinematic experience for filmmakers and moviegoers alike with the warmth and personal touch that is unique to Chicago. For more information, visit <http://www.csaff.org>.