

Tehran Hosts 'Iran and India Literary Ties'

TEHRAN -- A meeting titled "Iran and India literary ties" was held at the cultural center of the Book City Institute in Tehran on Wednesday to consider the literary associations of the two countries.

Iran and India enjoy long-standing cultural and political relations and there are many commonalities between these two nations which demand rediscovery and reconsideration.

The meeting was attended by Fathollah Mojtabai, Fatemeh Masoumeh Naseri, an instructor at the University of Kashmir, Shah-Nawaz Shah, an instructor at the University of Kashmir, Muhammad-Reza Adeli, Ehsanollah Shakrollahi, Elham Haddadi, as well as a group of Persian language and literature academics from Indian and Iranian universities.

The event was held at 5:00 PM at the cultural center of the Book City Institute of Tehran.

Scientists Determine Origins of Persian Walnut



LONDON (Earth.com) -- Using both phylogenetic and population genetic approaches, a team of researchers were finally able to track down the origins of the Persian walnut (*Juglans regia*), prized for its hardwood and rich nuts.

Persian walnut is grown primarily in China, California, Turkey, and Iran. However, fossil records point to the walnut being native to North America, with two walnut species — black walnuts and butternuts (white walnuts) — having cropped up about 35 to 45 million years ago.

This new research, though, shows that the Persian walnut is the result of a hybridization between two extinct walnut species, which occurred about 3.45 million years ago.

The team's previous analyses of about 19 species of walnut never showed a link between North American, Asian, and Persian walnut species. But they excluded incomplete lineage sorting as the cause of the phylogenetic uncertainty.

"This led us to speculate that ancient hybridization might be involved in the origin of the Persian walnut and the American butternut," said co-senior author Da-Yong Zhang, a population geneticist.

So, the team then used whole-genome sequencing from 80 individual trees, which represented 19 of the 22 species of *Juglans*, to test their hybridization theory.

"We applied a battery of genome-wide methods for hybridization detection and to test speciation models to infer the time of origin of the Persian walnut," said co-senior author Wei-Ning Bai. "In the end, we characterized the ge-

netic composition of the genomes of not only the Persian walnut, but also the Iron walnut, *J. sigillata*, and the American butternut, *J. cinerea*."

Based on walnut fruit fossils and the newly-discovered genomic evidence, by the late Oligocene era, "[walnuts] must have expanded from America to Europe and then spread to Asia and further expanded into Europe, where the black walnut and butternut lineages came into contact and hybridized some 3.45 Ma ago," the authors continued. "While walnuts diversified in Asia and the New World, they were lost from Europe during the Pleistocene climate oscillations, with eventually only the newly formed hybrid lineage that gave rise to *J. regia* surviving."

"All of our genome-wide analyses converged to provide unambiguous evidence of hybridization at the roots of both the American butternut (*J. cinerea*) and the Persian walnut (*J. regia*/*J. sigillata*)," the authors said. "Our results further resolve the controversy concerning the origin of the American butternut, *J. cinerea*, which turns out to result from massive nuclear gene introgression involving an American black walnut through pollen swamping by an immigrating Asian butternut."

"The genomic mosaicism of both the Persian walnut (incl. *J. sigillata*) and the American butternut *J. cinerea* provides evidence for the importance of hybridization throughout the evolution of walnuts," concluded the authors.

The findings are published in *Molecular Biology and Evolution*.

A Review of Contenders in Fajr Film Festival

TEHRAN -- As the 42nd Fajr International Film Festival approaches, cinephiles eagerly await the cinematic gems set to grace the screen from February 1 to 11, 2024.

Among the much-anticipated contenders in the main competition section, 'Sodaye-Simorgh', six more films are introduced by iFilm, each promising a unique narrative.

'Parviz Khan' depicting Parviz Dehdari's impact beyond the field

In a debut move at the current edition of the festival, filmmaker Ali Saqafi brings forth a biographical film centered on Iranian football player and coach Parviz Dehdari.

Distinct from typical sports narratives, the film delves deeper into the social dimensions of Dehdari's influential career.

Notable actors such as Saeed Pour-samimi, Maryam Saadat, Hamidreza Pegah, and Behnam Tashakkori are cast in this production.

Produced by the Owj Arts and Media Organization, the movie unfolds the narrative of prominent national team players who, under the guidance of Parviz Dehdari, make the decision to resign from the national team.

Poursamimi, known for his previous appearance in 'Amphibious' at the 38th Fajr Film Festival, takes on a significant role in bringing this story to the screen.

'Summer of the Same Year' marks return of Mahmoud Kalari as director

Renowned Iranian cinematogra-



A scene from Shahsavari

pher Mahmoud Kalari returns to the director's chair after 23 years with his third film, 'Summer of the Same Year', set to premiere at the 42nd Fajr Film Festival.

The movie's cast list includes Mehran Modiri, Ali Shademan, Fariba Naderi, Samira Hasanpour, Roya Javidnia, Mahrouz Nonahali, Saber Abar and Pejman Bazeghi.

Kalari's last directorial venture, 'Dance with a Dream', adds anticipation to his latest offering.

Javad Ezzati's directorial debut unveils 'Bloody Crocodile'

Javad Ezzati, a familiar face at the Fajr Festival, steps into a new role as a director with his debut film, 'Bloody Crocodile'.

Collaborating with actor Kamran Hejazi once again, Ezzati presents a narrative featuring a cast that includes Abbas Jamshidifar, Saeed Aghakhani, Elnaz Habibi, Behzad Khalaj, and

Shabnam Qorbani.

The film explores the director's unique perspective, showcasing his transition from acting to directing.

'Beautiful Lies': Atash Zamzam's cross-cultural cinematic endeavor

In the 13th collaboration between Iran and Bangladesh, Morteza Atash Zamzam presents 'Beautiful Lies' as the follow-up to his recent work, 'Holia'.

The film unfolds the challenging life of Fereshteh and her husband Amjad, featuring performances by Bangladeshi actors Jaya Ahsan, Suman Rikita, and Salem Shahid.

'Missing Hand': Ensieh Shahhuseini's unique perspective on Sacred Defense

Ensieh Shahhuseini, the sole female director at this edition of the Fajr Film Festival, brings her fifth film, 'Missing Hand', to the audi-

ence.

Coproduced by Seyyed Saeed Seyyedzadeh and the Farabi Cinema Foundation, the film features a cast of lesser-known actors, including Masoumeh Bafandeh, Zahra Ahmadvani, Azam Razavi, and others.

Exploring the untold stories of the Holy Defense, the film combines documentary elements with a female narrative of the historical event.

'Good Father': Asghar Naimi explores generational expectations

Having previously participated in the 41st Fajr Film Festival, Asghar Naimi is now unveiling his latest work, 'Good Father'.

The film portrays the story of Maryam's father, who, enamored with the idea of grandchildren, exerts pressure on Maryam and her husband.

Starring Sina Mehrad, Pardis Ahmadiyeh, Farhad Ayish, and others, the movie addresses familial expectations and generational dynamics.

'Shahsavari': Hussein Namazi returns to wedding drama

Namazi, known for 'Shadarvan', returns with his third directorial effort, 'Shahsavari'.

Set within a wedding ceremony, the film features Elnaz Habibi, Mehrdad Sedikian, Hadi Kazemi, and others.

The storyline unfolds over three days and nights, capturing the essence of a joyous celebration.

Entezami Returns to Cinema With Score for 'Majnoun'

TEHRAN -- Renowned composer and orchestra leader Majid Entezami has made a comeback to the world of cinema after a decade, creating the film score for the movie 'Majnoun'.

The flick, directed by Mahdi Shamohamadi, is a production of the Owj Arts and Media Organization, iFilm reported.

It is set to participate at the 42nd Fajr International Film Festival in Iran.

The 2024 Fajr International Film Festival aims to identify top-quality international and national films. This edition of the festival is scheduled to be held from February 1 to 11.

The film depicts the heroic actions of martyrs Mehdi and Majid Zeinoddin on Majnoun Island and during the major Khaybar Operation in the 1980s Iraq-Iran war.

Entezami has written film scores for over 80 cinematic works since the 1970s. He, along with Hussein Alizadeh and Muhammad-Reza Aliqoli, has won the most Crystal Simorgh awards for Best Original Music at the Fajr Film Festival for films such as 'Bicyclist' and 'Glass Agency'.

Entezami is considered one of the most prolific composers in Iranian cinema, with his music

on "From Karkheh to Rhein" being particularly memorable.

"From Karkheh to Rhein" is an Iranian film written and directed by Ebrahim Hatamikia, starring Ali Dehkordi and Homa Rosta. The film was a German-Iranian co-production.



Picture of the Day



Desert greening experts say the sand hills that have been mulched for decades and planted with saplings have now turned into green pastures in Iran's Khuzestan province.

Photo by IRNA