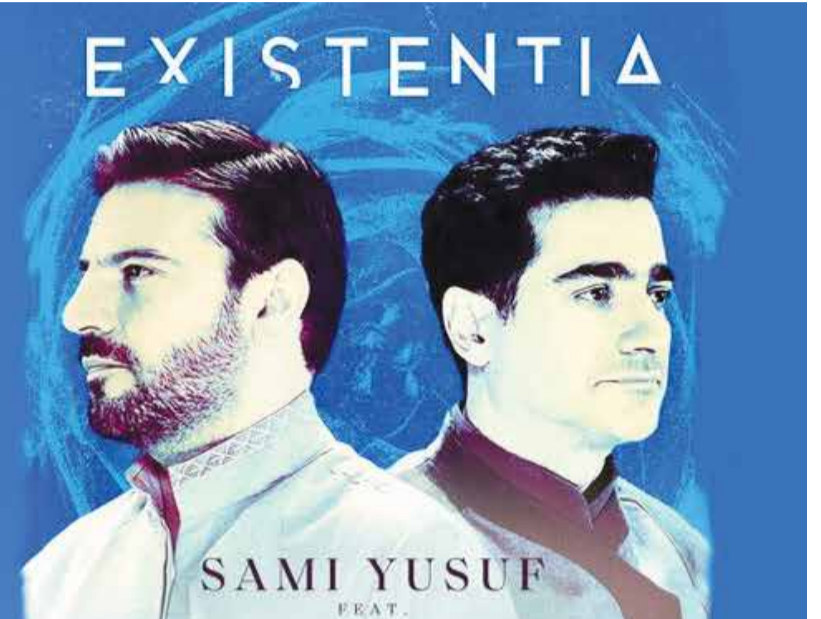


# Iranian, British singers release joint track on Rumi poem



Well-known Iranian-born British singer Sami Yusuf and renowned Iranian classical vocalist Homayoun Shajarian released a new song based on a poem by the 13th-century Persian mystic poet Rumi. The track, titled 'Existencia,' is from Yusuf's upcoming album

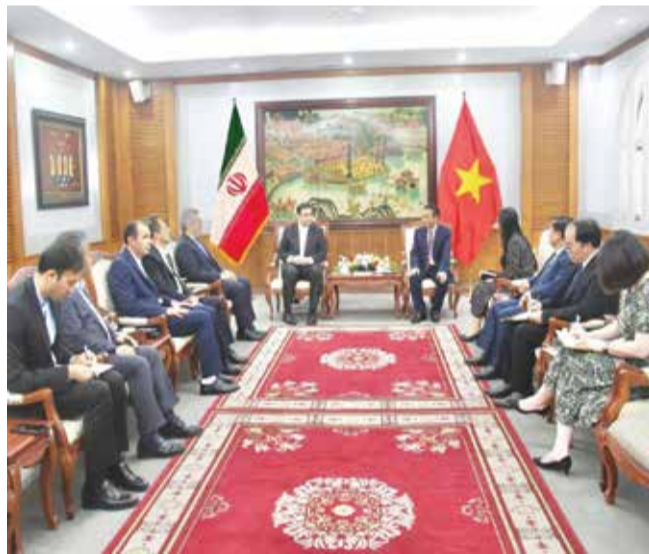
'Ecstasy.' It features both artists singing in Arabic and Persian. The song became available on Sunday on various music platforms, according to IRNA. Exuding delightful ebullience, Sami Yusuf dropped some lines about the release on his X handle a few days ago, saying, "I'm

excited to announce that the first track, 'Existencia,' from my upcoming album Ecstasy will be released on 1 July. And I'm thrilled that it features my incredibly talented dear friend, the brilliant vocalist, Homayoun Shajarian. His performance is breathtaking, and I know you're

going to love it as much as I do." Sami Yusuf, born Siamak Radmanesh, is known for his work that often explores spiritual themes. He has been recognized as one of the most prominent British Muslim figures globally, with The Guardian describing him as "perhaps the most

famous British Muslim in the world." Yusuf has performed songs in multiple languages, including Azerbaijani, Turkish, Persian, Urdu, and Hindi. His collaboration with Shajarian, a prominent figure in traditional Iranian music, marks a significant cultural

fusion in the music world. In June, Yusuf and Shajarian shared a photo together, sparking speculation about their collaboration. Now, their joint effort has come to fruition, offering fans a blend of their unique musical talents and cultural heritage.



## Iran, Vietnam to broaden tourism cooperation

Officials from Iran and Vietnam met in Hanoi on Monday to discuss ways to enhance tourism cooperation between the two countries. During the meeting, Iran's Deputy Tourism Minister Ali-Asghar Shalbafian of Iran and Deputy Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism Hoang Dao Cuong of Vietnam reviewed updating a tourism agreement previously signed, IRNA wrote. They also emphasized the im-

portance of further meetings between the governments and private sectors of both countries to maximize the potential for tourism cooperation. In addition, they explored the possibility of easing visa requirements for Iranian people who intend to visit Vietnam. Shalbafian is in Hanoi for the inauguration of an exhibition showcasing Iran's tourism offerings.



## Student happiness key to mental health: Minister

Social Desk

Iran's Education Minister Reza Morad-Sahraei emphasized the direct connection between students' happiness and their mental health. Speaking at the ceremony of summer activities at the Shahid Bahonar camp, Sahraei encouraged parents to support their children's participation in these programs, ILNA wrote. «Hope fuels our movement towards the future," Morad-Sahraei said. "One of the main goals of these activities should be to create hope and joy for the children."

The minister highlighted the richness of Iranian culture and the importance of teaching children values such as sacrifice, hard work, and respect for parents and teachers. He also noted the diversity of cultural activities planned for the summer, including camps, sports, and skill-building and scientific programs. The minister called for media to promote these activities to parents, stating, "There is a direct relationship between children's happiness and their mental health. Parents should encourage their children's participation in these programs."



## Int'l handicrafts center to open in Isfahan

An international handicrafts center is planned to be established within the former Risbaf Factory in Isfahan to boost development, promotion, and applied research of handicrafts from various countries, announced Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, Iran's deputy tourism minister. Shalbafian stated that the center will host artisans from around the world, aiming to foster international collaboration and exchange in the handicrafts sector, ILNA wrote. "The handicraft center will transform the historical Risbaf Factory into a hub for artisans from around the world," said a local official speaking at a press conference on Monday. "This

initiative aims to promote development, dissemination, and practical research in the field of handicrafts on an international scale." A memorandum of understanding between the UN Tourism and the Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts is in progress to facilitate the establishment process, according to Mehran Zeinalian. This initiative, proposed by Iran, was reviewed and supported by the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific & the UNWTO Commission for South Asia and highlighted by the organization's secretary-general as a significant and innovative move by Iran.

Arts & Culture Desk

## Tunisia, Iran discuss expansion of tourism cooperation

Iran and Tunisia conducted their first joint meeting since the mutual visa waiver, aiming to overcome existing barriers and boost tourism between the two nations. Tunisian ambassador in Tehran, Imad al-Rahmuni emphasized the strong desire of Tunisians to visit the historic cities of Shiraz and Isfahan, despite the current challenges posed by the lack of direct flights and financial exchange issues, ILNA wrote. Following the mutual visa waiver agreement between Iran and

Tunisia, the first joint meeting to discuss tourism cooperation was held in Tehran. The meeting was attended by the Tunisian ambassador, representatives from Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, and travel agency managers, hosted by the Association of Air Transport and Tourist Agencies of Iran (AATTAI). Hormatollah Rafiei, the head of the AATTAI, highlighted that Tu-

nisia was the first country to take steps toward a mutual visa waiver with Iran. He mentioned that Tunisia has long been a key destination for Iranian tourists, with charter flights operating at various times. Although these activities were halted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism relations between Iran and Tunisia have now not only resumed but are progressing with greater vigor.

Rafiei further noted the strong relations between the governments and private sectors of Iran and Tunisia, particularly in the tourism sector. Ambassador stated that tourism is a gateway to broader relations between countries. He underscored the need for direct flights to facilitate better connections between the people of Iran and Tunisia, which would positively impact other areas of

cooperation. Despite the challenges, including visa issues and the absence of direct flights, both countries remain determined to achieve their tourism development goals. The Tunisian ambassador's first action upon his appointment in Iran was to ensure Tunisia's participation in the Tehran International Tourism & related Industries Exhibition. Despite not being initially included in their

plans, the involvement was made possible with support from both countries' tourism ministries and Rafiei. Looking ahead, the envoy announced plans for a joint commission on tourism cooperation to be hosted by Iran. The Tunisian Minister of Tourism, along with representatives from Tunisian travel agencies and the airline sector, will visit Tehran. This visit will coincide with the Tunisia Culture Week, aimed at fostering partnerships between Tunisian and Iranian tourism professionals.