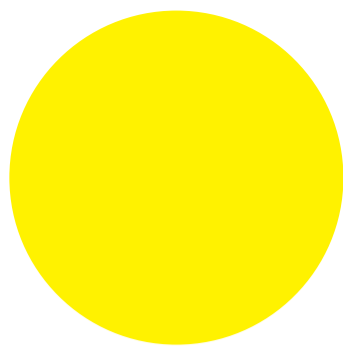


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Talks will work if mutual interest take lead

## OPINIONS

As diplomatic signals flicker between Tehran and Washington, renewed chatter over Iran-US negotiations has once again grabbed headlines. Indirect talks in Oman today seem to be the opening move, but direct engagement may still be on the cards. In this atmosphere, political analysts and foreign policy experts in Iran have offered their takes on what is at stake and how both sides might play their hand. From the looming snapback deadline to the primacy of national interest and the regional ripple effects of a potential thaw, their views shed light on the complex calculus behind the diplomatic reset.

### Clock ticking on Iran-US negotiations

By Abdolreza Faraji-Rad  
Foreign policy analyst

Iran and the US are heading into a high-stakes and complex round of negotiations and neither side truly knows what the other is bringing to the table. Everything hinges on Washington's expectations. If those expectations stick to nuclear non-proliferation concerns, Tehran has made it clear it is ready to engage, and talks could move forward smoothly. But if missile capabilities are thrown into the mix, optimism may be short-lived. There is more than a 50% chance that both sides will stay in the room, and it is unlikely a single round will blow things off course.

Yet one critical factor cannot be overlooked. Iran is running up against the ticking clock of the snapback mechanism, so time is not on its side. Moving forward with Europe will not be realistic unless progress with the US is locked in. At the very least, Europeans need assurance or a green light from Washington that talks are on the right track.

Unlike the JCPOA negotiations, which dragged on for nearly two years, the current talks must wrap up within two to three months due to snapback deadlines. After that, both sides will need to lay their cards on the table and decide their next move.

If Europe is to trigger the snapback mechanism, it must genuinely feel that Iran and the US have hit a dead end. Otherwise, by October, all Iran-related sanctions under Resolution 2231 will be automatically lifted—a scenario Europe wants to avoid unless it feels confident about what is ahead.

Following failed cease-fire efforts in Gaza, US President Donald Trump now sees a deal with Iran as something he might pull off, possibly with less friction than in the Middle East or the Russia-Ukraine conflict. For Iran, this dynamic also opens a window, and it must try to leverage it for its own gain.

### National interest must steer talks

By Mehdi Zakerian  
Professor of international relations

Foreign relations and the international order are not built on ideology or trust; they boil down to the pursuit of national interest. That's why Iran's negotiating team must go into talks with the US using globally accepted legal and diplomatic standards which prioritize the national interests of Iranians. Anything less would fail to deliver for the Iranian people.

Debates over whether talks should be direct or indirect are, frankly, a smoke-screen. [Page 2 >](#)

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## What will digital war do to world?

**ANALYSIS** The digital revolution is shaking up global competition, with technology at its core. As nations scramble to get ahead, AI, quantum computing, and advanced chips have become key players in this high-stakes game. The US and China are locked in a fierce rivalry, each vying for tech supremacy while navigating dependencies on one another. Meanwhile, initiatives like China's Digital Silk Road are pushing boundaries, influencing developing nations and challenging Western dominance. Military advancements, particularly in AI-driven warfare, add another layer to this complex landscape. As countries gear up and strategize, the power dynamics of the global economy are set to shift dramatically. Stay tuned—this tech battle is just heating up!

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# Iran to give talks with US 'genuine chance'

Leader's advisor: FM will go to Oman with full authority



Steve Witkoff

Abbas Araghchi

## International Desk

Iran said on Friday it is giving high-level nuclear talks with the US "a genuine chance" as the two countries are set to hold the negotiations in Oman today to resolve a decades-long dispute over Iran's nuclear program.

Iran's Foreign Ministry's spokesman said on Friday Washington

should value Tehran's decision to engage in talks despite what he called the US's "prevailing confrontational hoopla".

"We intend to assess the other side's intent and resolve this Saturday," spokesperson Esmail Baqaei posted on X. "In earnest and with candid vigilance, we are giving diplomacy a genuine chance."

US President Donald Trump made a

surprise announcement on Monday that Washington and Tehran would begin talks in Oman, a Persian Gulf state that has mediated between the West and the Islamic Republic before.

The talks were first announced by Trump during Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to Washington.

For months, Tehran and Washington have been expressing their interest to begin new negotiations on Iran's nuclear program.

On March 7, Trump sent a letter to the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, calling for resumption of nuclear negotiations while warning of possible military action if Iran refuses. "If they don't make a deal, there will be bombing, and it will be bombing the likes of which they have never seen before."

Iranian military officials and Armed Forces have repeatedly underlined the country's preparedness to defend the country.

## Iran rejects bullying

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-e Ravanchi said on Friday that Iran rejects any bullying

and coercion.

"Without threats and intimidation from the American side, there is a good possibility of reaching an accord", he said on Friday.

Ali Shamkhani, an adviser to Iran's Leader, in a post on X also said "Important and practical" Iranian proposals have been prepared in pursuit of "a real and fair" agreement.

"If Washington comes to the talks with sincere intentions and genuine will to reach an agreement, the path to a deal will be clear and smooth," Shamkhani added.

He said Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was heading to Oman with "full authority" for indirect talks.

The talks would be led by Araghchi and US special envoy Steve Witkoff, with Omani Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi as intermediary.

In recent months, Iran has also been talking with France, Germany, Britain, China and Russia - the signatories of the 2015 nuclear deal from which Trump unilaterally withdrew during his first term and reimposed sweeping economic sanctions on Iran.

Tehran adhered to the deal for a year after Washington withdrew from it, but later began rolling back

its own commitments.

## Diplomatic solution

On Friday, Germany urged Iran and the US to reach a "diplomatic solution", saying that it is a "positive development that there is a channel for dialogue between Iran and the United States".

Ahead of the talks, the US imposed additional sanctions on Iran targeting its oil network and nuclear program.

Iran's nuclear agency chief Mohammad Eslami downplayed their impact, saying: "They applied maximum pressure with various sanctions, but they were unable to prevent the country from progressing." US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Thursday said, "We hope that'll lead to peace. We've been very clear what Iran is never going to have a nuclear weapon, and I think that's what led to this meeting," Rubio said during a Cabinet meeting chaired by Donald Trump. Tehran says its program is purely for peaceful energy purposes, but the West says it goes far beyond any civilian requirements, and suspects Tehran of covertly seeking to develop nuclear weapons capability.

## Tariff battle escalates as China retaliates with 125% tariffs on US goods

China said Friday it would raise its tariffs on US goods to 125 percent in a further escalation of a trade war that threatens to bring exports to a halt between the world's two biggest economies.

Beijing's retaliation sparked fresh market volatility, with European stocks seesawing following the announcement while Tokyo and Seoul closed in the red, AFP reported.

In a sign of investors' worries about the health of the US economy under President Donald Trump's erratic stewardship, the dollar fell to a three-year low against the euro and by 1.3 percent against the yen.

In Beijing, China's State Council Tariff Commission said new tariffs of 125 percent on US goods would take effect Saturday, almost matching the staggering 145 percent level imposed on Chinese goods coming into America.

A Commerce Ministry spokesperson said the United States bore "full responsibility for this", deriding Trump's tariffs as a "numbers game" that "will become a joke".

The Chinese finance ministry said tariffs would not go any higher because "there is no possibility of

market acceptance for US goods exported to China" - an acknowledgment that almost no imports are possible at the new level.

Beijing also said it would file a lawsuit with the World Trade Organization over the latest round of levies announced by Trump.

Chinese President Xi Jinping condemned "unilateral bullying".

While the superpowers clash, the EU said its trade chief Maros Sefcovic would hold talks with US counterparts in Washington on Monday to resolve their own tariffs spat.

Sefcovic is traveling "in good faith to try and find solutions that can benefit us all," EU trade spokesperson Olof Gill said.

Trump sent global financial markets into a tailspin by announcing historic tariffs on America's trading partners on April 2, including a 10-percent baseline for all goods coming into the United States.

After days of plunging markets, on Wednesday he froze the higher tariff rates of 20 percent or more imposed on allies such as the European Union or Japan, but kept an additional rate of 34 percent on

China.

Beijing has since retaliated, leading to tit-for-tat increases over the past few days that culminated in Friday's latest move.

Trump acknowledged "a transition cost and transition problems" on Thursday, while insisting "in the end it's going to be a beautiful thing." Speaking to reporters, he said he had respect for Xi and was hoping for a deal.

"He's been a friend of mine for a long period of time. I think that we'll end up working out something that's very good for both countries," he said.

Economists warn that the disruption in trade between the tightly integrated US and Chinese economies threatens businesses, will increase prices for consumers, and could cause a global recession.

Trump described the European Union as "very smart" to refrain from retaliatory levies.

But the 27-nation bloc's chief Ursula von der Leyen told the Financial Times on Friday that it remained armed with a "wide range of countermeasures" if negotiations with Trump hit the skids.

## Iran, Armenia conduct joint military drills



## International Desk

Iran and Armenia concluded two days of joint military exercises along their shared border.

The drill, conducted on both sides of the border, involved operational units from the Ground Forces of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and the Armenian Army.

Iran said the aim of the drills is to strengthen security at the shared border and fight terrorist groups in the area.

The joint drill took place in the Norduz border area, which is located in Iran's northwestern East Azerbaijan Province. Brigadier General Valiollah Ma'dani, deputy commander for operations of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC)'s Ground Forces, said on Wednesday that, "the joint exercise is a proac-

tive measure to ensure the combat readiness of our forces, confront terrorism, and contribute to sustainable peace in the region".

Ma'dani noted that the primary objective of the joint drill was to strengthen the security of the common border. "Given the sensitive geopolitical position of this area, the strategic importance of our border with Armenia cannot be overstated," he said.

Light and heavy weapons were used in the military exercises. Meanwhile, special forces displayed their sniper skills and practiced artillery fire support during the drills.

Armenia's borders with neighboring Azerbaijan and Turkey have been closed for more than three decades, giving its mountainous frontier with Iran an outsized economic significance.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

## Talks will work if...

What matters is whether negotiations will add anything of value to Iran's national interest. If so,

they will be a source of pride and strength. If not, they will yield no benefits for Iran. It is no secret that some actors squandered past opportunities. Hardliners played a disruptive role during the JCPOA era, throwing up roadblocks that shut the door on critical opportunities. Even when golden chances for a renewed agreement were on the table, the same groups burned those bridges. As a result, expectations for any new deal bringing home even 10% of the original JCPOA benefits are slim. At best, these negotiations may only help keep tensions in check, but hopes for major breakthroughs or concessions are few and far between.

## Talks could pave way for regional calm

By Asghar Salimi  
Political analyst

The format of the upcoming talks is set to be indirect, but if things move forward and evolve into direct negotiations, the outcome could have more impacts and the path to agreement far smoother.

These discussions might well set the stage for face-to-face talks and a gradual lifting of sanctions after years of deadlock. The process must remain grounded in mutual rights to ensure both sides come away with tangible gains.

A deal between Iran and the US would go a long way toward stabilizing the region. Apart from Israel—which remains gripped by fear over Iran's progress—

other regional countries have expressed support for such a breakthrough and broader peace.

As long as the region stays clear of war and tension, all countries stand to benefit. Israel, however, has always tried to stir the pot to fish in troubled waters. Engaging with the US to lift sanctions could help untangle long-standing problems, but Iran must make full use of every available channel.

The truth is, in diplomacy, there are no permanent friends or foes. It is shared interests that call the shots. With Russia and China holding seats on the Security Council, they can play a constructive role in the standoff. Iran should step into the global arena confidently, but never at the cost of tying its national interests to those of others.



# Gov't prioritizes building technology tower for biotech, AI, nanotech: Pezeshkian

## National Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian said that the construction of a technology tower focused on vaccine production, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, and biological research is among the government's priority programs to elevate the status of the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute.

During his visit to Karaj, Alborz Province, on Thursday, Pezeshkian met with the directors of the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute (RVSRI) and underscored the government's commitment to advancing this scientific-research institution, president.ir reported.

The president underscored the necessity of forming a working group comprising university professors, managers from the Razi and Pasteur institutes, and officials from the Ministries of Health and Agriculture. This group will coordinate the planning, design, and construction of the technology tower in line with advanced global standards, he added.



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (C) meets with the directors of Iran's Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute (RVSRI) in Karaj on April 10, 2025.  
● president.ir

The Pasteur Institute of Iran, founded in 1920, is a key institution focused on public health. It encompasses research, production, and education. The institute is a regional leader in vaccine development and manufacturing. The Razi institute is a state-run Iranian institute focused on vaccine and serum research, working to improve the quality and global accessibility of its snake antivenom. The RVSRI also participates in training programs and recently celebrated its 100th anniversary.

The president added, "Through the implementation of this major scientific-technological project, the groundwork will be laid for merging the Razi and Pasteur institutes, transforming them into a unified research, production, and service hub in the medical field for the entire country and the region."



Pezeshkian stressed the importance of leveraging the expertise of elites, particularly

those residing abroad, in the construction and operation of the tower.

He also highlighted that energy consumption patterns and meeting the tower's needs

through renewable energy sources must be central to its design and construction.

## China's March Iranian oil imports surge amid US tightened sanctions

China's imports of Iranian oil surged in March as buyers stockpiled supplies amid tightening US pressure on Iran's oil industry, traders and analysts said.

China's oil imports from Iran surpassed 1.8 million barrels per day last month, an all-time high, coinciding with a rise in inventory levels in independent refining hub Shandong Province, according to data by ship tracking firm Vortexa, Reuters reported.

Data from analytics firm Kpler put China's Iranian oil imports at 1.71 million bpd in March, up 20% from 1.43 million bpd in February and a five-month high, while two traders who track Iranian flows into China estimated March imports at 1.67 million bpd and 1.8 million bpd, respectively.

China, which opposes unilateral sanctions, buys some 90% of Iran's oil exports, a trade that has been boosted as more vessels drawn by high fees replaced those under US sanctions, traders and analysts have said.

Iranian oil accounted for 16% of China's March seaborne crude oil imports, Kpler data showed.

Vortexa senior analyst Emma Li and a China-based refining source attributed the rush to buy Iranian barrels to worries among traders and refiners of further supply disruptions.

The US administration has imposed



four rounds of sanctions on Iranian oil trade since President Donald Trump's February call for its so-called "maximum pressure" on Tehran, including March sanctions on Shandong teapot refiner Shouguang Luqing Petrochemical.

On Thursday, it slapped sanctions on Iranian oil trading networks, including on a China-based crude oil storage terminal linked via a pipeline to an independent refinery.

The Treasury Department also designated UAE-based Indian national Jugwinder Singh Brar, who owns shipping companies with a fleet of nearly 30 vessels, over what it claimed was "transfers of Iranian petroleum."

The sanctions block US assets of



An oil tanker unloads crude oil at a crude oil terminal in Zhoushan, Zhejiang Province, China, on July 4, 2018.  
● REUTERS

those designated and prevent Americans from doing business with them. A trader, an executive at an independent "teapot" refiner, said Iranian oil seems to have "flooded in" last month, with some shipments delivered by dealers into tanks looking for buyers. Li expects China's Iranian oil imports to drop in April as overall demand has not picked up, which will stabilize the year-to-date average in the 1.3-1.4 million bpd range, in line with last year.

## Iran, Azerbaijan to sign transport MoU during president's upcoming visit to Baku

### Economy Desk

Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development announced that during a joint meeting with Azerbaijani officials in Baku, it was agreed to prepare a memorandum of understanding regarding transportation, border affairs, customs, and transit matters, which will be signed during President Pezeshkian's upcoming visit to Azerbaijan.

Upon her arrival at the Jolfa border in East Azarbaijan Province, Farzaneh Sadegh highlighted the outcomes of her three-day trip to the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mehr News Agency reported.

"A review of bilateral interactions and agreements within the framework of the Joint Economic Cooperation Commission was conducted, in light of President Masoud Pezeshkian's forthcoming visit to Azerbaijan," the minister said.

Referring to her meeting with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Sadegh said, "The session emphasized all mutual agreements and collaborations in transportation, transit, increasing trade exchanges, oil, gas, energy, and other sectors."

The minister also addressed her discussions with Shahin Mustafayev, Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan and co-chair of the Azerbaijan-Iran Joint Economic Cooperation Commission, noting, "In this meeting, bilateral issues and



agreements, along with preparations for President Pezeshkian's visit to Azerbaijan, were examined in greater detail." "Key topics discussed included maritime and port cooperation, expanding road transport and transit capacity, and facilitating the movement of Iranian and Azerbaijani trucks," she added.

The minister underscored the mutual emphasis on expediting the implementation of the preferential trade agreement between Iran and Azerbaijan during this visit.

Sadegh also announced plans to hold a specialized meeting of business delegations from both countries on the sidelines of the president's trip, aimed at boosting international cargo transport and transit.

She stressed the urgency of accelerating the implementation of a border terminal in the area, mentioning that land allocation, acquisition, and preparation for the terminal's construction have already been addressed.

## Iran's offshore oil industry has 'unparalleled' potential to boost production

### Economy Desk

Iran's offshore oil industry holds unparalleled capacities and opportunities for production and investment, said the head of Iran's Offshore Oil Company (IOOC).

Referring to the unique opportunities in the country's offshore oil industry, Ahmadreza Rasti stated realizing this potential could significantly boost oil production in the Persian Gulf."

During an internal company meeting on Thursday, Rasti stressed the mobilization of resources and personnel to accelerate project implementation, maintenance, and production enhancement in offshore oil operations, SHANA reported.

The IOOC head remarked, "The presence of capable managers, experts, and specialists in this company has ensured that Iran's offshore oil industry remains on a path of growth and

prosperity."

Salman Khosravi, Deputy CEO of Iran's Offshore Oil Company, also expressed hope at the meeting that "this year will witness remarkable progress in the development, maintenance, and enhancement of offshore oil production."

"Increasing production, maintaining oil and gas pipelines, gas injection, water injection, and expanding the number of drilling rigs were discussed. It was agreed that necessary measures will be

taken this year to achieve the target of 12 operational drilling rigs," he added. "The meeting also placed special emphasis on strategies to boost oil production through repairs of rotating machinery, diesel engines, gas generators, and expediting project execution. Accelerating major repairs of the Abuzar Field oil transmission pipeline on Kharq Island was approved by managers and is projected to have a significant impact on increasing the compa-

ny's output," Khosravi noted.

The session further addressed strategies for production enhancement, resolving existing challenges, maintaining oil fields, developmental projects, and improving employee welfare services. Operational managers from the Bahregan, Kharg, Lavan, Sirri, Qeshm, and Kish regions, along with corporate managers and department heads, presented their perspectives on current operational concerns.

# What will digital war do to world?

**ANALYSIS** *Techno-geopolitics, by influencing traditional patterns of global competition, has brought about significant transformations in the realm of digital technologies and geo-economic rivalries. In this context, China, the United States, and the European Union are striving to leverage new tools to dominate the future global order.*

*The pursuit of technological superiority has turned into a new arena of competition among global powers, particularly China, the United States, and the European Union. Mastery over advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), microelectronics, big data, machine learning, and quantum information systems ultimately shapes and solidifies the international balance of power. Global powers are determined to develop technological capabilities to gain a strategic advantage in their broader competition. The development of such capabilities has been prioritized as a national strategy by global powers and is pursued at the highest levels of government. These powers have realized and emphasized the importance of achieving technological superiority in terms of economic development, national security, and international competition.*

*This has led scholars Saeed Pirmohammadi, Mehdi Hedayati Shahidani, and Amir Niakooee to write an academic paper, titled "Technogeopolitics and the Change of Traditional Global Patterns in Digital Technologies: A Strategic Vision for Iran". In that paper, a summary of which is given below, they sought to examine the potential relationship between techno-geopolitics and the transformation of traditional global patterns in digital technologies, using a comparative study method and data analysis.*

## Geo-economic competitions in future

Technology is at the core of geo-economic competitions in the future international system. Therefore, it is generally argued that success and superiority in shaping the future world order depend on staying at the cutting edge of technology. Among the most important advantage-generating technologies are artificial intelligence, hypersonic technologies, quantum computing, the Internet of Things, and others, whose emergence has transformed the nature of competition among major powers. Geo-economic competitions for dominance over new multipurpose technologies based on big data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence influence the structure and patterns of interaction and agency of countries in regional and international environments. The competition among global powers in the technological domain, particularly in artificial intelligence, is a multidimensional rivalry encompassing technological, economic, military, and political spheres.

Much of this competition currently revolves around the United States and China; thus, further in-depth research is required in this regard. The European Union also emphasizes the critical importance of sensitive and multipurpose technologies in strengthening technological sovereignty and reducing strategic dependencies among its members.

## What is techno-geopolitics?

Techno-geopolitics, or the geopolitics of technology, as the name suggests, examines the relationship between "technology" and "geopolitics". As a result of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, technological capabilities and dimensions have gained a special place at the forefront of the competition of global powers.

In traditional definitions, power was defined by geography and control over territory or oceans, whereas, based on the new definition, power is measured and evaluated by the ability to influence social capital; control goods, money, and data; and exploit the connections that technology enables.

Thus, any interaction between countries — over issues ranging from energy to information technology standards — becomes a tool of geopolitics. The new concept of techno-geopolitics requires further elaboration. Introducing this concept clearly demonstrates the ever-solidifying link between the technological capabilities of countries and their national security and geopolitical power. At a macro and strategic level, techno-geopolitics examines the contemporary relations between the United States and China — and to some extent the European Union — and the future of global



● EDATA PAY

cybersecurity through the lenses of geopolitics and financial-technological competition.

## Competition of global powers over AI techs

In general, technology has always been a critical element in shifting the balance of power. Since the competition among major powers revolves around the relative distribution of power, controlling and developing new technologies can influence the dimensions of global power competition. There are numerous historical examples of this. For instance, during the agricultural age, tools such as the chariot, saddle, stirrup, and similar equipment were considered advantage-generating tools. Over time, in the industrial age, nuclear warheads, cruise missiles, ballistic missiles, combustion engines, submarines, and missile defense systems became significant. In this context, missile superiority can sometimes alter the balance of power among major powers. This is particularly impactful when missile capabilities are combined with advanced technologies and a strong economy.

According to many experts, technology is currently the most important and decisive arena of competition among global powers, and artificial intelligence is the main axis of competition between the two sides. The prevailing view among American elites is that AI could turn China into a greater strategic threat. Despite significant advancements by Chinese companies in artificial intelligence, technological dependence on Western and American companies remains evident.

## New forms of espionage devices

Some American legislators have expressed concerns that China is using AI-generated deepfakes to disseminate false political

information and influence public opinion within the United States, particularly during critical moments such as presidential and congressional elections. Compared to traditional threats, new forms of espionage and counter-espionage devices and systems that utilize artificial intelligence are far more complex and extensive; tracking and countering them is extremely difficult, and they can easily infiltrate the critical infrastructure of target countries for extended periods.

## Competition in field of advanced chips

The CHIPS and Science Act was passed in the United States in August 2022. When President Biden signed that \$52 billion law, he highlighted an issue that many had overlooked: the critical importance of semiconductors. Joe Biden stated during the signing ceremony, "These tiny little computer chips are the building blocks of the modern economy."

The law prohibits semiconduc-

tor companies from exporting advanced chips to China and increases pressure on China to develop domestic production capabilities. The equation is quite clear; companies intending to export AI chips to China or other sanctioned regions must inform the US government. These sanctions also apply to companies headquartered in China or other sanctioned regions with branches in other countries. Therefore, this competition must be analyzed at a strategic level, far beyond superficial layers.

## Huawei-Open RAN techno-geopolitical dualism

Concerns that the Chinese company Huawei might dominate 5G technology are among the primary worries of American officials. This Chinese giant, alongside Sweden's Ericsson, Finland's Nokia, and China's ZTE, controls about 27% of the global market revenue for 5G network equipment. While Huawei dominates many older telecommunications infrastructures in the developing

world and the Global South, it relies on Western technology to provide 5G services. China's mastery over building 5G networks has given it a strategic advantage in technological competition with the United States. The United States does not have a strategic counterpart to Huawei, the global leader in building 5G networks.

## New restrictions against competing platforms

Washington and Beijing have sought to deploy their domestic operating systems in pursuit of geopolitical and geo-economic objectives. TikTok, as China's first global internet platform, plays a pivotal role in expanding China's digital influence worldwide, including in the United States.

This platform has become a reference for news, particularly among American youth, and many businesses rely on it to expand their trade. It is important to note that TikTok's entry into the broader technological competition between the Unit-



In general, competition in the export of AI-related technologies between China and the United States is ongoing. European countries have largely opted for the more expensive yet more secure American systems, while poorer countries, primarily in Africa and the Indo-Pacific, are drawn to the Digital Silk Road initiatives.

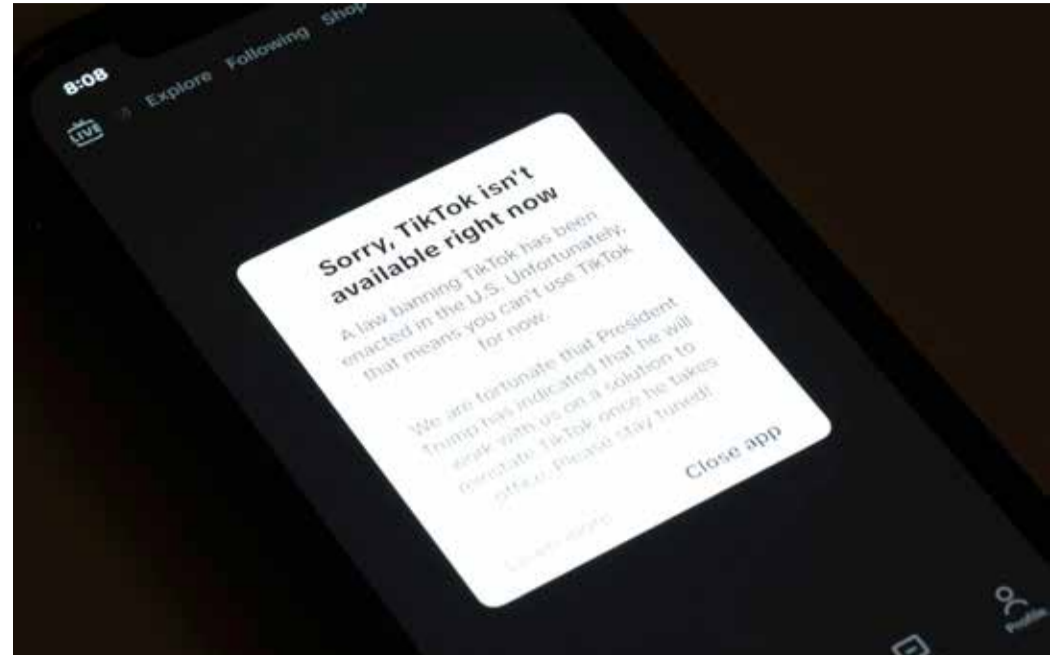


Then-US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (sitting), joined by fellow Democrats, enrolls the bipartisan bill designed to encourage more semiconductor companies to build chip plants in the United States, at the Capitol in Washington on July 29, 2022.

● J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP



A visitor learns about Huawei's 5G products and solutions at the firm's booth at MWC19 in Barcelona, Spain, in February 2019.  
● KHINE KYAW/MYANMAR ELEVEN



A message reading "Sorry, TikTok isn't available right now" is displayed by the TikTok app on a cell phone screen on January 18, 2025. The ban was later lifted by Donald Trump, the next US president.  
● ANDY BAO/AP

ed States and China is part of Washington's efforts to neutralize potential foreign influence campaigns.

**Competition for technological influence in geopolitical regions**

In 2013, Beijing introduced the Digital Silk Road as part of the mega-project Belt and Road initiative. This plan focused on supporting Chinese tech giants in expanding their overseas activities. Based on this, the activities of Baidu, Tencent, and Alibaba expanded beyond the domestic sphere to the international arena. This initiative, through the expansion of digital technologies in the geopolitical regions of developing countries or the Global South, poses challenges to US technological dominance. In general, competition in the export of AI-related technologies between China and the United States is ongoing. European countries have largely opted for the more expensive yet more secure American systems, while poorer countries, primarily in Africa and the Indo-Pacific, are drawn to the Digital Silk Road initiatives.

**Competing over technological raw materials**

Technological competition among global powers will continue for a long time. Although conflicts over technological superiority between the United States (alongside Europe, Japan, and Taiwan) and China will intensify, a full-scale confrontation between the two sides seems unlikely

due to the interconnectedness of the global digital economy. Domestically, China is committed to accelerating scientific advancements. Through strengthening self-reliance in AI and chip manufacturing, it seeks to balance against the technological superiority of the United States and its aligned coalition in Europe and East Asia. Internationally, China supports multilateral arrangements, including with the United Nations, to play a leading role in global AI governance — a move that could marginalize the United States. The United States, leveraging its institutional and consensus-building powers, will strive to limit China's actions and progress in the technological domain.

**Techno-geopolitical competition in military sphere**

It is evident that China's use of AI in the military sphere is a pressing national security concern for the United States. China considers AI crucial for modern warfare. China's focus on "intelligent warfare" reflects a shift in its military strategy, emphasizing the extensive use of AI at all levels of conflict, from planning and intelligence to operations. AI also plays a key role in achieving China's overarching goal of becoming a "world-class military" through the "intelligitization" of its armed forces. Techno-geopolitical alignments in the military sector between the United States and China are gradually emerging. In Australia, engineers are working on

the Ghost Shark submarine, which operates with AI and has no human crew. This project is part of the competition between the United States and its allies against China over the development of AI-controlled weapons. Thus, the AI military revolution unfolds within the framework of US-China techno-geopolitical competition and shapes the future of global equations. Success in this grand competition requires maintaining technological advantages and intelligently adapting them to geopolitical spheres of influence.

**Strategic outlook for Iran**

Remarkable advancements in the technological domain, as well as global competition in this field, can create strategic opportunities for other countries. Information systems based on technology can categorize vast amounts of data from various geographical locations to identify patterns and highlight useful information. Thus, they provide decision-makers with more useful and higher-quality information at a faster pace. Moreover, various technology-driven software can play a key role in information warfare operations by surveying and analyzing public opinion through social media data. The capacity of technology, in general, and AI, in particular, to produce unconventional outcomes in the military domain is also considered a strategic advantage. The unpredictability of technology leads to miscalculations by the opposing side. Iran will be one of the primary

targets of US sanctions policies in digital technologies, including halting the export of advanced microchips and slowing the development of related sensitive technologies. However, building domestic capacity while leveraging foreign experiences — through optimizing policies and simultaneously considering opportunities and constraints — ensures success in this regard. The achievements of strategic partners such as China and Russia, with whom Iran's defense diplomacy has made significant progress, should be utilized. Among neighbors as well, given the progress made and the priorities outlined, there is ample room for maneuver and movement to expand Iran's digital diplomacy.

In practical terms, Iran has recently moved beyond the stage of drafting a national document and establishing a relevant domestic organization and authority in the field of AI. According to the National Artificial Intelligence Document approved in 2022, the goal is to be among the top 10 leading countries in AI by 2031. The National Artificial Intelligence Organization is responsible for developing infrastructure and organizing and developing the AI ecosystem. Alongside institutional and legal arrangements, the development of infrastructure related to digital technologies and AI must be prioritized. The techno-geopolitical dualities mentioned in this research call on aligned and allied actors to adjust their commercial behavior according to the outlined standards, which are clearly de-

finied against the rival technological pole. Washington is striving to expand its techno-geopolitical sphere of influence against the threat of Chinese AI to US allies such as Japan, India, Australia, South Korea, and Taiwan. Meanwhile, Chinese companies are also targeting developing countries and the Global South in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, seeking to gain technological influence in these geopolitical regions. The main competition revolves around controlling global financial, informational, and telecommunications networks and more effectively participating in setting international technology standards and related norm-setting institutions. Overall, technology has transformed traditional patterns of global competition. In the new context, economic leaps have shifted from traditional models to knowledge-based economies. Examining new development models shows that the role of digital technology, as the main driving element, has been elevated. Thus, the focus of countries' competition to enhance their strategic weight in the international system is shifting toward the digital economy and advanced technologies. From this perspective, any country or bloc that excels and leads in the technological domain will also lead the global economy, have greater geopolitical weight, and generally shape the arrangements related to the international balance of power.

*The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.*



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The first of three Australian Ghost Shark Extra-Large AUV manufactured prototypes is unveiled on April 18, 2024, by the Royal Australian Navy (RAN).  
● REDDIT



# Iranian Volleyball Premier League Finals: Foolad completes fightback to defend title

## Sports Desk

Foolad Sirjan defended its Iranian Volleyball Premier League title after defeating Shahdab Yazd 3-1 (25-15, 22-25, 25-16, 25-22) in Game 3 of the Finals in Tehran on Thursday. Having lost the first game of the best-of-three series in four sets, Foolad had to come out victorious in a five-set thriller on Tuesday to force a decider, before Thursday's triumph secured the third Iranian top-flight crown for Behruz Ataei's men.

Foolad's Ali Hajipour was the star of the show on Thursday, chipping in a game-high 27 points, while outside-hitter Amirhossein Efsandiari and middle-blocker Mohammad Valizadeh contributed with 20 and 10 points for Ataei's side, respectively.

Veteran opposite Amir Ghafour was the only Shahdab player to finish in double figures, scoring 20 points. Hajipour's heroics saw the 23-year-old walk away with the MVP and Best Opposite prizes in the awarding ceremony.

Foolad captain Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi and Shahdab's Masoud Gholami, who scored seven points apiece in the fi-



Foolad Sirjan players and coaching staff celebrate after the victory over Shahdab Yazd in Game 3 of the Iranian Volleyball Premier League Finals in Tehran, Iran, on April 10, 2025.

● RASOUL SHIRDEL/volleyball.ir

day one. My players were caught off-guard in the first game of the finals, but I had no doubt we were going to bounce back in Game 2, and my team was in its best form for today's game," said Ataei, who now has four major titles under his belt with Foolad since parting ways the Iranian national team head coach in October 2023 – all coming at the expense of Shahdab over the past 12 months.

Foolad beat Shahdab to the Iranian league crown last April, and then went on to win the AVC Asian Club Championship final in September, before lifting the Iranian Volleyball Cup trophy in February.

Ataei's side, which also won a precious bronze medal at the Club World Championship last December, settled for a fourth-place finish in the 12-team table of the regular season before defeating Mehregan Nour and Shahrdari Urmia in the play-offs for a place in the final.

nal, shared the Best Middle-Blocker award, while Efsandiari and Pakistani Ali

Usman Faryad of Shahdab were named the Best Outside-Hitters.

Mohammadreza Moazentook the Best Libero prize, with his 47-year-old Shah-

dab teammate Alireza Behboudi claiming the Best Setter award.

"We were confident of winning the title. That's the mindset we had since

## IHF Youth Beach Handball World Championship: Iran to face Spain, Oman, Puerto Rico in group stage

### Sports Desk

Iran was drawn against Spain, Oman, and Puerto Rico in Group A of the IHF Men's Youth (U17) Beach Handball World Championship – starting June 17 in Tunisia.

The draw for the third edition of the event took place in Hammamet, Tunisia, on Thursday, where 16 teams were divided into four groups.

A bronze medalist in the previous edition in 2022 in Greece, Iran booked a place in the showdown after defeating host Thailand to the Asian youth crown last October.

Spain will also be among the favorites in Tunisia, having won the title in the first edition in 2017 as well as the 2018 Youth Olympic gold, while Oman and Puerto Rico are among the nine

debutants in the competition.

Elsewhere in the draw, African sides Tanzania and Kenya were pitted against fellow debutant Hungary, plus Germany in Group B. The host country chose to be placed in Group C, where it will face Thailand, alongside debutants Mexico and the Oceania side, Cook Islands.

Tunisia chose to be placed in group C, where

they will face Thailand, alongside debutants Mexico and the Oceania side, Cook Islands.

Brazil – runner-up in 2022 – is in Group D with fellow-South American sides Argentina – bronze winner in 2017 and the 2018 Youth Olympics – and Uruguay, plus Senegal.

Reigning champion Croatia failed to qualify for the finals.



● asianhandball.org

## Esteghlal boss Bozovic on the brink after Foolad defeat

### Sports Desk

Montenegrin head coach Miodrag Bozovic could see his reign on Esteghlal bench come to a premature end in the coming days after the Tehran Blues suffered a 1-0 defeat against Foolad Khuzestan at home in the Persian Gulf Pro League on Thursday. Foolad midfielder Masoud Sarabadani scored the only goal of the contest with nine minutes from normal time at the Azadi Stadium, finding the net on the rebound after his initial effort from the

spot was saved by Esteghlal keeper Seyyed Hossein Hosseini.

A ninth defeat of the league season saw Esteghlal – fourth-time champion since the introduction of the Iranian Pro League in 2001 – sit 12th in the 16-team table with 28 points with five games remaining.

A fifth coach on Esteghlal bench this campaign, Bozovic is yet to claim a victory with the Blues, who have lost four in seven outings since the Montenegrin was appointed to the role in late February.

In a statement released on Friday, the club described the latest defeat and the poor run of late as "unacceptable", adding: "The results in recent week will not go unnoticed by the club's management and board."

"Understanding the current situation and acknowledging the justified criticism from fans and former players, the club will make prompt decisions," added the statement. Mehr News Agency reported earlier on Friday that former Esteghlal midfielder Mojtaba Jabbari, who joined Bo-

zovic's coaching staff in late March, is likely to replace the Montenegrin for the rest of the season.

Esteghlal could still finish a dreadful campaign with silverware as the Blues are pitted against second-tier club Paykan in the Iranian Hazfi Cup quarterfinals.



Esteghlal head coach Miodrag Bozovic reacts during a 1-0 loss to Foolad Khuzestan in the Persian Gulf Pro League at the Azadi Stadium, Tehran, Iran, on April 10, 2025.

● MOHAMMADREZA BOLANDI/ISNA



# Zabol's timeless connection to history

## Iranica Desk

*Zabol, one of the historical and cultural cities of Iran in the Sistan and Baluchestan Province, stands out as a unique tourist destination with rich historical and cultural diversity. It offers an exceptional experience for visitors, showcasing the region's profound heritage. Situated in the northeastern part of the province and the southeastern region of Iran, Zabol shines as a gem of Sistan and Baluchestan Province, nestled within the Sistan plain and on the northern edge of Hamun Lake, the largest seasonal lake in Iran.*

*As one of the oldest cities in Iran, Zabol boasts a history spanning several millennia. In ancient times, it served as the center and capital of ancient Sistan, holding significant political, economic, and cultural importance. It even occupies a distinguished place in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, referred to as the capital of Zabolistan and the land of Rostam and other Iranian heroes.*

*The attractions of Zabol, a treasure trove of history and nature, draw many tourists. Visiting the Burnt City (Shahr-e Sokhteh) provides a deep dive into human history, while ancient fortresses evoke memories of this land's grandeur and magnificence. In addition to historical attractions, Zabol boasts unique natural features. The Hamun Wetland, once the largest freshwater wetland in Iran, showcases a stunning and picturesque landscape. With all these characteristics, the province reflects a distinctive aspect of Iran's rich culture and civilization.*

## Burnt City

(Burnt City) Shahr-e Sokhteh is one of the rare ancient urban sites in this region, covering an area of 151 hectares and built on a promontory between Hamun Lake and the Hirmand River. According to paleontology theories, this city was established around 3200 BCE, inhabited through four periods from 3200 to 1800 BCE. The archaeological site of the Burnt City was constructed during the second and third millennia BCE by migrants from various regions. Remarkably, no document or inscription has been found to reveal the ancient and true name of this city; it is called the "Burnt City" due to fires that occurred during two periods between 3200 and 2750 BCE.

This site is unique because it is one of the few ancient cities where women managed family finances. Remains in-



● IRNA

dicate that the city consisted of five sections: the north-eastern part of the Burnt City, central sectors, an industrial area, memorial structures, and a cemetery, all organized in a series of interconnected mounds. Discoveries from the Burnt City include the

world's first animation, the most astonishing finding in the ancient city; the oldest known brain surgery; the world's first artificial eye; a 5,000-year-old ruler; and the oldest backgammon board, highlighting its archaeological significance.

## Qaleh Now

Qaleh Now (meaning new castle) is located along the Zabol-Zehak road and is the sole village that has preserved the traditional texture and indigenous architecture of the region. The houses, built with dome-shaped roofs and mud plaster, are designed to withstand the intense heat and strong winds known to sweep through the area for 120 days each year.

According to travelogues by English travelers, the village has a history of around 160 years. During the Qajar period, the region's villages were characterized by defensive and fortress-like structures. Prior to establishing this village, an older settlement named Qaleh-ye Kohneh (meaning "Old Castle") existed nearby, designed like a fortress; hence, the new village was named Qaleh Now.



● IRNA

The location is notable for the remnants of a fire temple from the Sassanid period, situated in the village of Karakuyeh, approximately 25 kilometers from Zabol. Historical documents related to Zoroastrians indicate

that this fire temple held particular religious significance; its fire was crucial for religious ceremonies and to maintain flames in other temples. In addition to fire, the sun was also revered in this temple.



● IRNA

## Old windmills

Old windmills represent one of the historical and cultural structures of Sistan and Baluchestan Province, particularly in the city of Zahedan. These traditional structures are showcases of the engineering skills and lifestyles of ancient peoples, playing a vital role in meeting the region's agricultural needs. Zahedan was once one of Iran's major cities from the 4th to the 9th centuries AH. It is located 20 kilometers southeast of Zabol and spans an area of 325 hectares.

## Khajeh Mountain

Khajeh Mountain is one of the most important tourist destinations and attractions in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, located just a short distance from Zabol. This mountain is home to valuable historical structures that, like hidden treasures, have remained concealed from tourists. Ad-

ditionally, the various beliefs and narratives associated with Khajeh Mountain amplify its significance.

As the only natural feature in the Sistan plain, Khajeh Mountain rises approximately 609 meters above sea level (about 100 meters from the ground). It hosts one of the rare archaeological sites

from the Parthian period. Although many sections of this earthen structure have been damaged due to natural and human factors, the architectural style of this fortress remains appreciated.

The mountain derives its name from the tomb of Khajeh Mahdi, whose shrine is located at its summit.



● wikipedia.org



● wikipedia.org

## Machi Castle

Machi Castle is classified as a national heritage site located 70 kilometers southwest of Zabol in Sistan and Baluchestan Province. This castle, a relic from the Safavid era, was once a principal center of governance in Sistan. In the local dialect, machi means date palm, a name chosen due to the castle's location amid date palms. The structure predominantly employs adobe and mud in its construction and features a square architectural plan, with tall verandas and clay domes — characteristic elements of this historical site.



● eneshat.com

## Chehel Dokhtaran Castle

Chehel Dokhtaran Castle (Forty Girls Castle) is among the notable sights of Sistan and Baluchestan Province, situated in a village called Kuh-e Khajeh (Khajeh Mountain) in Zabol. The naming of this area is deeply rooted in leg-

ends and narratives recounted by the villagers throughout history. According to these ancient tales, this area was home to forty unmarried girls who lived together, and their sounds of joy and celebration were always heard by the villagers until a sorcerer, using a specific spell,

terminated their lives, and the girls' wealth was buried in that very place.

Besides the stories, this area includes an ancient castle made of stone and clay, dating back to the Sassanid era, establishing it as one of the regions for archaeological excavations and research.

# Iran, Kazakhstan agree on joint museum exhibitions

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and Kazakhstan agreed to host joint exhibitions and establish a shared digital database for cultural exchange. The agreements were reached during a meeting between Jebrael Nokandeh, Director of the National Museum of Iran, and his Kazakh counterpart, Berik Abdygaliuly, in Tehran on April 10. The two nations plan to organize an exhibition of Iranian artifacts in Astana in 2025 and a showcase of Kazakh treasures in Tehran in 2026, IRNA reported. Nokandeh highlighted the shared cultural heritage of the two nations and referred to the memorandum of understanding between their museums. He expressed Iran's readiness to expand cultural cooperation and inter-museum ties. Among his proposals was the organization of joint exhibitions and the creation of a shared dig-

ital database to facilitate the exchange of cultural data and artifacts, the report said. Abdygaliuly also emphasized the importance of implementing the terms of the memorandum and pointed out that the shared heritage between Iran and Kazakhstan—spanning various historical periods, including the Scythian, Islamic, and particularly the Timurid era—provided strong foundations for further collaboration. He proposed hosting an exhibition of Iran's National Museum artifacts in Kazakhstan in the current year and an exhibition of Kazakhstan's National Museum collections in Iran in 2026. "Cultural diplomacy thrives through such collaborations," Nokandeh said, emphasizing the potential of museums to bridge civilizations. Abdygaliuly noted that these initiatives would underscore the rich heritage

connecting Iran and Kazakhstan. In a separate development, Iran's Deputy Minister for Handicrafts and Traditional Arts, Maryam Jalali, met with Kazakh Ambassador Ontalap Onalbayev to discuss economic and artistic partnerships. Jalali proposed a consortium to explore mutual heritage and promote handicrafts, suggesting that Iranian artisans could incorporate Kazakh cultural symbols into their works. Plans also include a sister-city agreement between Shahr-e Kord and Taraz to enhance felt production collaboration. Jalali highlighted the role of women in preserving cultural heritage and proposed empowering nomadic women through handicraft projects. Additionally, a statue of Omar Khayyam by Iranian woodcarvers is planned for installation in Taraz, symbolizing the cultural collaboration between the two nations.



● IRNA

## Imagination meets technique in photography



and transitioned from analog. My last analog photography period coincided with the liberation of Khorramshahr, where I worked with the late Golestan, Mohammad Farnood, and Deqati. From Golestan, I learned the importance of capturing moments without hesitation.

### Do you edit your digital photos?

In documentary photography, editing is not allowed. However, in conceptual minimalism, editing is entirely permissible, and any alterations are noted for the judges. Using others' photos is not permitted.

### Is your style in photography minimalist?

In addition to architectural and street photography, I also work in minimalism. In this competition, I focused on conceptual minimalism.

### How did you develop this minimalist mindset with a philosophical perspective?

In minimalism, you retain only what's essential and discard the rest. This applies to lifestyle as well—eliminating unnecessary ceremonies and decorations. You can easily feel a sense of calm in minimalist spaces, akin to meditation. When it becomes conceptual, despite its simplicity, it conveys a concept, giving you the freedom to use your own photos in combinations. Of course, these details must be explained in the photo descriptions.

### Did you reach this perspective in photography because of the good instructors you had in painting?

In artistic work, imagination is the initial step, whether in painting or photography. For photographers, this involves capturing, editing, and printing the image effectively. However, sanctions limit access to modern software and technology, and printing is complicated by the need for costly imported materials like high-quality paper and chemicals. Despite efforts by places like Aria Laboratory, these challenges persist. I personally manage the entire process from idea creation to editing and printing.

### How has your photography approach changed from the Revolution and Iran-Iraq War to now?

I applied visual arts principles to pho-

tography, adhering to composition and aesthetic guidelines. Although I had limited experience, it was sufficient for documentary work, and I often took risks. My documentary style has remained consistent but has become more refined. Meanwhile, I've discovered new opportunities in minimalist and conceptual photography, which is a fresh direction for me.

### Have your photos from the Revolution and the war been conceptually acclaimed?

I am preparing photos from the Revolution and war for release, and I plan to hold an exhibition this September. The exhibition will include fine art works with limited editions, pending the availability of materials like paper and chemicals.

My approach to photography and painting is innovative, often bold in design and composition while respecting certain rules. Simplification requires courage, and once achieved, it's about societal interpretation. My work has been well-received in specialized gatherings.

Historically, horses symbolize power, beauty, intelligence, and loyalty. Inspired by a horse named "Shamshir," I worked on a project involving horses. I consulted with Babak Mohammadi and chose a Selle Français named "Legend" and its offspring at a farm owned by my friend, Mr. Vosough, who used to manage the Iran newspaper. One black-and-white photo features a horse waiting for its master, with a shadow on the wall, capturing the agony of waiting. The play of shadows and light is depicted simply yet powerfully.

A color photo shows a white horse looking out a window, symbolizing a meaningful view of life. The crack on the wall adds depth to the story, and this photo has been well-received internationally.

Another photo explores the relationship between humans and technology, sparking curiosity and viewed extensively on photography sites. In a contest with 42,000 submissions from 131 countries, my work was among the top 10, and I was recognized as one of the top 10 minimalist conceptual photographers worldwide. The black-and-white photo was among the top 350 globally in 2024. Extensive research was conducted for this project.

### How many photos did you submit to the competition?

I took three photos, all of which were among the best. I am very strict in my selections and discard many works that do not meet my standards. These photos will be published in a highly valued book and will also be exhibited in art centers around the world.

### How would you evaluate the state of digital photography in Iran?

In Iran, most photographers rely on digital techniques due to the unavailability or high cost of analog methods. Sanctions prevent access to advanced software, and weak internet infrastructure hinders bypassing filters, leading to technical limitations. Universities lack structured programs for teaching digital photography, and vocational groups fail to provide adequate training due to poor foundational education. A systematic approach, such as training 50 individuals and deploying two per province to train others annually, is absent. Consequently, the digital education system in Iran is disorganized and ineffective, with quality productions often stemming from individual efforts.

### What did you learn from Mr. Golestan and your painting instructors in terms of personality as an artist?

Golestan taught me how to capture moments. He'd take the first photo without using the viewfinder, relying on a wide-angle lens to frame the shot quickly. He'd move from the periphery to the center, dominating the subject. Equipped with a motor drive, he could take up to five photos per second, ensuring he never missed the decisive moment.

### How did you draw inspiration from your painting instructors?

My last painting instructor, Katouzian, was strict and precise in design, with a sharp and powerful gaze that made students immediately understand their mistakes during corrections. His construction and color techniques were conveyed with a powerful yet sweet pen. I completed a gouache course and learned watercolor techniques under his guidance. Reflecting on my works from that time, I feel the strength he instilled in us, though we may not have fully appreciated it by not continuing. I wish him health and longevity.

By Saeideh Ehsani Rad  
Staff writer

## INTERVIEW

Photography combines imagination and technique. Recently, Abolqasem Khoshro gained recognition in the photography community by being named one of the top 10 conceptual minimalist photographers in the 2024 35AWARDS. He competed against over 10,000 photographers from 131 countries and more than 42,000 submissions, with one of his works featured among the top 350 photos. The 35AWARDS is an international competition established in 2015, aiming to showcase the best works annually across 10 categories. Since 2017, it highlights influential photographers based on their three best works. Winners receive certificates, cash prizes, and publication in an annual album, offering international exposure and networking opportunities. Khoshro discussed his achievement and artistic endeavors in an interview with Iran Daily reporter. The full text of the interview follows.

### IRAN DAILY: How did your interest in painting and entering the field of photography develop?

**KHOSHRO:** From a young age, I was drawn to painting and traditional coffeehouse murals. I continued painting throughout high school and later pursued mathematics in college, followed by mechanical engineering. I also took architecture courses and eventually

studied architecture after completing my mechanical engineering degree. Outside of formal education, I learned from excellent mentors and explored art. During university, I began photography, particularly architectural photography, working with notable photographers like Kaveh Golestan and Abbas Attar. I met Golestan at an exhibition at Molavi Hall before the 1979 Islamic Revolution and Attar during protests. While photography was a part of my journey, painting remained my primary focus alongside rigorous training.

### What style did you have in painting?

I learned drawing through the art school method, studying under Faramarz Piliaram, a renowned Iranian painter who encouraged me to create a monograph on Qeshm Island. I have an unpublished photo collection of Qeshm from 48 years ago. Later, I studied anatomy with Gholamhossein Nami and completed a four-year painting course, including oil techniques, with Morteza Katouzian. This led to my decision to focus on photography over painting.

### Can you explain why you made this choice?

I believed the world was moving towards speed, and painting required more patience and had a different impact scope. While painting has a profound effect, it didn't offer the speed I desired. As we entered the digital era, I joined the digital caravan



Abolqasem Khoshro