



Venezuela honors Iranian anchor who stayed on air during Israeli attack

Arts & Culture Desk

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro awarded the Simon Bolivar National Journalism Prize to Iranian news anchor Sahar Emami, who gained international attention for resuming her broadcast moments after an Israeli airstrike hit her Tehran studio. Maduro granted the national journalism award to Emami, who showed "exemplary courage" during the June 16 Israeli attack on Iran's state television headquarters. The award also honors media personnel killed in the strike on the Islamic Republic of Iran News Network (IRINN), IRNA reported. Iran's ambassador to Venezuela, Ali

Chegini, accepted the prize on behalf of Emami and the families of those killed in the attack during a ceremony at Venezuela's National Journalism Day celebration.

Emami became a household name across the Middle East after video footage showed her briefly leaving the anchor desk when the Israeli strike shook the IRINN studio building. Minutes later, she returned "unshaken and resolute" to resume the live broadcast, earning widespread praise for her composure under fire.

The June attack came after Israel issued evacuation warnings for the Tehran area where the television studios are located. The explosion filled the

studio with dust and debris during the live broadcast, forcing Emami to duck for cover before returning to continue reporting.

Iranian Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei praised Emami's actions, and she has since become a symbol of defiance in Iran. Images of Emami "facing the camera with a defiant gaze, her index finger raised in the air" have circulated widely on social media.

The Simon Bolivar Prize recognizes outstanding journalism and is named after the South American independence hero. Venezuela's state media broadcast the award ceremony live across multiple national television channels.



Iranian director bags Canadian Oscar-qualifying festival nominations



Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Ramin Hosseinpour scored nominations in two categories at Canada's Oscar-qualifying Toronto International Nollywood Film Festival (TINFF) for his documentary short 'Sculpture,' festival organizers announced. The director landed nominations for Best Director and Best Film in the documentary category at TINFF, which runs from September 6 to 13, 2025, in Toronto. The festival gained recognition as a Canadian Screen

Award qualifying event through approval from the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television, cinemajournal.ir reported. Hosseinpour also swept four awards at the 22-year-old Accolade Global Film Competition in San Diego in June 2025, taking home honors for Best Director, Best Short Documentary, Best Writing and Best Screenplay. The filmmaker will serve on TINFF's international industry panel, participating in specialized sessions, professional roundtables and official programs during the

festival. The awards ceremony and red-carpet event will take place within the same September timeframe.

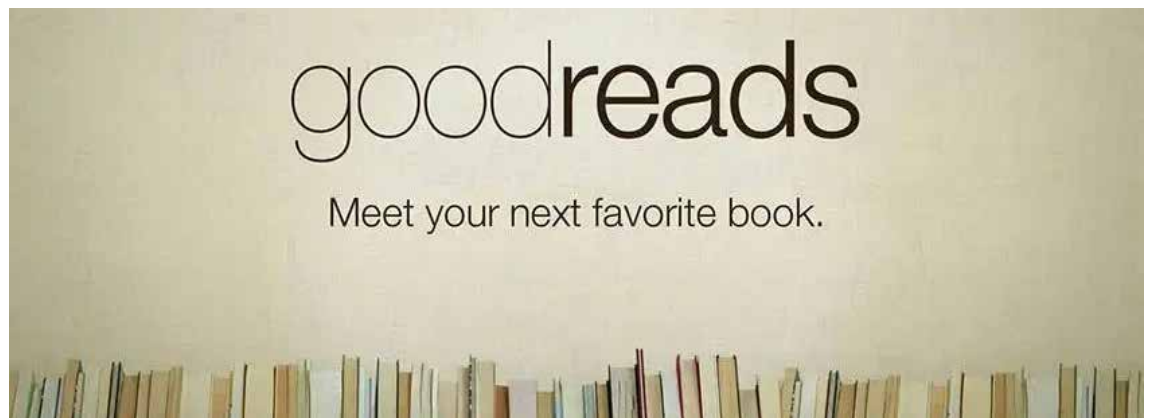
'Sculpture' tells the story of 13th-century Persian poets Rumi and Shams Tabrizi, drawing from historical documentary sources. The film competes in both short film and video art categories at international festivals and is currently vying for qualification for the 2026 Academy Awards, Canadian Screen Awards and BAFTAs.

The director is currently producing his next short film 'The Claimant,' focusing on the life of Persian poet Attar, a prominent Persian poet and mystic from Nishapur.

International critics describe Hosseinpour's work as documentary-based narratives that blend visual and conceptual aesthetics with architectural structure and musical composition.

The Accolade Global Film Competition, operating since 2003 in San Diego, California, ranks among America's most established independent artistic events in film and visual media. The competition uses specialized jury systems while focusing on discovering global creative talent.

Amazon's Goodreads blocks Iranian users citing US sanctions, sparks outcry



Arts & Culture Desk

Goodreads, the Amazon-owned book social network, has come under fire after suspending accounts of Iranian users without warning in recent days, citing US sanctions. The move triggered widespread criticism from users and digital rights advocates who say it amounts to "digital discrimination." Founded in 2006 and acquired by Amazon in 2013, Goodreads has long served as a global platform for readers to review books, share notes, and connect over literature. But over the past several weeks, dozens of Iranian users discovered their accounts had been deleted or locked — in some cases, wiping out years of activity, Tasnim reported.

The users said they received no prior notice. When they attempted to reach

Goodreads support, they were redirected to Amazon's identity verification email, which demanded personal documents, including passports, proof of residence, and job records from the past 50 days.

"These requirements were never mentioned in the site's terms of use," one user told Iranian news outlet Tasnim, calling the move "arbitrary and invasive."

This isn't the first time Goodreads has targeted Iranian users. In 2019, a similar wave of account suspensions coincided with a new round of US sanctions on Iran. But users and critics argue the current actions go further, severing access to non-commercial, non-political spaces with no financial element.

"Goodreads is not a bank or a marketplace. It's a place to talk about

books," reads a statement from a user-organized petition that has begun circulating online. The petition urges Amazon to end "nationality-based suspensions" and restore affected accounts.

Some users, who had contributed hundreds of reviews and book annotations, say years of work disappeared overnight.

Digital rights advocates warn that such enforcement, under the broad umbrella of US sanctions, is expanding beyond business or finance and infringing on free expression.

"If left unchecked, this could spread to users in other countries," the petition adds. "We must defend the global right to read and be heard."

Amazon has not responded to multiple requests for comment. Goodreads has remained silent on the issue.

Iran orders 'immediate' deportation of illegal foreign nationals



Social Desk

Iran's prosecutor general on Saturday ordered all unauthorized

foreign nationals to leave the country "immediately," threatening legal action against violators and property seizures from land-

lords who rent to undocumented immigrants.

Mohammad Kazem Movahedi Azad issued the directive during a memorial ceremony in Hamedan province, specifically targeting Afghan nationals who have been living in Iran without proper documentation, IRNA reported.

"Foreign nationals, especially our Afghan brothers and sisters whom we have hosted for years, should help ensure unauthorized individuals leave Iran in the shortest possible time," Movahedi Azad said, adding that violators would face judicial action. The crackdown extends beyond

deportations. Border Guard Commander Brigadier General Ahmad Ali Goudarzi announced that rental agreements with Afghan nationals would be declared void under the new policy. "Any house or property rented to Afghans will have its contract nullified, and the property will be sealed and confiscated," Goudarzi said.

The border commander described the move as responding to "public demand" for organizing unauthorized foreign nationals, according to state media reports.

Iran has hosted millions of Af-

ghan refugees for decades, but the Islamic Republic has faced mounting economic pressure from international sanctions and growing public discontent over resource allocation.

Movahedi Azad also called on authorized foreign residents to report individuals who have collaborated with the Zionist regime, promising leniency for those who voluntarily turn themselves in.

The prosecutor general's office did not specify a timeline for the deportations or provide figures on how many unauthorized foreign nationals currently reside

in Iran.

Iran's relationship with its Afghan population has deteriorated since the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in 2021, with Tehran periodically announcing mass deportation campaigns that have displaced thousands of families.

The new directive represents one of the most comprehensive crackdowns on undocumented immigrants in recent years, potentially affecting hundreds of thousands of Afghan nationals who fled to Iran seeking economic opportunities or escaping conflict.