

Two senior judges assassinated in Tehran; shooter takes own life

National Desk

Two high-profile Iranian judges were killed in a shooting attack on Saturday at the Supreme Court building in the capital Tehran.

A statement issued by the Judiciary identified the judges as Ali Razini, 71, and Mohammad Moghiseh, 68, saying that they worked on cases fighting crimes against national security, espionage and terrorism.

"This morning, a gunman infiltrated the Supreme Court in a planned act of assassination of two brave and experienced judges. The two judges were martyred in the act," Judiciary spokesman Asghar Jahangir said.

Jahangir said the assailant "killed himself" after the shootings, adding that a bodyguard of the judges was also injured in the attack.

The motive behind their killing were not immediately clear. Authorities have launched an investigation into the incident. "We hope to be able to quickly publish the results of the follow-ups to arrest those involved" in the incident, Jahangir said.

According to the preliminary investigation, the attacker was not involved in any cases before the Supreme Court.

Razini, 71, held several important positions in Iran's judiciary and was previously targeted in an assassination attempt by

assailants "who planted a magnetic bomb in his vehicle," according to Mizan news agency. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in a statement extended condolences to the families of the judges over the "cowardly and inhumane terrorist act" and called for quick investigation into the shooting attack.

Iran's Judiciary Chief Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei also in a statement extended condolences over the deaths of the judges.

Ejei praised the two judges, saying that they were constantly at the forefront of achieving justice and securing the rights of the oppressed during their tenures.



Mohammad Moghiseh

Ali Razini

Envoy says Japan aims to help Iran bolster global interactions



Tsukada Tamaki
ISNA

International Desk

The Japanese ambassador to Iran Tsukada Tamaki said 2025 will be an important year in the world and Japan is trying to play an important role in strengthening Iran's interactions with the international community.

"Given the existing capacities in Iran and Japan, and considering the new approach of the Iranian government in interacting with the international community and its desire to attract foreign investment, it is expected that cooperation between the two countries will increase (in the future)," Tamaki made the comments in an interview with ISNA in the northeastern province of Khorasan Razavi.

Tamaki also emphasized the need to expand cooperation between the private sectors of the two countries.

He said that the private sector in Japan avoids facing a crisis, but if sanctions imposed on Iran are lifted, Japan is willing to invest in various sectors in Iran and improve cooperation between the two countries' private and public

sectors. Therefore, facilitating interaction between the private sectors of the two countries can help the expansion of economic relations between Tehran and Tokyo, the Japanese ambassador said.

He also noted that Japan and Iran will celebrate 100 years of diplomatic relations in 2029.

"This is a very good opportunity to hold an important event, especially for cultural exchanges between the two countries. In addition to paying attention to the history of Iran-Japan relations, we can also focus on the future of bilateral relations."

Referring to Iran's industrial sectors that have high potential for investment, Tamaki said, "We are moving towards decarbonization, and in this transitional period, working on some energy areas is a good business opportunity."

Tamaki pointed to green ammonia technology and its use in the energy market and said it will have a very good market in the transition to decarbonization.

Gaza cease-fire takes effect today



A boy runs with a Palestinian flag past tents at a camp for people displaced by conflict in the central Gaza Strip on January 17, 2025.

EYAD BABA/AFP



A cease-fire in the Gaza war will begin on Sunday morning, Qatar's Foreign Ministry spokesperson announced in a post on X.

"As coordinated by the parties to the agreement and the mediators, the cease-fire in the Gaza Strip will begin at 8:30 am (0630 GMT) on Sunday," Qatar's Foreign Ministry spokesman Majed al-Ansari said on Saturday.

The deal was approved after more than 460 days of war in which Israeli forces have killed more than 46,788 Palestinians and wounded 110,453. It would see the release of 33 captives held in Gaza over the next six weeks, in exchange for hundreds of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.

The remainder, including male soldiers, are to be released in a second phase that will be negotiated during the first.

Hamas has said it will not release the remaining captives without a lasting cease-fire and a full Israeli

withdrawal.

Israel's justice ministry said 737 Palestinian prisoners and detainees would be freed as part of the deal's first phase -- none before 4:00 pm (1400 GMT) on Sunday.

In more than 15 months of war Israel's war on Gaza, there has been only one previous truce, for one week, in November 2023. That deal also saw the release of hostages held by Hamas in exchange for Palestinian prisoners.

The office of Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed the deal "supports achieving the objectives of the war" after the cabinet approved the deal.

But Hamas said Israel had "failed to achieve its aggressive goals" and "only succeeded in committing war crimes that disgrace the dignity of humanity".

Leader of the Lebanese group Hezbollah, Naim Qassem, congratulated the Palestinians for reaching

the deal, saying it proved the "persistence of resistance" against Israel. "This deal, which was unchanged from what was proposed in May 2024, proves the persistence of resistance groups, which took what they wanted while Israel was not able to take what it sought," he said. Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas said the Palestinian Authority, which has partial administrative control in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, has completed preparations "to assume full responsibility in Gaza" after the war.

In Gaza, meanwhile, Israeli forces kept up heavy attacks.

Nearly 120 Palestinians killed by Israeli bombardment since Wednesday when the cease-fire announced by mediators.

On Saturday, Gaza's civil defense rescue agency said at least five members of a family were killed when a strike hit their tent in Khan Yunis, in southern Gaza.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



'Far from reality': Armed Forces debunk new speculations on Raisi's death

National Desk

Iran's Armed Forces in a statement on Saturday dismissed new speculations on the death of former Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi after he was killed in a helicopter crash in northwestern Iran in May last year. The statement said that an extensive investigation conducted by the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran had concluded that "merely complicated weather and geographical conditions of the region" had caused the crash in a mountainous area in Iran's northwest.

It dismissed as "far from reality" any speculations about technical failures,

sabotage, terrorist attacks, explosions, or electronic warfare.

The statement said that the unfounded claims in the social media on the death of Raisi arise from ignorance, lack of knowledge, or are made for specific purposes. The Armed Forces' reaction came after Mojtaba Mousavi, brother of the head of Raisi's security team, Mehdi Mousavi, in an interview said that his brother had been opposed to the trip to Azerbaijan border "but at the insistence of the president's office, he finally fulfilled his inherent duty."

Other less known officials also recently claimed that "electronic warfare and cyberattacks" might have played a role in



the tragic incident.

Late president Raisi along with Mehdi Mousavi, foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and other dignitaries lost their lives after their helicopter crashed into the mountains in East Azerbaijan Province on May 19.