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World: South Asia

Another Shia leader killed in Pakistan



By Shahid Malik in Lahore

A prominent Shia lawyer has been shot dead in the town of Gujranwala, about 50 miles (80km) from Lahore, the capital of the Pakistani province of Punjab.

The lawyer, Ejaz Rasoolnagri, was a local leader of the Shia organisation Tehrik-e-Jafria Pakistan (TJP). His car was ambushed by unknown gunmen using automatic weapons early on Thursday morning.

He is the second important Shia leader to have been murdered in Pakistan in the last week.

The attack happened as Mr Rasoolnagri was driving his daughter to her school. She was seriously injured, but an armed guard occupying a rear seat in the lawyer's car escaped unhurt.

Mr Rasoolnagri was in his early forties and was the senior vice president of the Gujranwala district Bar Association.

His death is the latest in a fresh spate of sectarian violence in Pakistan.

On Tuesday, TJP General Secretary Khursheed Anwar was shot dead along with his daughter and an armed guard in the



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city of Dera Ismail Khan.

Mr Anwar was gunned down by two armed men in what police believe is a case of religious sectarianism.

He was a local lawyer and one of the most prominent Shia Muslim leaders in the country.

Within minutes of his death, angry TJP supporters took to the streets and chanted slogans against members of a rival Sunni Muslim party.

Officials say a big hunt has been ordered for Mr Khan's unidentified killers, but say it is too early to blame any particular group for the incident.

This year in the province of Punjab, more than 40 people have been killed in such incidents, which officials say are directly linked to the sectarian rivalry between the hardline groups of the minority Shia and majority Sunni Muslim communities.

Officials say that they are taking "precautionary measures" to stop retaliatory attacks following the latest incidents.

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