

Iran's presidential contenders

Iran's presidential election is shaping up to be a two-horse race, with moderate incumbent Hassan Rouhani facing a tough re-election battle against hardline cleric Ebrahim Raisi



HASSAN ROUHANI, 68

- Elected in 2013 on pledges of greater personal freedoms and detente with West

- Clinched 2015 deal which saw Iran limit its nuclear programme in exchange for relief from crippling international sanctions

- Believed to be frontrunner in May 19 election, but failure of nuclear deal to bring economic gains for ordinary Iranians has created opening that rivals have sought to exploit

- Has used campaign to attack opponents over personal freedoms, corruption and wealthy state bodies that do not pay tax

- Won key endorsement of Iran's reformist ex-president **Mohammad Khatami**, who praised government for cutting inflation from 40 percent in 2013 to 9.5 percent in 2016

EBRAHIM RAISI, 56

- Former attorney general, serves as head of **Imam Reza** charity which manages vast conglomerate of businesses and endowments in Iran

- Close to Supreme Leader **Ayatollah Ali Khamenei** and seen by many as his possible successor

- Campaigned on promise to fight poverty, proposing cash payments for poor that proved popular under former president **Mahmoud Ahmadinejad**

- Raisi's candidacy has revived controversy over Iran's mass execution of prisoners in 1988 – he allegedly served on board that sentenced some prisoners to death

- Backed by Tehran's conservative mayor **Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf**, who dropped out of presidential race on May 15 to consolidate opposition aiming to unseat Rouhani