

Fifty dead as Iranian bloodshed escalates

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TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Two days of political and religious violence in provincial cities claimed 50 or more lives in this strife-torn nation, informed sources said Friday.

The biggest bloodbath occurred in the southern city of Shiraz, where orthodox Moslems battled with mem-

nevers were not related to the mounting political campaign against Iran's pro-West ruler, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

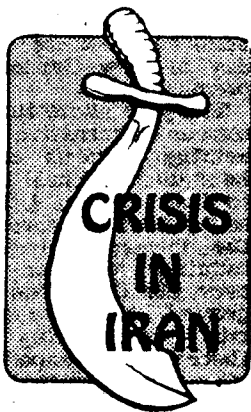
In Paris, Ayatullah Khomeini, the Shiite Moslem religious leader who is at the head of the anti-shah movement, urged his followers to step up their efforts to drive the shah from his throne.

The latest round of clashes between security forces and demonstrators, and between pro- and anti-shah civilians began last Monday, but Thursday and yesterday were the bloodiest days yet. Deaths were reported in at least three cities, bringing the toll for the week close to the 70 mark.

In Shiraz Thursday, Shiite Moslems attacked a Pepsi-Cola plant and other businesses and homes of Bahai sect members. More than 40 Shiites were killed and 50 wounded, informed sources said.

When the Shiites attacked the homes, Bahai sect members opened fire with automatic weapons to protect their property, the sources said.

Most Iranians, including the shah himself, are Shiites.



bers of the Bahai religion, which is linked with Iran's elite.

The Pentagon reported in Washington, meanwhile, that a four-ship U.S. Navy task force was engaged in maneuvers with ships from Iran, Pakistan and Britain in the Gulf of Oman, at Iran's southeast corner.

But officials said the ma-