

Isolated skirmishes reported in Kurdistan on anniversary of Khomeini's return

Iran celebrates a year of the Ayatollah's rule



An Iranian woman weeps outside the hospital where Ayatollah Khomeini is recuperating from a heart ailment

From Reuters in Tehran
Hundreds of thousands of joyful Iranians yesterday celebrated the anniversary of Ayatollah Khomeini's return to Iran after years of exile.

Muslims gathered outside a north Tehran hospital where the 79-year-old Ayatollah is recovering from a heart ailment. They sobbed as speakers eulogised the leader.

Then, chanting slogans and waving banners, they marched five miles to the university to take part in Friday prayers. Less elaborate demonstrations were reported from other Iranian cities.

Tehran march recalled on a smaller scale, the scenes of a year ago when up to four million people poured into the streets to welcome their hero.

Addressing Friday prayers, the Spiritual leader, Hojatoleslam Seyyed Ali Khomeini, described last week's presidential elections, won by the Finance Minister, Mr Bani-Sadr, as a "great victory."

Hojatoleslam Khamene'i, a leader of the Islamic Republican Party, whose candidate was disqualified from the elections on a technicality, struck a conciliatory note to Mr Bani-Sadr when he said: "May this great

victory be auspicious to the President."

But a speaker at the hospital, Hojatoleslam Mohammad Mohllesi, said in a reference to the forthcoming parliamentary elections, that it was Ayatollah Khomeini's will to elect revolutionary figures and "reveal the plotters."

Mr Bani-Sadr will reportedly take his presidential oath before Ayatollah Khomeini at the hospital on Monday. The Iranian leader, who was taken to hospital nine days ago, will stay there for the time being.

In Iran's troubled Kurdish region, isolated skirmishes were reported in some villages yesterday, but Kurdish sources said the main areas were quiet as both sides reinforced.

The reasons for the latest violence have remained obscure and there has been disagreement about casualty figures. The official Pars news agency said about 12 people had been killed but Kurdish sources put the death toll several times higher.

Meanwhile, in Canada, it was revealed that diplomats in Tehran declared an unscheduled national holiday last Monday, when they closed their

embassy as cover for their departure from Iran.

The embassy was also closed the day after six US Embassy officials fled the country, posing as Canadians.

"We put up signs saying the embassy was closed. When people came in, I called it a new national Canadian day — don't ask me what it was," a military police sergeant said. He declined to say how the embassy sheltered the six Americans and got them out of Iran.

UPI adds from Washington: Lawyers say they will ask the Supreme Court to decide if the Government has the right to check the visas of Iranian students and deport those who are in the United States illegally.

On Thursday, the US circuit court of appeals for the District of Columbia declined to reconsider a ruling by a three-judge panel upholding President Carter's programme.

Since the President's order went into effect, 6871 of the 56,694 Iranian students who reported to authorities during a six-week period were found in violation, and 55 left voluntarily. Another 1356 have agreed to depart voluntarily in the next month, while 43 more face deportation.

