

# Rangoon tells protesters to stop rumours

BP 880913

Rangoon (AP) — More than 1,000 schoolchildren fasted as thousands more anti-government protesters marched yesterday in Rangoon, and the military said it would shoot the people who spread a rumour that the armed forces had threatened the government.

In their first joint statement, key opposition leaders repeated their demand that authorities allow the immediate formation of an interim government to lead the transition to democracy.

Last night, the students ended a 36-hour fast at the Rangoon General Hospital compound, a longtime rallying point. The students, ranging in age from about 10 to 17 and many wearing school uniforms, held banners demanding "Give us democracy" and "Give us interim government."

Many thousands of student-led demonstrators marched through the capital, shouting demands for an interim government and multiparty democracy. At least five sep-

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## Warning over rumours

military warning stemmed from false rumours that two senior commanders had threatened the shelling and bombing of several buildings if authorities did not agree by 1 p.m. today to form an interim government.

"This evening, false propaganda was spread through the distribution of leaflets by cars and through announcements by loudspeakers on the main streets of Rangoon city," the broadcast said.

"A warning of the defence forces has been received through authorities concerned, saying the defence forces can no longer tolerate this and will open fire if they come across this group of peo-

ple," it said.

The threat in the unsigned, mimeographed leaflets was purportedly issued by the navy's vice chief, Rear Adm Maung Maung Khin, and the air force's vice chief, Maj Gen Tin Tun.

President Maung Maung has rejected the call for an interim government. But on Saturday he bowed to weeks of nationwide protests and announced the ruling party would relinquish its 26-year monopoly on power and hold the first multiparty elections since 1960.

Parliament on Sunday authorised the government to amend the constitution to permit a multiparty system and hold the election in as little as six weeks.

But the demonstrators clearly remain sceptical of the promise and the protests have continued.

Burma scholars note the present constitution

is designed throughout to support single-party rule, and would virtually have to be scrapped rather than amended to permit multiparty elections.

American Burma expert Josef Silverstein, contacted by the Associated Press, said the constitution gives the president and central government great power and enshrines the rigid party policies known as the "Burmese Way to Socialism."

Meanwhile, opposition leaders Aung Gyi, former Defence Minister Tin Oo and Aung San Suu Kyi issued their demand for an interim government in a letter to Maung Maung.

None of the opposition leaders has specified who should be in the interim government, saying only it should comprise people outside the ruling Burma Socialist Programme Party who are "acceptable to all the people."

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Also, Gen Saw Maung, Burma's defence minister and armed forces chief of staff, called in a nationwide broadcast last night for the public and military to cooperate in holding proposed general elections.

Saw Maung also said the military had not intervened to end increasing lawlessness in Burma "to avoid possible misunderstandings amid various attempts to discredit the armed forces by way of spreading false rumours, propaganda and exaggerations."

arate groups were counted, and estimates of the total number of protesters ranged from 10,000 to over 100,000.

A Western diplomat in Rangoon said the demonstrators marched in a more militant style than before and shouted their defiance louder.

More soldiers were seen on the streets yesterday, but they did not interfere with the protesters, who dispersed peacefully.

Meanwhile, state-run Radio Rangoon said the

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