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Opposition in Burma bids to form united front

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Aung San Suu Kyi, Tin Oo and Ang Gyi later joined former prime minister U Nu and independence hero Bo Ya Naing to meet students, who urged them to unite and come up with a plan for an interim government.

"We agreed to deliver a response within 48 hours," Aung San Suu Kyi said.

There were fewer anti-government protesters on the streets yesterday than in recent days, but diplomats said the demonstrators appeared more determined to press their case.

"They seem to be the hard core, cause-oriented students. They are definitely more organised, more grim," an Asian diplomat said.

Diplomats speculated there were fewer demonstrators because violence was feared after threats by small student factions. Others said many protesters were simply exhausted after weeks of daily rallies and nights often

Another diplomat said the opposition would have to come up with a plan for unity and coordination soon.

The meeting with the election commission, formed to supervise elections within six to 12 weeks, was held at the initiative of the government body.

An aide to Tin Oo said commission officials expressed regret at the opposition's stand.

Saw Maung warned opponents of the government: "Please do not try to break up the defence forces because the state can lose its independence, and we, together with all the people, will have to face grave dangers that cannot be foreseen."

Burma's state radio last night appealed to workers to go back on their jobs to end hardships caused by the more than one-month long paralysis of the economy and services by demonstrations and strikes.