

Students told to keep up pressure

# Revolt leaders ready to form new Burma govt

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**BURMESE** opposition leaders said yesterday they were ready to form an interim government and urged students to keep up non-violent pressure to force the resignation of the ruling socialist party.

General Tin Oo told Reuters the opposition would not compromise with the ruling Burma Socialist Programme Party but would give it "a few days" to relinquish power to them or he and other leading opponents would form a rival government.

Tin Oo, a former defence minister, said that he, Aung San Suu Kyi and Aung Gyi had reached a unified position yesterday after calls by student leaders in the past two days for urgent progress towards the formation of a new government.

Speaking by telephone from Rangoon, he said he would accept a post in a transition government if requested by the people but did not mention any specific position.

Stressing the need for non-violence to end the BSPP's 25-year-old monopoly of power, he said: "With democracy at hand moral courage is the only way to achieve success."

"We expect a response from the government within two or three days," the general said.

As for much of the past month, huge street demonstrations were held in the capital yesterday involving a broad range of people including marching bands and police.

Tin Oo, Aung San Suu Kyi and Aung Gyi, three of Burma's most prominent opposition figures, in a joint statement issued yesterday, urged students who have been in the vanguard of the national revolt for multi-party democracy to be patient.

The statement said it would be better to give the government time to quit and arrange an orderly handover to an interim government, rather than to set up a parallel government.

"That could lead to unnecessary problems and disturbances, so we should expel the current government and then form the interim government with support of the people," it said.

Tin Oo told Reuters if the BSPP did not acquiesce the opposition would have to form a rival government to wrest power.

This week the government agreed to hold elections for a multi-party government but the opposition overwhelmingly rejected any polls conducted by the BSPP and continued to insist on the army-backed party's resignation.

Tin Oo said the opposition was also demanding that army officers — the core of the BSPP — resign from the party.

The army is Burma's most organised political institution and its support is vital for the stability of any government.

Meanwhile, AP reported that more than 100,000 people from all walks of life filled the streets of Rangoon yesterday, angrily condemning the one-party government and demanding a new administration to bring back democracy.

The student-led demonstrators jammed all of the capital's main streets in a spontaneous, peaceful rejection of the BSPP and its 26 years of repression and ruinous economic policies. Estimates of the crowd ranged from 100,000 to one million.

"There is no indication at present that the government will accept the demand for an interim government," said an Asian diplomat in Rangoon, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"Step down fascist BSPP government" and "Give us an interim government," shouted students, Buddhist monks, government workers and people from many other segments of society.

"You run or we will kill you," the marchers shouted, pounding fists in the air as they used more militant and threatening slogans than before. "If they don't fall, make them fall," they chanted.

The protesters shouted their rejection of the government's plan to hold elections, saying they did not trust the election supervisory commission it appointed on Sunday.

A Western diplomat in Rangoon said the demon-

strators, accompanied by marching bands, included about 100 uniformed policemen and pilots and stewardesses whose pro-democracy strikes have grounded all commercial flights since last week.

He said several thousand demonstrators listened to strident speeches in front of the US Embassy, a favourite rallying place.

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