

Military revolt looms in Burma

TN 880913

RANGOON — Opposition leaders called for an interim government to hold elections and the military feverishly tried to squelch rumours that officers would revolt today if such a government wasn't formed.

Gen Saw Maung, in a nationwide broadcast yesterday, rejected as false leaflets distributed in the capital that said the military would bomb government buildings unless an interim government were formed to oversee the elections.

State-run *Radio Rangoon* said security forces would shoot anyone responsible for spreading the rumour.

Opposition leaders Aung Gyi, former Defence Minister Tin Oo and Aung San Suu Kyi repeated their demand for immediate formation of an interim government to hold the elections designed to

end 26 years of military-dominated, one-party rule in a letter yesterday to President Maung Maung.

The government did not immediately acknowledge its receipt.

None of the opposition leaders have specified who should be in the interim government. They also have not said if they would be willing to serve in a transition government.

Maung Maung has rejected the call for an interim government. On Saturday, he bowed to weeks of nationwide protests and announced the ruling party would hold the first multi-party elections since 1960.

Parliament on Sunday authorized the government to amend the Constitution to permit a multi-party system and hold the election, possibly in six weeks.

The actions have so far

failed to halt anti-government protests.

Last night, students aged 10 to 17 seeking an interim government ended a 36-hour fast at the Rangoon General Hospital compound, a longtime rallying point.

Between 10,000 and 100,000 student-led demonstrators marched through the capital, shouting demands for an interim government and multi-party democracy.

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

Radio Rangoon earlier said the State Council met with the newly formed Commission on Elections to discuss details of the general election, naming Ba Htay as commission chairman.

The Parliament-appointed commission has three retired civil servants, a retired army brigadier general and a former member of Parliament. All generally are regarded as neutral. At least four of the five do not belong to the ruling Burma Socialist Programme Party.

Parliament set a target date of three months for holding the elections, but empowered the government to make it earlier or later.

The last multi-party elections were Feb 6, 1960, when U Nu's Clean Anti-Facist People's Freedom League won a massive victory.

U Nu was overthrown in a March 2, 1962, coup led by Gen Ne Win, who ruled over the next 26 years and turned resource-rich Burma into one of the world's poorest nations. — AP

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