

# Honeymoon's over for Chamlong fans

FINALLY the honeymoon is over for Palang Dharma Party populist leader Chamlong Srimuang and his ardent followers.

The kind of blind love they once showed for Bangkok's charming governor is now put to test as they take a cold hard look at whether he was involved in the October 6th 1976 incident which saw the deaths of many students.

If it is proven he was involved, those on the Left may abandon him. If he wasn't, the Right probably will.

What if he keeps silent? Then he risks being accused of worse things, like being the kind of cheap, I'll-say-anything-to-get-your-vote politician he's always putting down.

Charismatic Governor Chamlong who is famous for his incorruptible ways has always attracted followers with his call for hard work and morality. But many of his fans mistook his non-conformist, ascetic, vegetarian and unmaterialistic lifestyle to mean he shared their own leftist ideals. For this foolish group, Chamlong's alleged role on October 6, comes as a nasty shock.

The spell is, indeed, broken. Where once Chamlong could draw people from all walks of life, from go-go girls to the clergy, this is now no longer possible. For a man who once impressed the foreign Press with his striving to build a decent society, thus prompting one magazine to predict he was likely to become the next Prime Minister, the current controversy has made uncertain his future.

That naive assumption by some of his followers that everyone shares the same idea about what is moral and what isn't is finally dashed. Who is Chamlong and what does he really stand for — crucial questions which are often clouded by mass euphoria and adoration, have caught up with them.

The sad truth is many people around the world (including Thailand) do believe that killing communists is moral. Equally unnerving is the fact that many people with leftist ideas believe that killing capitalists is no sin.

Though the October 6 fighting was basically between reactionary rightwing students and the politically influential leftist students, the army and police has been criticised for not being able to prevent the horror at Thammasat University.

Today, some people see the bloody incident as a tragedy. But for others, it signalled a welcome return of the Right.

Now we see more people waking



up to the fact that our society is made up in part by these two opposing elements who have their own versions of what's good and what's bad, what's right and what's wrong.

For a while it seemed Governor Chamlong's winning personality was able to unite these factions. For a time they were able to forget their political differences, dreaming only of Chamlong's promise of a better tomorrow.

Naturally some people don't want to be told the party's over. Admirers of the governor, among them academics like professor Chai-anan Samutvanich on Tuesday have defended him by saying Chamlong was not involved.

## CHALLENGED

But this was immediately challenged on Wednesday by Col Prachak Sawangchit, a Young Turk and Army war hero, who said Chamlong was working as an intelligence officer at the time of the unrest. He made clear, however, the governor was not directly connected with the riots.

So far Chamlong has remained quiet about the whole controversy which erupted July 1, when one of his own candidates Mrs Chongkol Srikanchana in a public speech at Sanam Luang, praised Chamlong's actions against the students on Oc-

tober 6 (thinking it would attract more supporters).

For liberal-minded supporters of Chamlong, this was most embarrassing. Soon the situation may be clarified by the governor himself. But those on the Right will be watching closely how Chamlong responds. They won't like to see him appeasing the Left.

In the end, whichever way the axe falls, Governor Chamlong should not fear the outcome. Indeed, when the truth comes out, whoever remains in his camp are then the right kind of loyal supporters he deserves.

The honeymoon is over but Chamlong is far from being finished. On the contrary, this rude awakening may simply usher in a more politically defined Palang Dharma Party. Even with the loss of the liberal left, Chamlong can still, on the strength of these loyal followers, emerge a powerful contender.

If recent history has shown leaders with checkered pasts can be forgiven, one is Austrian President Kurt Waldheim. Despite the scandal of having served in Nazi forces, he has managed to win enough supporters to head the country. Another forgiven leader is ex-Watergate president Richard-Nixon who has recently become more popular among his countrymen.

Whatever part Chamlong played in the student unrest, he is today still regarded as one of the most honest men in Bangkok, as he possesses unfailing, sterling virtues. Moreover, he is a natural leader. As a foreign observer once said of him: "If you figure out how Chamlong motivates the road sweepers to keep Bangkok clean when past governors could not, you will come close to understanding his inherent ability to wield power."

Another admirer said Chamlong's almost extreme Buddhist values make him a Thai equivalent of a Quaker, a very conservative Christian sect. These qualities will always make him an appealing populist figure.

To be sure, many of Chamlong's rivals may turn green when they find this recent goof-up about October 6 has not turned out to be the kind of windfall they expected.

It can all easily backfire. As the German philosopher Nietzsche once said: That which does not kill you, will make you stronger.

— Cimi Suchontan

# Post OPINION

## Chamlong must act to restore trust

FOR those who witnessed the wanton killing of supposed Communists at Thammasat University and others who personally experienced cruel and inhuman treatment at the hands of a violent mob stirred up by frenzied anti-Communist propaganda on October 6, 1976, the memory dies hard.

After 12 years, recollections of these bitter and painful events have returned to haunt us, just as the country prepares for a general election. At the core of the issue is not the question of the morality of the incident. Instead it is whether one person — Bangkok Governor and Palang Dharma Party leader Maj-Gen Chamlong Srimuang — was involved and, if so, to what extent.

The controversy was started by a PDP candidate who, in a Press interview with a weekly Thai-language magazine and, later on, in a campaign rally speech, unwittingly boasted that Chamlong, like her, was involved in the October 6 incident. She also claimed that Chamlong disguised himself as a civilian to observe the situation outside Thammasat University before the riots and subsequent violence erupted.

The unfortunate "slip-of-the tongue" suddenly thrust Chamlong and his PDP, which was riding the crest of popularity especially in Bangkok, into murky waters. Doubts were raised even among Chamlong's faithful supporters who have begun to loudly query his background. A crucial question was asked: "Was he actually involved? And if he was, to what extent?" As talk became louder, confusion set in and emotion began to take over. Some even felt betrayed.

Chamlong's political opponents were quick to capitalise on this golden opportunity by keeping the public in doubt about the governor with more revelations of more facts — yet to be verified

— about the incident as well as the governor's role in it.

Surprisingly, the target of all this rhetoric is Chamlong alone, regardless of the fact that there are many others — several of whom were then more powerful and higher in rank — who were directly involved in the plotting and mob instigation which culminated in the riot and massacre in and around Thammasat University on that black October 6. In a way, it seems that Chamlong is being made a scapegoat for a dreadful crime that was committed by so many who are more than willing to forget and bury it in the past.

Chamlong has, so far, steadfastly denied any part in the affair, but his explanation has failed to satisfy those who are still doubtful about his actual role as an intelligence officer during the politically turbulent period.

As a public figure who has earned the trust and confidence of a large number of people, particularly Bangkokians who voted him into the office of Bangkok governor and those who are about to cast their ballots on July 24, Chamlong has an obligation to provide a frank and clear explanation. He must be ready to answer all kinds of awkward questions so that the truth can be established beyond a shadow of doubt.

But whether Chamlong can clear himself also depends on the ability of the doubters themselves to listen and judge with wisdom, fairness and broadmindedness, not merely with emotion.

Chamlong is not a saint, but an ordinary human being who is vulnerable and, like so many of us, can make mistakes. The question of whether the mistakes — if mistakes there were — of a national political figure already holding high office can be forgiven will determine his destiny.



# Ex-student activist cites Chamlong's role

18/10/88  
PUL

A FORMER student leader charged yesterday that Palang Dharma Party leader Chamlong Srimuang and many other "Young Turk" officers played active roles in political events preceding the Oct 6, 1976, bloodbath.

Mahin Tanboonperm, who was jailed on communist charges for two years after the Thammasat University tragedy, strongly criticized Chamlong's alleged role as a secret stage manager for anti-student and anti-government demonstrations that led to bloody rightwing attacks on student protesters.

Mahin is among Democrat members of the City Assembly who have been at odds with Chamlong's city administration.

(Editorial, Page 8)

Chamlong, who won a landslide victory in the 1985 Bangkok gubernatorial election with a modest, Buddhism-devoted character, has repeatedly denied involvement. He said he only monitored the rallies as a civilian who was concerned about the country.

"Nobody knows (about my role) more than myself," he said

yesterday.

The governor said he will clarify his role again during his party's campaign rally at Sanam Luang on Monday.

A Palang Dharma candidate, Chongkol Srikanchana, claimed recently that she and Chamlong stage-managed many rightwing rallies together with Chamlong telling her what to say.

Mahin said stage-managing those rallies was a crime.

"Chongkol disclosed that she was proud of fighting side by side with Chamlongk. She doesn't know that she and Chamlong committed a major crime in history," Mahin said.

He said many Young Turk officers were politically active before the turbulence, in which hundreds of student demonstrators were killed at Thammasat University.

"Young turks know what is what. Chamlong is a Young Turk," he said.

Mahin also lashed out at political scientist Chai-anan Samudvanija, who had defended Chamlong against the allegation. Chai-anan said his studies on history prove that the charge is a "distortion" of history.

Mahin said Chai-anan was distorting the history himself.

# Chamlong: Everybody is trying to get me

BANGKOK Governor Chamlong Srimuang said this morning that his opponents are trying to use the Oct 6 incident to discredit him.

He again denied any involvement in the tragic incident in 1976 during which hundreds of students were killed and injured when rightwing activists and government security forces stormed Thammasat University where students were protesting the return of former premier Thanom Kittikachorn.

"...Everybody is trying to get at me. They had run out of things to attack me on. Now there is this Oct 6 incident," he said.

The governor, who is leader of the Palang Dharma Party, said he will answer all questions about his alleged role in the Oct 6 incident in

a rally to be held at Sanam Luang on Monday. "I will speak my heart out on that day — even in the rain," he said.

He said that all accusations against him in connection with the 1976 event were "groundless."

Chamlong said on that day he was at the Royal Plaza and was not even aware of what was going on inside Thammasat University.

Mrs Chongkol Srikanjana, a Bangkok election candidate of Palang Dharma, initially provoked the recent controversy when she told a rally that she had fought side by side with Chamlong against the Seni Government and the students.

Chongkol had earlier told a weekly magazine that Chamlong,

who was then one of the Young Turk officers, disguised himself as a civilian to stage-manage some of the anti-government rallies.

Asked whether Chongkol's accounts were true, Chamlong said, "They are partially true. But there could be some confusion about the events concerned."

Chamlong said on Monday that he will also respond to what Col Prachak Sawangchit, one of his former colleagues, has said about his role at the time.

Prachak on Wednesday said Chamlong was sent on an intelligence-gathering assignment by the Young Turks, a group of young like-minded army officers, during the days leading to Oct 6 bloodbath.

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# THE NATION

• Thailand's independent newspaper  
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## Oct 6 should be debated properly

**I**T might sound reasonable to argue that it is still too early to revive the debate on the tragic events of October 6, 1976, because the rifts in Thai society still need healing.

But it would be a sign of democratic maturity if one of the most important events of recent Thai history could be debated openly and responsibly.

If it becomes an election issue in which politicians are chosen or rejected partly on what they did at the time, so much the better.

Elections should not be about the wealth of candidates or their empty platitudes that have absolutely no effect on who is going to be prime minister or how the country is going to be run.

That is why the present debate could be healthy. It is also probably the first time people outside academic and intellectual circles are seriously questioning the moral justification for the armed assault on students protesting inside Thammasat University. Even some previously-hawkish newspapers have changed their tune.

Nevertheless, this has to be done properly. There is little to be gained and much to be lost if one politician — Chamlong Srimuang — is to end up discredited as a result of the debate, while another — Samak Sundaravej — benefits.

What is needed is a comprehensive assessment of what happened and why, and what the many participants did. That would put Samak himself under the microscope, along with leading members of the Chat Thai Party such as Chatchai Chunhavan and Praman Adireksan, members of the military, border patrol police, and Internal Security Operations Command, students and academics, and the media.

Samak denies now that he was involved in the events at Thammasat on Oct 6. He argues that his appointment as interior minister in the Thanin Kraivixien government came several weeks after Oct 6 and was therefore unrelated.

Samak could have been hiding in a cave on Oct 6, but that would not mean he had nothing to do with what happened.

The bloodbath at Thammasat University was not an isolated incident. It was part of an atmosphere of tension and hysteria fuelled by inflammatory outbursts. Samak's speeches were among the most

prominent, and the tone and content of what he said was entirely consistent with the rightist violence that erupted.

Subsequently, as interior minister, Samak was a member of one of the most reactionary governments Thailand has seen. It should not be forgotten that the Thanin government was so short-lived because it was too restrictive and increased conflict.

Samak's statements in Thailand and on his frequent trips abroad as a member of the Thanin government concentrated on justifying the events of Oct 6. He was assigned the task of "correcting the image". He argued that what happened was the action of patriots battling Vietnamese-led, heavily-armed leftists.

He has never retracted what he said even though there is no evidence that those protesting inside the university were armed with anything more than a few handguns — they were certainly heavily outgunned and the vast majority were unarmed.

The only difference between Samak and Chamlong — if Chamlong really was involved in the way students and Samak's party are suggesting — is that Samak has always been open about his stance. If Chamlong was involved, he is trying to hide his role from us.

Questions should also be asked about the role of Chat Thai leaders, and perhaps some Democrats. The late Surin Masdit, at that time Democrat minister attached to the Prime Minister's Office, claimed that Chat Thai ministers seemed to know in advance what was going to happen. Praman was quite openly a patron of the *kwaa pikhaat saay* ("right-destroy-left") movement.

And the students who are pushing the issue so actively now should ask themselves whether some of their predecessors — perhaps only a handful who were in touch with the Communist Party of Thailand — might have knowingly sought armed conflict, and implicitly the deaths of their innocent colleagues, in the disastrous belief that "the time was ripe for revolution".

As Chai-Anant Samudvanijya, the political scientist who spoke in defence of Chamlong, said: Oct 6 should be forgiven but not forgotten.

There are lessons to be learnt, and they should not be distorted by electioneering.



# Chamlong says he is clean

16 JUL 1976

PALANG Dharma's embattled leader, Chamlong Srimuang, said yesterday that he was at the Royal Plaza on Oct 6, 1976 and "didn't know what was happening at Thammasat University."

"I'm lucky because I didn't go to *Tha Prachan* that day. Even so, there have been articles saying it was I (who was behind the incident)," the Bangkok governor said.

Chamlong said all allegations about his role before the bloodbath are "absurd". He has announced that all will be clarified when his party holds its last major rally at Sanam Luang on Monday.

"I will tell it all. If it rains, I will be speaking in the rain," he said.

Chamlong has been accused of calling the shots at anti-student and anti-government rallies that led to the bloody attack on Thammasat University by rightwing mobs and a coup later that day that toppled the government of M.R. Seni Pramoj.

"I had nothing to do with the Thammasat incident. I was at the Royal Plaza all day and didn't know what was happening at Thammasat," Chamlong said.

He added, "I have no alibi. It's up to the people to decide whether to believe me."

Having projected the image of a political moderate and devout Buddhist, Chamlong said the allegation is aimed at destroying his reputation.

"Twelve years have passed but now everybody is attacking me. I'm not worried about my future because I'm easy. I'm just wondering why there is such a (foul) play in this society," he said.

The allegation has put Chamlong in a very awkward situation. He has been exploited by his main rival, the Prachakorn Thai Party, until recently — when similar doubts emerged against its leader Samak Sundaravej over his political role in the 1976 episode.

Samak denied involvement, saying he was just an MP at the time of the ugliest moment in Thailand's modern history.

He said he had accepted an invitation by Thammasat students to clarify his role.

Meanwhile, officials of Prachakorn Thai Party said yesterday Samak will visit Chulalongkorn University on Monday to clarify his role in the October 6 incident.

Samak's explanation will be made at the invitation of the university's student union, along with other people said to be involved with the incident.

Anusorn Dharmchai, president of the student union, said students are seeking clarifications on the October 6 tragedy because the public want to know the truth, which will help them decide whom to vote for in the upcoming election.

He stressed that the students do not want to abuse the issue to attack anybody or to take revenge and are willing to forgive those involved in the incident.

Anusorn and other student leaders yesterday submitted their invitation to Samak with Prachakorn Thai officials.

# Chamlong to clarify October 6 role at rally

**PALANG Dharma Party leader Chamlong Srimuang yesterday accused his political rivals of capitalising on the October 6 riots to discredit him.**

Denying his connection to the incident, Maj-Gen Chamlong said he would clarify his role in the incident at a party rally at Sanam Luang on Monday.

"I will talk about it all even if it rains on that day," he said.

Maj-Gen Chamlong complained that he has become a target of a smear campaign by his rivals who capitalised on the October 6, 1976, incident to discredit him.

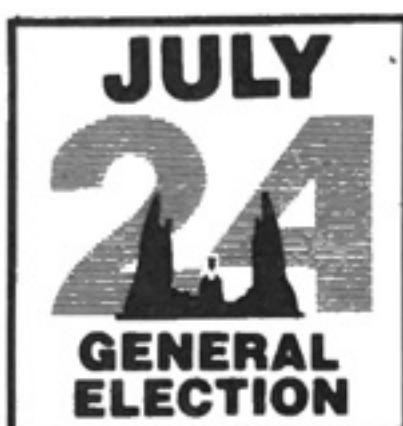
The governor did not identify the persons who he claimed were involved in the alleged smear campaign against him but said they included former and active politicians as well as persons who wanted to draw public attention to themselves.

Former Army Col Prachak Sawangchit said at press conferences this week that Maj-Gen Chamlong was involved in the October 6 riots.

Col Prachak, former key member in the so-called "Young Turk" military group, said that although Maj-Gen Chamlong had not been involved in the killing of students at Thammasat University, he was connected to the incident because he supplied intelligence information to the Young Turks during the period.

Maj-Gen Chamlong said some newspaper columnists have tried to implicate him in the incident.

"I'm surprised why things have turned out this way. Do they want to attack me until I die?" he



said.

He, however, said he did not care if such discrediting campaigns would affect his personal life.

"I have nothing to worry about... I only doubt why they use such tactics. They have used my religious belief to attack me and now it's this October 6 incident," he said.

He reiterated that he was not involved in the killing of students at Thammasat University.

He said he had not been at Sanam Luang or at the university during the riots.

"I was at the Royal Plaza and did not know then what was going on at the university," he said.

The October 6 riot has become a major election issue in Bangkok after PDP candidate for Constituency 2, Chongkol Srikanchana, said at a campaign rally at Lumpini Park that she and Maj-Gen Chamlong had worked with a right-wing movement during the period.

Maj-Gen Chamlong said yesterday that Mrs Chongkol's comments on his connection with the

riots were "partly true, but partly confusing".

He would clarify his connection with the incident at Sanam Luang, Maj-Gen Chamlong said.

The PDP leader admitted that the October 6 issue would affect his party's chances in the election.

"It will unavoidably affect the PDP in the election because the issue is being raised during the period close to the election," he said.

However, Maj-Gen Chamlong said he was not afraid of the impact.

"A person like me has never thought of hurting the country or any person. It's strange that somebody attacked me on the issue," he said.

In an election campaign rally in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Maj-Gen Chamlong asked constituents not to sell their votes as the action would lead to a corrupt administration and could cost the country dearly.

He told an audience of about 4,000 that the PDP was not formed with any design to "destroy" other parties but to solve the people's problems and weed out corruption.

In the 20-minute speech, the PDP leader denied that he supports the Santi Asoke centre, allegedly existing in violation of the law.

He also advised the audience not to believe anything very easily. He was apparently referring to accusations that he was involved in the October 6, 1976 bloodbath.

## Samak to clarify role in October 6 incident

**PRACHAKORN** Thai Party leader Samak Sundaravej said last night he had accepted the invitation of the Chulalongkorn University Students Union to clarify his role in the October 6, 1976 incident.

He said he will appear at the student union on Monday at 1.30 p.m.

"I have waited for this chance for 10 years," Mr Samak said, adding that

he has long been portrayed by political opponents as a murderer.

The party leader said the bloody riot happened on October 6 but he was appointed interior minister on October 22.

Therefore, he said, it was impossible for him to issue an order to kill the students at Thammasat University on that day.

Commenting on Army Chief Gen Chavalit Yong-

chaiyudh's announcement that he would step down as army chief in two years, Mr Samak said Gen Chavalit intended to withdraw support for Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda and prepare himself as the next premier.

However, he said Gen Chavalit cannot compete with Gen Prem as the latter has "a genius adviser" like Sqn-Ldr Prasong Soonsiri.



# Oct 6 issue: Students want truth to be bared

FORMER prime minister M.R. Seni Pramoj, whose government was overthrown by the military after the October 6, 1976, riot at Thammasat University, will meet with student leaders today to recount the incident, which has become a key issue in next Sunday's general election.

Student leaders recently called on those involved, including leaders of at least two key political parties fiercely contesting seats in Bangkok, to bring out a true picture of the riot, in which scores of students were killed or wounded.

Chulalongkorn University sources said student leaders of several universities will meet with M.R. Seni this morning to hear his account of the incidents.

M.R. Seni initially refused to talk about the incident but agreed after repeated requests by the students, the sources said.

Student organisations have called on party leaders Maj-Gen Chamlong Srimuang of Palang Dharma (PDP) and Samak Sundaravej of Prachakorn Thai, to clarify their roles in the massacre after recent allegations suggested they were involved.

The controversy began at a PDP campaign rally when Mrs Chongkol Srikanchana, the party's candidate in Bangkok's Constituency 7, told a crowd at Lumpini Park that she and Maj-Gen Chamlong had worked "side-by-side" in a right-wing movement.

The movement has been blamed for killing Thammasat University students when the students protested against

the return of former military strongman Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, who fled the country following a student uprising in 1973.

Mr Samak was later named by newspaper columnists, who accused him of belonging to the same right-wing movement and being close to Mrs Chongkol, who they said he calls by her nickname, "Pi Bua."

Both Maj-Gen Chamlong and Mr Samak have denied all involvement in the incidents.

The students have said they would invite about 20 leading public figures, including Maj-Gen Chamlong, Mr Samak and former prime minister Kriangsak Chomanan, to clarify their roles in a discussion.

Mr Samak has said he will meet student leaders tomorrow, but Maj-Gen Chamlong, who is also governor of Bangkok, has said he would be unable to attend because he will be campaigning in the South.

But he said he would "tell all" at his party's final big campaign rally at Sanam Chai tomorrow.

Gen Kriangsak yesterday also denied he had been involved in the 1976 incident.

He said he was chief of staff of the Armed Forces at the time under then-supreme commander Adm Sa-ngad Chaloryoo.

The military had been put on alert during the turmoil, the general said, but the police had handled peacekeeping duties.

He was responsible for intelligence gathering at Thammasat University for the military at the time, he said.

## RESEARCH

Governor Chamlong, then a major, was with the military intelligence agency of Supreme Command headquarters, Gen Kriangsak said, and had not taken part in the student massacre.

The general, who led the now-defunct National Democracy Party, yesterday refused to talk further about the incident, saying he would have to do more research since it had happened long ago.

He was not sure he

would meet with students, he said.

Thongchai Vinitkul, a Thammasat lecturer and one of the 18 student leaders tried in the military court in connection with the October 6 incident, yesterday attacked Maj-Gen Chamlong for denying involvement in the incidents.

Speaking at Thammasat University during a panel discussion, "October 6, 1976: A Case Study on its Impact on Thai Democratic and Social Development", organised by the university's Student Union, Mr Thongchai said:

"I don't want to attack Maj-Gen Chamlong, but he should elaborate more on his role in the incident."

He said Maj-Gen Chamlong should not try to evade the truth "just to maintain his popularity".

He criticised Maj-Gen Chamlong for saying the allegations about his involvement in the incident are part of a campaign to discredit him.

The lecturer said such a smear campaign would probably help the governor win more votes. "Who cares? Only a few people really know what happened," he said.

He also criticised Mr Samak for saying he had not been at Thammasat University during the riot.

Dr Charnvit Kasetsiri, a Thammasat University historian and expert on the incidents, discounted remarks by a leading Chulalongkorn University political scientist recently that Chamlong had not taken part in the riot.

Prof Chai-anan Samutvanich said last Tuesday that several Young Turk soldiers, including Maj-Gen Chamlong, had helped lobby then prime minister Kriangsak for an amnesty for the student leaders who had been tried by the military court.

Dr Charnvit said the Kriangsak government granted amnesty to the students because of pressure from the public, international human rights groups and student groups.

He said the October 6 incidents were "an act of premeditated violence aimed at bringing back the authoritarian regime that had been ousted in the student uprising of October 14, 1973".

It was the closest that Thailand has ever come to civil war, he said.

"It is difficult to say if this person or that person was involved in the riots because no detailed study has been made.

"Comments by persons who have no real knowledge of the incidents could end up being used by politicians against their opponents in the election campaign.

"When people have strong feelings on an issue, the facts tend to get distorted," Dr Charnvit said.





# Chamlong, Samak clarify roles in '76 tragedy today

**BANGKOK Governor Chamlong Srimuang and Prachakorn Thai Party leader Samak Sundaravej will hold major rallies this evening and try to clear themselves of any responsibility for the October 6 massacre — the 1976 tragedy that has become an election issue.**

Chamlong admitted in Hat Yai yesterday that allegation of his involvement in the incident has slightly affected the image of his Palang Dharma Party. But he repeated his denial of any role in the event.

Chamlong will address a Palang Dharma rally this evening at Sanam Luang. He said yesterday he will discuss a list of 20 issues that his opponents have used in a campaign against him. The Oct 6 incident is one of them, he said.

"I will tell the truth to the people tomorrow and let them decide who is right and wrong," he said at a public rally in Hat Yai.

Samak, whose Prachakorn Thai Party is being challenged by Palang Dharma in the Bangkok constituencies, will speak this afternoon at a panel discussion at Chulalongkorn University on his role in the Oct 6 incident. Samak, who was considered an ultra-rightist politician at the time, has also denied any involvement in the massacre of students at Thammasat University.

After the panel discussion, Samak will hold a rally at Chatuchak Park to speak on the same issue.

Chamlong was linked to the Oct 6 incident by Phongkol Srikanthana, a Bangkok election candidate of Palang Dharma Party, who said he engineered some of the anti-government rallies at the time.

Samak was a known fervent anti-student politician who became interior minister in the post-coup government led by Thanin Kraivixian.

As Samak and Chamlong prepared for their crucial rallies, students who are

conducting an inquiry into the Oct 6 massacre met with former premier M.R. Seni Pramoj yesterday to hear him recount the events leading to that tragic day.

Seni was leader of the government that was toppled by the military shortly after security forces and right-wing mobs stormed Thammasat University on Oct 6, 1976, and killed scores of students who were protesting the return of former military strongman Thanom Kittikachorn.

One of Seni's former aides told the students yesterday that certain right-wing members of the Seni Government wanted the student movement crushed by force during its campus protest during the days before Oct 6.

Bundit Siriphan, who is now a lawyer, said Seni was urged by these people to take drastic action against the students. But the former premier resisted their suggestions.

And Anusorn Dhamchai, a Chulalongkorn University student leader who is

pushing for "historical truths" surrounding the October 6 bloodbath, quoted a study as showing that members of a coalition party in the Seni Government had links with the military and wanted the student movement crushed.

Anusorn led a delegation of students from Chulalongkorn University to see Seni at his residence in Soi Ekkamai yesterday morning to hear his account of the Oct 6 incident.

The politicians that Seni's former aide and Anusorn referred to are members of a major political party that once had strong army connections. One of them served as deputy premier in a number of administrations.

Bundit, who was present when Seni met the students yesterday, later told reporters that Maj Gen Pramarn Adireksarn, former leader of Chat Thai Party who was then one of Seni's deputies, offered to lead village scouts, a government-organized right-wing pressure group, to

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**Nation in the**

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storm Thammasat University. But he was strongly opposed by Democrat Cabinet members, Bundit said.

Seni, whose administration was overthrown by the military in the 1976 coup, recalled that his government was contemplating imposing a state of emergency at the height of the Oct 6 incident when security forces and right-wing activists attacked Thammasat University and went after the students.

But the military, led by former supreme commander Adm Sa-ngad Chalawyo, toppled the government in a coup that same evening.

Seni suggested that he knew very little about what was happening on the Thammasat campus that day because he was busy meeting with his Cabinet at Government House.

He said that at one stage, representatives of village scouts, who were rallying in large numbers at the Royal Plaza, offered to "take care of" the students inside Thammasat University. "But I rejected the offer," he said.

Seni said Pol Lt Gen Chumphol Lohachala, who was then deputy police chief, told his Cabinet in a report on Oct 6 that the students were stockpiling arms on the campus. But Seni said Chumphol's statement was later disputed by Pol Gen Srisuk Mahindradhep, the police chief.

But Chumphol said yesterday he did not recall telling the Seni Cabinet that students were stockpiling weapons. "I only reported that there was fighting between those inside and outside the university," Chumphol said yesterday.

Seni's aide, Bundit, said Maj Gen Chatichai Choonhavan, who was then Chat Thai deputy leader and a member of the Cabinet, handed Chumphol the report he presented to the Cabinet.

Bundit said Chatichai then hurriedly left the Government House to meet the protesting village scouts. As he got up, a village scout scarf was seen protruding from his back pocket, Bundit recalled.

Both Pramarn and Chatichai were known for their close association with the right-wing movement at the time.

Seni, 83, said that on the evening of October 6, right-wing mobs stormed into the Government House to demand action against three Cabinet members whom they accused of being communists. The three were Chuan Leekpai, Surin Masdit and Damrong Latthapipat, who were members of the Seni-led Democrat Party.

Seni identified one of the leaders of the mobs as well-known novelist "Tomyanti" (Vimol Siripaibul).

"Twelve years after the Oct 6 incident, I still cannot conclude who was the mastermind and who was actually involved," Seni said when asked whether he had any recollections of any particular persons involved in the tragic incident.

He said he did not know Governor Chamlong at the time and that he was not aware of the role played by Prachakorn Thai Party leader Samak then.

Seni said Samak, who was then a Democrat member, was dropped from the Cabinet following a reshuffle after his demand to be made interior minister was rejected. Samak, who was deputy interior minister in the previous Seni administration, was then known as a staunch right-wing, anti-student politician.

Anusorn said Chulalongkorn students are conducting an inquiry into the Oct 6 incident because they want to find out the truth as to who was involved and who was not.

While describing the incident as a "dark spot in Thai history," Anusorn said the students have no intention to use the issue to serve or discredit any political parties.

Chamlong has been caught in an on-going debate about his Oct 6 role. Chamlong, who at the time of the incident was a member of the Young Turk movement, has repeatedly denied any involvement in the attack on Thammasat University, though he admitted having joined some of the right wing rallies.