

Shooting and Shouting Incidents Heighten Tension

By **ANDREW H. MALCOLM**
Special to The New York Times

ARANYAPRATHET, Thailand, April 23—Tensions are high in this border town as heavily armed Thai and Cambodian Communist troops glower at each other across a 50-foot bridge that once linked these two countries but not separates them.

Several shouting and shooting incidents have flared on the border in recent days. The most serious occurred yesterday when a merchant pushing a cart filled with wood was severely wounded in the back by a rifle shot fired from the Cambodian side. Thai border policemen also tell of gunfire aimed over the heads of sightseers on the Thai side, apparently when the Communists thought they were pushing too close to Cambodian soil.

The shouting incidents sprang from demands by the Cambodians that Thailand return the substantial amounts of military equipment, including six armored personnel carriers, that Cambodian Government troops used to flee across the border. There have been numerous episodes of mutual jeering, with jubilant Cambodian Communist soldiers threatening to march on Thailand.

So far, Thai policemen, soldiers and border guards have been restrained in their responses. They have been ordered not to return fire unless there have been casualties on this side. Border guard details are kept small, usually just a pair of men.

However, just behind the border are considerable numbers of Royal Thai Army

troops. Trucks are standing by as helicopters fly overhead.

From the Thai side of the bridge today life in Poipet, Cambodia, appeared to be bustling. Many people on bicycles moved about under the white flag of surrender, a sheet that still hangs from the village flagpole. This was the only view of Cambodian life available as the Communist regime and its accompanying news blackout ended the sixth day.

The Communist radio, now broadcasting from Phnom Penh, carried no new disclosures today. Yesterday it broadcast a speech by Khieu Samphan, the new regime's Deputy Premier and a major figure, that indicated that Communist leaders

might be entering the capital. But the radio provided no new details today.

There were unconfirmed reports of executions near here, however. The reports said that four men suspected of having stolen a motorcycle in Poipet were taken to some dense brush near the bridge here on Sunday night. There, it was said, their throats were slashed and they were buried.

Local radio broadcasts from Poipet said that all private property there had been confiscated as had stocks of rice, beef, pork and salt. These were sold at regulated prices, the radio said.

From a few hundred yards' distance today, there seemed

to be no great turmoil. Soldiers in pajama-like garments could be seen strolling with guns slung over their shoulder.

Much closer, Communist border guards, including women, could be seen inside a building fanning themselves in the tropical humidity. Occasionally they peered back, then slammed shutters closed.

Although the bridge was closed when the Communists took control of the village last weekend, some communication was maintained through an informal market under the bridge.

"But two days ago the Communists shut it down," said Lek Pumpoo, a Thai border guard. "The situation is getting

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 1975

in a Thai Town on the Border

c 17

Facing Cambodia

worse."

In this Thai village where tattered blankets serve as screens, Government loudspeakers interrupted their music today to blare out a series of announcements urging new arrivals to get cholera inoculations and instructing all refugees to register at the town hall every seven days.

Thailand's coalition Government, which is seeking diplomatic relations with the new Cambodian regime, has been somewhat embarrassed by the flood of several thousand Cambodian refugees — the exact number varies by the hour — and has said they must leave within 30 days. That is a logistical problem for which prepara-

tions have yet to begin.

Along the 200-mile road that links Aranyaprathet with Bangkok, the police have set up five checkpoints where they carefully scrutinize all vehicles, especially buses, for refugees trying to leave their designated areas.

"We are running because we want to live," said Koy Paramount, one refugee. "We wish to go anywhere but Cambodia."

Mr. Koy Paramount and his 22 traveling companions, who include a former Cambodian customs official and a police chief, were convinced they would be executed under a Communist regime in their home town, Sisophon.

Last Thursday, the day

Phnom Penh surrendered, the families rode to a wooded area near the Thai border. Shortly after midnight they sneaked through the woods to the Klong Luek, the stagnant canal that runs under the bridge here.

Troops Holding Out in Temple

PREAH VIHEAR, Cambodia, April 23 (Reuters)—The flag of the defeated Khmer Republic is still flying over a diehard garrison in an old Buddhist temple in this remote northwestern corner of Cambodia.

About 150 soldiers, some with their families, and 10 monks are awaiting developments in Preah Vihear, a famous Buddhist temple built on a cliff overlooking Cambodia's

great northwest plain, about 205 miles from Phnom Penh.

Access to the vast temple complex is easy from Thailand, but from Cambodia entry can be gained only by scaling the 1,500-foot cliff.

A young lieutenant, second in command at the garrison, showed no hesitation when he was asked what the troops would do if the Communists came. "Attack, because the soldiers here do not like the Communist," he said.

The lieutenant said he knew almost nothing of the present situation in Cambodia except that Phnom Penh had fallen. He and his men are out of a direct radio contact with the rest of the country.