

## Evacuation of Thai dependents delayed

THE cancellation of the only flight by Thai Airways International to Rangoon yesterday delayed the evacuations of staff and dependents at the Thai Embassy and other embassies in Rangoon.

Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila said he expected 28 dependents of Thai Embassy staff to be flown to Bangkok today. Only a few essential staffers will remain behind, he said.

Officials of the Thai airline said it has no scheduled flight to Rangoon today. "But if there is an order from the government, we can arrange a flight," said an official who asked not to be named.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saroj Chavanaviraj said last night there was no confirmation from the Thai Embassy in Rangoon whether the evacuation would take place today.

All flights to and from Rangoon were cancelled yesterday after air traffic controllers in the Burmese capital joined the strike.

The Rangoon strike forced air traffic controllers in Thailand, India and China to establish an emergency communication link-up to regulate air traffic in Burmese airspace.

An official of the Aeronautical Radio of Thailand (Aeroradio) told *The Nation* yesterday that the service makes it unnecessary for commercial airlines to avoid flying over Burma, which would otherwise add an hour to flying time.

There were fears that with the strike by Rangoon air traffic controllers, it would not be safe for commercial planes to fly over Burma.

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