

# One million join march in Rangoon

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## • 3 people beheaded; evacuations of embassy dependents begin

RANGOON — About one million people including top government officials and intelligence agents marched in the Burmese capital demanding democracy yesterday, and diplomats said Japan, the Soviet Union and China have evacuated embassy dependents and aid experts from the besieged nation.

The capital came to a standstill as uniformed state factory workers, Buddhist monks and Catholic nuns, housewives and a group of 200 blind people joined in mass marches and a general strike to demand an end to 26 years of authoritarian rule.

Mobs beheaded three people who tried to poison protesters and security forces shot and injured 17 people to halt looting.

Residents said more than 700,000 protesters marched in Mandalay, the country's second-largest city some 560 kilometres (350 miles) north of Rangoon. The same number marched in Monywa, an important trading town 100 kilometres (60 miles) northwest of Mandalay. More than 100,000 marched in Moulmein, the Mon State capital 80 kilometres (50 miles) southeast of Rangoon.

A Western diplomat in Rangoon said the evacuations were ordered because embassies believed the country was "sliding toward chaos."

"It looks like it's drifting towards a real nasty confrontation," said a Western diplomat monitoring yesterday's events from Bangkok. Japan, Burma's largest aid donor, recently evacuated some dependents of embassy staff, a Foreign Ministry official in Tokyo said. Another official, ministry spokesman Yoshifumi Matsuda, said the Japanese Embassy in Rangoon yesterday urged all businessmen and dependents of Japanese nationals to leave on the first available flights.

Japan gave US\$172 million in aid last year but committed only US\$27.5 million this year in what analysts called an attempt to pressure Burma into political and

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economic reforms.

Diplomats in Rangoon, speaking anonymously, said 100 Chinese technicians working on official aid projects left Rangoon Wednesday and the rest also will be evacuated.

With its US\$200 million projects, China is the largest of the two communist nations giving aid to Burma. The other is Czechoslovakia.

The Chinese technicians had been working on the Rangoon-Syriam railroad and bridge project and construction of a national theatre in Rangoon. Work on both projects was suspended after last month's nationwide strike.

The sources said the 37 dependents of Soviet Embassy officials were evacuated Wednesday on a flight to Moscow. The Soviet and American embassies are the largest missions.

Evacuations of other foreign nationals were delayed because an airport strike yesterday forced cancellation of all flights to Thailand.

The US Embassy had planned to evacuate the first group of its up to 100 dependents, and sources said two military C-141 transport planes arrived in Bangkok yesterday in case no commercial flights were available soon.

United Press International quoted unidentified Thai officials as saying that they have prepared two C-130 transport planes for possible evacuation of dependents from the

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