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Mid-air engine shutdown adds to troubles at Qantas

- By Evelyn Yamine
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AN investigation will be launched into the latest in a line of mid-air Qantas mishaps after one of its jets made an emergency landing in Bangkok yesterday.

One of four engines on a Qantas 747 was shut down mid-air after experiencing mechanical trouble, forcing the flight to return to Bangkok shortly after take-off.

It is the fifth incident involving Qantas aircraft in just one week.

About 335 passengers were left stranded at Bangkok after one of the engines on the Boeing 747 flying to London suffered a "surge" about 4am.

Passengers were given hotel accommodation but had to wait at least 16 hours before a replacement aircraft arrived late last night to fly them to London.

Qantas was adamant passengers had not been in any danger, saying 747s can fly safely on three engines.

"Unfortunately we've had a bit of a run of bad luck," Qantas group executive of government and corporate affairs David Epstein said. "It does seem to be coincidental because it is involving different aircraft types and different sorts of incidents. Safety hasn't been put at risk in any of the incidents in the past week."

An Australian Transport Safety Bureau spokesman said the bureau was gathering information about the incident, but could not yet determine whether a full-scale investigation would take place.

On Monday a flight returned to Melbourne after cracks appeared in a cockpit window and last week an Airbus A380 blew two tyres when landing in Sydney and

a Boeing 747 also returned to Sydney with engine troubles.

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