

New Delhi police arrest 68 activists protesting outside the Burmese Embassy on Friday

New Delhi Police arrested 68 Burmese activists including a Buddhist monk protesting outside the Burmese Embassy on Friday against general elections planned by the Burmese regime.

The activists are currently in detention after being arrested about 40 minutes after they began a protest outside the Burmese Embassy at 11 a.m on Friday, according to sources in New Delhi.



Speaking to *The Irrawaddy* on Friday, one of the detained activists, Ko Salone, said: "They have told us to sit down and stay in the police station."

During the demonstration, the protesters shouted "We don't want the sham election," and "May the military junta fall. "

They also hurled rocks and insults and daubed the wall of the Burmese embassy with red paint, defacing pictures of Burmese junta-chief Snr-Gen Than Shwe before leaving them at the embassy gate.

Kim, an activist who led the protesters, said, “We went there to protest against an ambassador who is cheating the people and ignoring their interests by supporting the Burmese regime.”

“The election will only entrench the Burmese regime,” he said, vowing to launch further protests against the Burmese regime.

The activists said they accept neither the election law that was announced by the Burmese regime on March 8, nor the election itself, the date for which has yet to be announced.

The protesters also called for a review of the regime's 2008 Constitution.

No action against the protesters has been taken so far.

In the past, Indian authorities usually detained protesters for 24 hours and freed them, according to the sources. Before their release, some were made to promise not to participate in further protests, however.

Protests near embassies in India are prohibited by the Indian authorities.

Last Wednesday, about 200 Burmese activists launched an anti-election protest in New Delhi's Jantar Mantar Gardens.

India has developed deeper economic and military ties with the Burmese military regime over the past decade and has said it believes that talking quietly is a better approach than imposing sanctions.

India shifted its policy from supporting Suu Kyi to engaging the junta's generals in the early 1990s, partly because of a desire for access to Burma's large natural gas reserves.