

Youth, facial cosmetic & CDM (Burma): Myanmar Anti-Coup Protestors Get Creative with Thanakha in Fresh Protests

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Myanmar's anti-coup protesters on Thursday are getting creative with thanakha — the country's traditional facial cosmetic paste — to accelerate the civil disobedience movement (CDM), in which civil servants are encouraged to strike.

The latest campaign, popularly known as “the battle of thanakha” kicked off the day before Myanmar's designated Thanakha Day. Protesters have put the yellow paste on their faces in Yangon, Mandalay and several other cities.

Myanmar has designated the Tabodwe full moon, the 11th of Myanmar's lunar calendar, as Thanakha Day to promote the cosmetic paste.

Anti-regime protesters in Mandalay paint “CDM” in thanakha on foreheads. / The Irrawaddy

Protesters on Thursday painted “CDM” or three-finger salutes in thanakha, which is made from ground bark, on their foreheads.

Young protesters are helping to paint other demonstrators and to restore messages washed away by sweat during the day.

A young protester in Myaynigone, Yangon, said the use of thanakha was part of the process of holding fresh protests against the regime and to give moral support to protesters. The paste is recognized as a symbol of a mother's affection and protection. Many children go to school with thanakha smeared on their faces by their mothers.



Young protesters in Yangon paint other demonstrators and restore messages washed away by sweat during the day. / The Irrawaddy

“Wearing thanakha equals a mother's love, affection and protection. We will continue to fight until we achieve our goal,” he said.

Anti-coup protests have sparked a violent crackdown from the security forces with several fatalities. Protesters are demanding the military regime step down, free the elected leaders and hand over

power to the party, the National League for Democracy, they voted for in the November general election.

According to the Assistance of Association of Political Prisoners, more than 720 individuals have been detained by the military since Feb. 1.



Anti-regime protesters in Mandalay use thanakha on their faces. / The Irrawaddy

A teenager with “CDM” on his forehead in Yangon told The Irrawaddy he wanted to encourage more public servants to join the strike.

“We have lost lives. I urge every civil servant to take part in the CDM,” he said.



Anti-regime protesters in Yangon use thanakha on their faces. / The Irrawaddy

Launched on Feb. 3, the CDM has gained momentum across the country and the regime has increased arrests of protesters and civil servants taking part in the movement.

Residents have prevented some arrests of striking civil servants in their neighborhoods by people in plainclothes claiming to be police officers. But more than 40 protesters have been detained across the country. Civilians have formed groups to assist striking civil servants in need.

The Irrawaddy

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