

JU teacher jailed for Facebook post on PM

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced a Jahangirnagar University teacher to three years' rigorous imprisonment in a sedition case filed for making a derogatory comment on Facebook against the prime minister in 2011.

Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Nazmul Haque Shyamal handed down the punishment to Ruhul Amin Khandker, a lecturer at Department of Information

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JU teacher

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and Technology, in absentia.

Ruhul was also fined Tk 10,000, in default of which he would have to serve six more months in jail.

The court in its judgment said the punishment would be effective from the day of the convict's arrest or surrender.

During the trial, the court recorded statements of 12 prosecution witnesses, including the complainant, Sheikh Shariful Islam, a Chhatra League leader in JU.

Additional Public Prosecutor Anwarul Kabir told The Daily Star that the comment about the prime minister was tantamount to sedition and the charge brought against the accused was proved beyond doubt.

According to the prosecution, on August 13, 2011, the teacher posted a status on a Facebook page where he talked about deaths in road accidents and accused the government of awarding drivers licences without tests. At one point, he asked "why does the prime minister not die?"

After the status was uploaded, Shariful lodged a general diary with Ashulia Police Station.

On October 2 the same year, Assistant Superintendent of Police (Dhaka range) Monwar Hossain filed a sedition lawsuit with the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in Dhaka.

On January 29, 2012, Abdus Salam, assistant superintendent of police (Dhaka range) and also the investigation officer of the case, pressed charge against the lecturer.