

URGENT ACTION

STUDENT HELD FOR FACEBOOK POSTS OUT ON BAIL

Dilip Roy, a 22-year-old student activist, has been granted bail after spending more than two months in jail without charge in Rajshahi in Bangladesh. He was arrested in August for two Facebook posts criticising Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Dilip Roy is studying at Rajshahi University in western Bangladesh, where he is the General Secretary of student organisation Biplobi Chhatra Maitri. He was arrested by police on 28 August after criticising Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in two Facebook posts. The posts focused on Sheikh Hasina's support for a proposed coal-fired power plant in Rampal in southern Bangladesh, which many environmental activists oppose as it could have a damaging effect on Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest.

After Dilip Roy was arrested, a member of the local chapter of the Chhatra League – the student wing of the ruling party Awami League – filed a case against him under Section 57 of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Act for making “derogatory remarks” about Bangladesh's Prime Minister and the Awami League. Under this draconian law, an individual can face up to 14 years in jail for “publishing fake, obscene or defaming information in electronic form” or information which “prejudices the image of the State or person.” The ICT Act is often used by the Bangladeshi authorities to target, harass and imprison critics.

The Dhaka High Court granted Dilip Roy bail on 14 November. After spending more than two months in jail without charge, he was released from jail in Rajshahi on 17 November 2016. He was not tortured or ill-treated in prison and will continue his studies.

Amnesty International will continue to monitor the case and re-open the action if necessary.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the first update of UA 201/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa13/4750/2016/en/>

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