

Bangladesh lifts Facebook ban

June 6 2010



Supporters of a Pakistani religious party chant slogans during a rally against an Internet Facebook page, in Lahore, Pakistan, Sunday, May 30, 2010. Pakistan government ordered Internet service providers to block the social networking site amid anger over a page that encourages users to post images of Islam's Prophet Muhammad. Placard on center reads "we are servants of Prophet Muhammad". (AP Photo/K.M. Chaudary)

(AP) -- Bangladesh has lifted a weeklong ban on the social networking website Facebook imposed for a page urging people to draw images of Islam's Prophet Muhammad, an official said Sunday.

Bangladesh become the second South Asian nation after Pakistan to ban the popular site over religious concerns. Pakistan lifted a court-imposed ban last Monday after an information technology official said Facebook officials had apologized for the page deemed offensive to Muslims and removed its contents.

Many Muslims regard depictions of the prophet, even favorable ones, as blasphemous.

The [Bangladesh](#) Telecommunications Regulatory Commission ordered access to Facebook restored around midnight Saturday, and the site was available Sunday, said the commission's chairman, Zia Ahmed.

Facebook had removed the objectionable page, he said. The page could not be accessed in Bangladesh on Sunday.

The ban was imposed because Facebook was carrying caricatures that might hurt the religious sentiments of people in Bangladesh, where about 85 percent of the 150 million people are [Muslim](#), Ahmed said earlier.

The commission said the U.S.-based company also agreed to remove "obnoxious" images of some of the country's political leaders, including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and opposition leader Khaleda Zia. The commission did not elaborate.

Nearly 1 million people in Bangladesh use [Facebook](#), according to an estimate by the Bangladesh ISP Association.

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