

MARRIAGE REGISTRATION

Dodgy documents leave Poppy helpless

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Poppy, a female garments worker was screaming into a telephone on November 3, in the Rupnagar area, and seemingly getting no positive response from the other end when this correspondent caught sight of her.

On investigating into the matter, Star City found that the rights of the working class women were violated on a large-scale by marriage registrars. The marriage registrars solemnizing marriages of helpless young girls with no literacy, often take bribes from the would-be grooms and issue certificates inserting fake information on them and preventing the girl from taking legal action after man abandons her.

Sufia Akhter Poppy is now running around trying to get things sorted out but has failed so far.

Poppy married Rabiul Islam, a Bangladesh Biman employee on February 10 in the presence of Jaman, a Biman official who signed as witness.

Two marriage registrars present at the time in the Rupnagar residential area under Pallabi and registered her marriage.

One registrar Santo Islam Raza from Rupnagar, registered the marriage and the page number of the registration paper is 46, dated February 10, 2006. The other marriage registrar Sadekur Rahman from the Vashanteq area

registered the marriage from the groom's side.

After the ceremony, Santo Islam gave Poppy two copies of marriage documents. One document stated that Poppy and Rabiul got married in court of MA Salam, a first class magistrate in Dhaka on February 9, 2006 while the other stated that the marriage was registered on February 13 at Keraniganj under Mohammad Nazimuddin, register of the Painarbazar area in Keraniganj.

Apart from this other information of her marriage in the two documents did not tally with each other, Poppy said. Further witnesses were people Poppy did not even know.

Recently, six months into the marriage and living together, Rabiul denies agreeing to the marriage and Poppy learnt that she was given fake papers.

Poppy spent lots of her hard earned money to collect the actual copy of her marriage but failed, as Santo Islam could not produce the original papers. Poppy told Star City that the marriage registrar had charged Tk 2,000 for the first two marriage documents.

Meanwhile, Poppy contacted her husband's family to solve the problem. Her husband's family sought original marriage docu-

ments. She sent the copy she had and the family also refused to accept her as Rabiul's wife. The family also threatened Poppy's family not to go ahead with the case and in such event they would face dire consequences.

When Star City contacted Sadekur Raman, one of the registrars, he admitted that he was at the ceremony and the marriage was properly registered. In regard to the fake documents, he said that there was an original document and he did not know which copy the register had given Poppy. He further said that Santo Islam was the registrar, and he had nothing to do with it.

On contacting Santo Islam Raja, he told Star City that the girl was bad and disturbing him about her marriage documents.

"I am not involved with her marriage so I know nothing about her case," he said.

When asked why he gave Poppy fake papers he said: "No one can prove that those documents are fake and I did not provide them."

Star City's investigation also revealed that Santo Islam registered the marriage of Poly, a worker at Tarana beauty parlour and provided court documents instead of a registered copy.

Abdur Razzak, another marriage registrar in Dhaka told Star City that the registrars often provide court documents instead of the registration documents. He said: "If the marriage can be sustained, papers matter a little, but the question of papers

become essential when the marriage is in trouble."

Star City took Poppy to Ain O Salish Kendra for legal aid. Nina Goswami of the organisation said that this was a new kind of complain. She said the organisation would check the documents

within a short time and then go in for legal action.

She said if the documents are fake, the organisation file a criminal case against the registrars and the husband.



Sufia Akhter Poppy

STAR PHOTO

Rajuk asks JNU to stop

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Asked, Prof Sirajul refused to answer any questions from this correspondent. "I may talk to you later," the VC said.

The VC sat with the four agitating organisations – Centre for Urban Study (CUS), Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB), Campaign for Heritage Conservation and Paribesh Bachao Andolon – on November 22 to sort out the issue of demolishing the age-old building.

While the demolition was still going on in full swing, the VC told the meeting that he would try to convince the university syndicate to stop the demolition work.

Prof Nazrul Islam of the Centre for Urban Study said, "The demolition work was on when the VC was in a negotiation with us."

It is disappointing that the VC appeared fair in the negotiation on sorting out ways to save a heritage building, but he is actually in favour of pulling it down, Islam said.

He quoted the VC to have said

at the meeting, "I understand that it has not been proper to destroy the old building, but it is too late to save it."

The VC's argument is that the age-old building can be demolished because it is not enlisted as an archaeological site by the Department of Archeology.

Architect Taimur Islam, member secretary of Campaign for Heritage Conservation, said, "Such argument is not acceptable at all because there is good many other laws prohibiting the act of destroying heritage properties."

"All the legal prohibitions on demolishing heritage properties would have surfaced in this case if the project authorities followed the building construction rules and the national building code," Taimur said.

According to the Building Construction Act and Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC), demolition of such buildings requires prior approval from the

relevant authorities, a top official of the Rajuk said.

The BNBC provides that aspiring builders must seek prior approval from the authorities for any construction within a 500-metre-radius of a heritage properties site, he said.

The IAB, meanwhile, formally expressed its concern in a letter terming the demolition of the age-old building and destruction of an ancient garden with irreplaceable trees as an act detrimental to heritage properties.

The IAB letter signed by its President Khadem Ali sought responses from the consultant firm ECBL and two senior architects of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) Khairul Enam and Dr K Shabbir Ahmed concerned with the project.

"We have decided to resort to legal redress, as the mutual and amicable attempts to resolve the contention appear not to be successful," said Khadem Ali.

15x2

15x3

BPC yet to declare Shankhari Bazar

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'The area with its unique urban fabric, intricate artistry and craftsmanship alongside the ambience of a vibrant culture and traditions of the locality are undoubtedly are our heritage, Islam said.

'It is our responsibility to protect our heritage by re-organising the Department of Archaeology,' he added.

The UGS team leader said the government has a responsibility to protect the national historical sites as per Bangladesh Constitution.

'Both Article-24 of the Constitution of Bangladesh and

the Antiquities Act-1968 Article 2 G (iii) (6), state that the government should take necessary measures to preserve any urban site, street, building or public square having historical or artistic value,' Islam said.

The BPC officials said they had formed a committee two months ago to decide as to how they can turn the site into a tourist lane by overcoming all the existing drawbacks.

'The committee has finalised the report and we are hopeful to receive it next week,' said BPC GM Major (Retd) Keramat Ali Khan. 'Then and only then we can

take our next step,' he said.

He said Shankhari Bazar has a huge potential to be a lucrative tourist spot because of its rich heritage and historical background and the corporation is still hopeful to make best use of the features.

He said that declaration of Shankhari Bazar a heritage zone would give more weight to 'our initiative'. They are still trying to make the Department of Archaeology convinced through the ministry concerned, he said.

He further said that the BPC had published a brochure on Shankhari Bazar recently.

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