

Residents evicted without compensation or rehabilitation

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A 70-year old man and his youngest son are put behind bars. Their fault was they demanded fair compensation and a rehabilitation plot from the government when it acquired their homestead.

The government had acquired 10.5 decimals or 6.5 kathas of land of the family through LA caseno-2 in 1988 for development of Uttara Model Town.

Police arrested the old man and his son on charges of 'obstruction of government duties' during an eviction drive of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakhya (Rajuk) on January 20.

Sultan Mahmud and his son Abdullah Al Murad were arrested while their family members tried to resist eviction from their house (House 22/24, Road 6, Sector 11, Uttara) by pelting brickbats at the police.

Though the family received a partial compensation; they are yet to receive compensation for the acquired land and a rehabilitation plot.

The 2nd court of Senior Assistant Judge Majibur Rahman in Dhaka on November 5, 2006 directed in a decree that the chairman of Rajuk, deputy commissioner (DC) of Dhaka and the land acquisition officer are to ensure compensation for the acquired land and allotment of a plot for rehabilitation of the affected within 40 days.

"Following the decree, we immediately appealed to the chairman of Rajuk and the Land Acquisition Officer to pay the compensation and allot a plot to us in compliance with the decree," said Sultan Mahmud's second son Abdullah Al Masud. "Neither Rajuk authorities nor the district administration paid any heed to the appeal."

"The eviction was launched suddenly, though it was not in the order of the day's eviction drive. Influential plot owners 'managed' the Rajuk officials with high amount of bribe to

The Rajuk magistrate's wrath was also a reason behind the cruelty as "We had filed a violation miss case against him (magistrate) earlier," Masud added. Police used such a brutal force on the family members that they knocked one of them unconscious on the street while the Rajuk authorities flattened their house to the ground.

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Police used such a brutal force on the family members that they knocked one of them unconscious on the street while the Rajuk authorities flattened their house to the ground.

The family tried to resist the eviction and argued that neither the Rajuk nor district administration has yet addressed a court decree in this regard.

The Rajuk magistrate in fact acted on a personal grudge and to serve the interest of Rajuk employees who are the beneficiaries of the plot, alleged the



The new occupiers move in quickly amid debris to demarcate the plot with a wall.

evicted family members.

Masum Billah, a surveyor of Rajuk, is one of the three plot claimants.

"Sub-divisional engineer Enamul Kader is another beneficiary and facilitator in the deal of plot allotment," said Masum.

Enamul Kader was seen keenly rushing to the site, along with an army team on January 22 to make sure that the plot owners could take possession without any obstacle.

"We have all the documents at our office regarding allotment of the plots," said Kader, "The evicted family can no longer hold on to the land with all the court cases disposed off."

The residents filed a violation case against the Rajuk magistrate, as he attempted to evict them a number of times

earlier despite court's injunction.

After Rajuk officials filed a case against the residents on charge of creating obstruction to deliver the government duty, the police arrested elderly Sultan Mahmud and his eldest son Abdullah Al Murad. Rest of the evicted family members are now living under the open sky and running around the court premises for justice.

The family members are helplessly passing days in sheer uncertainty without any rehabilitation in sight.

Locals wandered as to how a surveyor of Rajuk could own an expensive and tough-to-avail Rajuk plot in Uttara Model Town.

Masud said, "It is just a con-

nivance of Chairman of Uttarkhan Union Parishad Kamal Uddin Ahmed, Rajuk engineer Enamul Kader and surveyor Masum Billah who managed the Rajuk magistrate to carry out the eviction drive to take possession of the plots before rehabilitating us."

Kamal Uddin Ahmed however said that he did not know anything about the eviction as he was out of town.

Chairman of Rajuk KAM Haroon said that there is no hard-and-fast rule that the government has to allot a rehabilitation plot to the affected family.

About the compensation for the acquired land, Haroon said, "The DC is supposed to pay the compensation for the acquired land, it is not our concern."

Regarding a court decree on compensation and rehabilitation plot for the affected, he said, "It is difficult to take so many issues into consideration while carrying out an eviction drive."

When asked how a Rajuk surveyor can afford to own an expensive plot on the disputed land, Haroon said he (surveyor) may get it in many ways but there is no quota for Rajuk employees at present.

The Rajuk chairman said initially, the eviction at the said plot was not in the order of Rajuk, but it was included later.

Officer-in-charge and first class magistrate of Rajuk ASM Emdadud Dastagir said he had no bar on carrying out the eviction with the High Court annulling the injunction.

"Any court decree regarding compensation and allotment of rehabilitation plot is beyond my knowledge," he said. "They did not show me any such document."

"But I don't understand why Rajuk does not give them even a 3-katha rehabilitation plot," Dastagir said.

He said that a counsel of the evicted family appealed to him to deal with the matter with a humanitarian consideration but "I could not do so as they turned

violent."

Executive engineer Jamal Akhtar of Rajuk's Uttara Division refused to say anything on the issue over telephone on January 22 and asked this correspondent to see him in the morning the following day.

When contacted accordingly, Jamal Akhtar said he was busy at a meeting and asked to see him in the afternoon.

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