

Teenage girls thwart child marriage in Bangladesh

The marriage of a 13-year-old girl was prevented after her schoolmates marched in protest and lodged a police complaint in Satkhira town in southwestern Bangladesh.

Around 50 girls, students of Class 8 of the Abdul Karim Girls' School, surprised the townspeople by taking to the streets and filing a complaint with the police, the Daily Star reported Friday.

Habiba Sultana, 13, dared not oppose her marriage to a neighbour 10 years her senior, who her father Siddique Sana, hard-pressed for money, had chosen.

But when she confided in some of her friends, one of them told her own father to lodge a complaint but he did not oblige.

Left with no choice, the girls prepared a petition and submitted it to the officer in charge of the Sadar Police Station.

Satkhira police chief Mirza Abdullahel Baki hurriedly summoned Sana and asked him to stop his minor daughter's marriage.

Habiba's father then had to sign a bond that he would not marry off his daughter until she became an adult.

Although most governments have banned child marriages, they are still common among the poor and rural people across South Asia.

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