

UK Court Rules Against Britain's New Laws Aimed At Fraud Marriages

LONDON - Britain's tough new rules to end and expose the notorious back-door immigration practice of "sham marriages" have been judged discriminatory to non-European and non-Christian immigrants and incompatible with the European Convention of Human Rights.

The extraordinary decision by the London High Court strikes out the British government's 14-month-old crackdown on a practice said to involve thousands of non-EU immigrants, mostly immigrants from South Asia.

In an ironic coincidence, the court ruling came within hours of a separate decision on a notorious British Indian couple who have already been jailed for running a "marriage factory".

The so-called "marriage factory" run by Jaswinder and Darshan Gill, "sold" British passport-holding spouses to illegal immigrants from India in a scam that lasted many years.

But in a separate, significant High Court decision on Monday, it was ruled discriminatory to prevent a non-EU immigrant from marrying at will whilst in



the UK.

From February 2005, people born outside the EU and who hold a mere six-month British visa, must seek special permission from the Home Office to marry.

This rule applies only to non-EU vis-

itors belonging to the Hindu, Sikh, Muslim or any faith other than Church of England. It is not yet clear if the government will appeal against the court ruling.

The judge said the rules were unreasonable and breached human rights, in a remarkable echo of immigration activists' complaints that it was wrong to discriminate against immigrants on religious grounds.

Definitive figures are not available but nearly 4,000 "sham marriages" are thought to have taken place in 2004,

just months before the new rules were introduced.

In the Indian-dominant London area of Brent, marriage registrars said almost a fifth of all weddings were bogus.

Fraud Marriage Makers Stripped Of Assets

LONDON - A couple of Indian origin, who made marriage a profitable business, converting their home into a factory for Indian men wanting to skip immigration procedures, have been stripped of nearly 1 million pound of assets by a British court.

Jaswinder Gill (43) and her husband Darshan (42) arranged scores of bogus weddings for 10,000 pound a time. Isleworth Crown Court ordered the confiscation of 849,300 pound from Jaswinder and 130,000 pound from her husband.

In 2005, Gill was imprisoned for 10 years by the same court for aiding illegal entry to the UK and perverting the course of justice.

Darshan, a subordinate to his wife's will, was sentenced to six years for conspiring to facilitate illegal entry.

In their bizarre business, the couple conned young British Asian women into flying to India by offering them lucrative contracts modelling bridal wear. Once in India, the women found themselves marrying strangers desperate for a life in Britain.

A victim, who refused to go through with the plans, was left in a hotel room

with two men and threatened with rape unless she co-operated. The couple ran their illegal business from their home in Hayes, West London, between 2000 and 2004.

While wealthy Indians paid the Gills up to 14,000 pound to set up the ceremonies, some of the bogus brides earned less than 1,000 pound.

Fifteen sham marriages were identified but detectives believe there were many more pointing to 325,000 pound that was channelled through two of the Gills' bank accounts alone. They believe the couple arranged scores of bogus weddings, netting around #1 million.

Yesterday, the court heard that Gill earned at least 10,000 pound for each marriage she set up, and that the cash directly traceable to the marriages was 150,000 pound. The couple owned two homes and a string of expensive cars. They had transferred 496,000 pound to India and Jaswinder Gill's bank account contained 250,000 pound. Jaswinder faces a further four years in jail if she fails to pay the 850,000 pound within 18 months.

Darshan faces an extra two years if he does not pay up in the same period.

Smuggling Rings...

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six to as old as the early '70s, and that most embarked on the risky trip so they could be reunited with family or friends.

"The vast majority of these individuals ... are coming here for a better way of life, and for jobs and to reunite with their families," Winchell said, adding that about 10 of them are under the age of 18.

RCMP Insp. Dan Malo, who lead the Canadian investigative team, added that almost all of the people who were smuggled would only have been able to pay \$5,000 to \$10,000 up front and would therefore be indebted to the criminal ring after their arrival in the U.S.

However, he said police found no evidence of sex slavery in the investigation.

Explaining how the system worked, Mercer said the smugglers would provide

their customers with forged documents, which investigators believe were produced overseas.

The people being smuggled would then fly on direct commercial flights from India and Pakistan to Toronto, where they would meet a designated handler. After clearing customs, the people would return the phony documents so they could be used in future smuggling operations, Mercer said.

He said the people being smuggled would then fly to Vancouver where they would wait in a "safe house" until the time came to sneak into the U.S. through remote areas between crossings.

Once across the border, most of the people were taken to a hotel in the Seattle area and then flown to their final destinations within the U.S., police said.

Officials on both side of the border said the operation took close cooperation, and everyone involved called it a model for future cross-border investigations.