

Japanese Princess Set To Marry Her Commoner Fiance On October 26

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The engagement of Princess Mako and former classmate Kei Komuro was announced in 2017.

Tokyo: Japanese Princess Mako will marry her fiance, a former college classmate, on October 26, authorities said Friday, after years of intense scrutiny and criticism that cast her engagement in an unflattering light.

The 29-year-old niece of Emperor Naruhito became engaged to Kei Komuro, 29, in 2017, and the two initially captivated the public with their smiles at each other in a news conference to announce the event.

But tabloid reports soon emerged about a financial dispute between Komuro's mother and her former fiance, and early in 2018 the marriage was postponed. In August that year Komuro departed to attend law school in the United States, and didn't return until Monday.

The Imperial Household Agency, which runs the lives of the royal family, made the announcement of the wedding date at a news conference.

They also said the princess is suffering from a form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Kyodo news agency reported - echoing the situation of Empress Masako, who for years has struggled with what has been termed an "adjustment disorder."

Mako will leave the royal family upon her marriage, as is customary. None of the ceremonies that usually accompany a royal marriage will take place, and the princess will forgo a one-off payment of a million dollars to which she is entitled, media reports have said.

The couple will register their marriage at a local government office, with records of the imperial family adjusted to reflect that Princess Mako has left it, reports have said.

The controversy over the pair's marriage started when a tabloid reported claims by a former fiance of Komuro's mother that the mother and son had failed to repay a debt of about \$35,000. Komuro has said his mother's former fiance provided the money as a gift, not a loan.

The scandal spread from tabloids to regular news media and gained still more life when imperial family members were prompted to speak out. Komuro himself issued a detailed statement this year.

Komuro completed studies at Fordham Law School this year and took the bar exam that will enable him to practice law this summer. He has secured a job as a clerk in a law office in the United States, according to media reports.

He flew into Tokyo late on Monday for his first visit in three years, sporting a ponytail that set off widespread tabloid and television discussion about whether he was being disrespectful.

A recent poll by the daily Mainichi showed 38% of respondents supported the marriage, while 35% opposed it, and 26% expressed no interest.

- Reuters