



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

[New Search](#) | [About RIRs](#) | [Help](#)

20 September 2010

BGD103532.E

Bangladesh: reports of fraudulent documents
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

In 7 September 2010 correspondence with the Research Directorate, an official at the High Commission of Canada to Bangladesh stated that

There is a significant prevalence of fraudulent documents [in Bangladesh] including passports, birth certificates, bank statements, taxation documents, business documents, school documents, marriage certificates. If we ask for it, it can be produced.

The Canadian Official added that "[t]here is no difficulty at all for anyone to obtain these documents. Quality varies with prices paid." (Canada 7 September 2010).

A June 2007 Asian Development Bank (ADB) study examining why individuals obtain fraudulent documents in different Asian countries, including Bangladesh, provides the following information:

In Bangladesh, those seeking to have false identity documents commonly avail [themselves] of the services of middle persons, or *dalal*. According to a dalal who was interviewed, an efficient system has developed where applicants pay an additional fee to avoid the hassle of going through the official procedures, particularly for procuring passports. The dalal pays the relevant issuing officer, who in turn pays the special branch of the police for the required verification. Such verification is generally issued regardless of whether the information provided is correct or not. (ADB June 2007, 65)

The study adds that Bangladesh has a "well-developed market for the delivery of passports through unofficial mediators or agents" (*ibid.*, 68).

The Canadian Official stated that

Bangladeshi records are not computerized. Everything is recorded by hand and filed. It is very consuming for all involved to locate original documents or applications; additionally primary source documents are not even required for a Bangladeshi passport as births are not generally recorded at the time of birth. One only needs to make a self declaration as to one's name and date of birth and you get your passport in that name and date of birth. Information from schools (on the students) are a more reliable way to confirm identity as the students' parents' names are generally included in this information. (Canada 7 Sept. 2010)

The Canadian Official said that the High Commission was not aware of any official efforts to prevent the production or to identify fraudulent documents (*ibid.*).

However, the 2007 ADB study notes that "the introduction of modern technology, such as machine-readable passports, is making it increasingly difficult to produce counterfeits of the more heavily regulated documents" (*ibid.*, 66). A June 2010 Xinhua news agency article stated that Bangladesh introduced machine-readable passports partially due to concerns over forgeries of the previously manually processed passports

(Xinhua 2 June 2010). According to an official from the Bangladesh Department of Immigration and Passports quoted in the Xinhua article, the manually processed passports were easy to fake since they were "hand-written and the photos and signatures are pasted manually" (ibid.). The official also explained that because of the "absence of a proper database", a person could potentially receive more than one passport using the same name (ibid.). A 10 July 2010 article from the website *News from Bangladesh* (NFB) reports that despite the introduction of machine readable passports (MRP) in the country, some dalals still act as middlemen by selling spots in queues at passport offices.

The 2007 ADB study indicates that an "active market" for fraudulent birth certificates does not exist in Bangladesh, but this was expected to change as birth registration became "a mandatory precondition for accessing benefits and opportunities" (ADB June 2007, 68). A United Nations (UN) Children's Fund (UNICEF) report on birth registration in Bangladesh, updated in April 2010, explains that until the Births and Deaths Registration Act came into effect in 2006, there was little motivation to register births and to obtain birth certificates and "[t]he birth registration system was manual, ad hoc, and prone to abuse" (UN Apr. 2010, 2). In 2006, only 9.8 percent of children under five years old were registered (ibid. 1). The Act requires authorities to provide a birth certification when a person is registered and has made it compulsory to show a birth certificate to access some government services (ibid., 3). In 2009, 53.6 percent of children under five years were registered (ibid., 1).

The UNICEF report states that the government of Bangladesh has developed a Universal Birth Registration Strategy aiming to register the entire population by the end of 2010 (ibid., 3). The UNICEF report states that the government, with UNICEF assistance, is working on putting into place a Birth Registration Information System (BRIS) to centrally record all births in the country and to permit the verification of data (ibid., 4-5). According to the report, "it will increase the reliability of birth registration as the instrument of protection and identity" (ibid., 5). The system will be implemented throughout the nation after a pilot project, begun in two regions in December 2009, is successfully completed (ibid., 4).

The Dhaka-based online news service bdnews24.com reported on 13 March 2010 that the Bangladesh Election Commission was planning to issue a new type of identity card within five years, partially to stop forgery and abuse of the existing card. There were several media articles reporting on fraudulent documents: bdnews24.com reports that police had arrested a man with "a large number of fake documents in his possession", including driver's licenses, national identity cards and birth registration forms (28 Aug. 2010). The Dhaka-based daily *The Financial Express* reports on a 2009 case where seven drivers were caught with falsified documentation (24 Aug. 2009). The Bangladesh daily *The New Nation* reports that at least 1,500 vehicles were found to have false registration documents (9 May 2009). An article from *The Financial Express* notes efforts by the National Board of Revenue to fight against "widespread" fake tax identification certificates (6 May 2009).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Asian Development Bank (ADB). June 2007. "Alternative Markets for Legal Identity: A Cost Benefit Analysis." *Legal Identity for Inclusive Development*. <<http://www.adb.org/documents/books/legal-identity/>> [Accessed 27 July 2010]

bdnews24.com [Dhaka]. 28 August 2010. "Police Nab 1, Recover Fake Driving Licenses, IDs." <<http://bdnews24.com/details.php?id=171909&cid=2&aoth=1>> [Accessed 30 Aug. 2010]

_____. 13 March 2010. Moinul Hoque Chowdhury. "ID Cards to Get Facelift, Security Boost." <<http://www.bdnews24.com/details.php?id=155762&cid=2>> [Accessed 29 July 2010]

Canada. 7 September 2010. High Commission of Canada to Bangladesh. Correspondence with an Official.

The Financial Express [Dhaka]. 24 August 2009. "No Let Up in City Traffic Snarl." (Factiva)

_____. 6 May 2009. "The Fake TIN Puzzle." (Factiva)

News From Bangladesh (NFB). 10 July 2010. "Passport 'Dalals' Rule Roost." <<http://bangladesh-web.com/view.php?hidRecord=325898>> [Accessed 27 July 2010]

The New Nation [Dhaka]. 9 May 2009. "Corruption, Irregularities Rampant in BRTA: 1500 Motor Vehicles Registered with Fake Documents." (Factiva)

United Nations (UN). April 2010. Children's Fund (UNICEF). "Birth Registration in Bangladesh." <[http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/Birth_Registration\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/Birth_Registration(1).pdf)> [Accessed 1 Sept. 2010]

Xinhua. 2 June 2010. "Bangladesh Launches Machine Readable Passport, Visa." (*People's Daily Online*) <<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90851/7010027.html>> [Accessed 30 Aug. 2010]

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sources, including: European Country of Information Network (ecoi.net), Transparency International (TI), United Kingdom (UK) Home Office, United Nations (UN) Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), UN Refworld, United States (US) Department of State.

The attached reproduction is a copy of an official work that is published by the Government of Canada. The reproduction has not been produced in affiliation with, or with the endorsement of the Government of Canada.