

Immigration and
Refugee Board of CanadaCommission de l'immigration
et du statut de réfugié du Canada

Canada

[Français](#)[Home](#)[Contact Us](#)[Help](#)[Search](#)[canada.gc.ca](#)

RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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

BGD42922.E

13 September 2004

Bangladesh: The voter's identity card, including the procedures to obtain one, its use, whether it is obligatory for all age-voting Bangladeshis, whether there are markings on the card indicating that the citizen has voted in previous elections, and its appearance (September 2004)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Dhaka Courier reported on 7 January 2000 that the Election Commission began the process of issuing voter identity cards to all eligible voters in 1995 to improve "transparen[cy] and accountability" in elections. As of 1994, under Bangladesh laws, all eligible voters were required to have a voter identity card and to present it during elections (*Dhaka Courier* 7 Jan. 2000). The card would be used as identification during many transactions:

...for transfer of immovable property, mutation of land, settlement of land, compensation for acquisition of land, marriage registration, procurement of different kinds of licenses and permits, passport, obtaining bank loan, relief, [and as a] VGD [Vulnerable Group Development] and VGF [Vulnerable Group Feeding] card. This will also be used for identification in judicial process, issuance of boarding pass to passengers of domestic flights and other government facilities (ibid.).

As of November 1999, some 75 per cent of eligible voters had had their photographs for the card taken, and 60 per cent of voters had been issued their cards (ibid.).

The counsellor at the Bangladesh High Commission in Ottawa provided the following information on the voter's identity card on 9 September 2004. The counsellor stated that the voter's identity card was an idea that originated in the mid-1990s. The independently-run Election Commission was to issue the voting card to all Bangladeshis of voting age, but in practice, only roughly 50 per cent of the voting population has a voter's identity card. It is an on-going process to have the card issued to all eligible voters. According to the counsellor, it is not mandatory for Bangladeshis to have this card when voting, i.e. other identity documents may be used at voting time. Bangladeshis can request the card at any time after they have reached 18 years of age, but usually most people ask for it just prior to elections. The voter's identity card can be used as a general identity document for obtaining a passport and for taking driving lessons. The card can be used for national, municipal and local elections. In terms of appearance, the card has a photograph and full address and identification number of the holder; it is slightly bigger than a North American credit card and the stiff paper on which the information is printed is laminated. The counsellor was uncertain about the

colour of the cards, but the ones he has seen have been yellow or green. There is no place on the card to indicate whether the holder of the card has voted in previous elections.

Please see the template document of the voter's identity card, attached to this Response, taken from the Bangladesh Election Commission Website for additional information on the appearance and information included on the card. The template can be accessed at the following Website: <http://www.bd-ec.org/App_VI_Form.PDF>.

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 additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Bangladesh High Commission, Ottawa. 9 September 2004. Telephone interview the counsellor.

Dhaka Courier . 7 January 2000. Vol. 16, No. 24-25. M.Z. Rahman. "Death of Fair Intention."

Additional Sources Consulted

The Bangladesh Human Rights Commission in London, England, the Election Commission in Dhaka and Democracy Watch in Dhaka did not respond to requests for information within the time constraints of this Response.

Internet sites, including: *Asia Times* , Bangladesh Human Rights Commission, BBC, *The Daily Star* , Democracy Watch, South Asia Forum for Human Rights, South Asia Media Net, US Department of State.

Attachment

Bangladesh Election Commission. n.d. "Voter's Identity Card." <http://www.bd-ec.org/App_VI_Form.PDF>[Accessed 9 Sept. 2004]

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.


[Top of Page](#)

[Important Notices](#)