

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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> Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment please email Basesdedonnees.DatabaseUnit@irb-cisr.gc.ca.

27 May 2015

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Bangladesh: Requirements and procedures to obtain and renew a passport at the Bangladesh High Commission in Ottawa; information on the procedures that the High Commission follows with the old passport booklet (2014-May 2015)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. General information

The website of the Bangladesh High Commission in Ottawa states that they have been processing Machine Readable Passports (MRP) since April 2012 (Bangladesh n.d.a). In an interview with the Research Directorate, an official at the Bangladesh High Commission in Ottawa stated that all MRPs are biometric, and that the High Commission issues MRPs (ibid. 13 May 2015).

The Bangladesh Department of Immigration and Passports website states that an MRP passport holder's basic information [is] printed in hidden steganographic encoded texts on the photograph. It contains a Machine Readable Zone (MRZ) where the personal data of the passport holder is available. Data available in MRZ can be read by a machine or computer at international borders. (ibid. 11 May 2015)

The embassy official stated that the applicant's biometric information, which is included in the MRZ of the MRP, comprises the applicant's "fingerprint, digital photo" and "digital signature" (ibid. 13 May 2015).

The Bangladesh High Commission's website states that according to the decision of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), since after 2014, hand-written passports are no longer valid for travel (ibid. n.d.a). The embassy official also stated that the High Commission no longer issues handwritten passports and that they have not been valid for travel since the beginning of 2015, according to the decision of the ICAO (ibid. 13 May 2015). The High Commission website states that hand-written passports can be replaced with a new MRP (ibid. n.d.a).

2. Types of Passports

According to the embassy official, there are three types of passports: ordinary, official and diplomatic (Bangladesh 13 May 2015). The same source explained that official passports are issued to government officials, while diplomatic passports are issued to specifically-entitled individuals, including but not limited to, the President, the Prime Minister, all diplomats, family members of diplomats (including wife and children under the age of 19), all members of Parliament, chief justices, army chiefs and police chiefs (ibid.). The Bangladesh High Commission in Ottawa provided sample copies of an ordinary, official and diplomatic passport, which are attached to this Response (Attachments 1, 2 and 3).

2.1 Authority of High Commission to Issue Official and Diplomatic Passports

According to the embassy official, the High Commission does not have the authority to issue a new official MRP passport, but it does have the authority to renew an official passport if the applicant already has an official Bangladeshi passport and is still in Bangladesh government service (Bangladesh 13 May 2015).

In regard to diplomatic passports, the same source noted that the High Commission "never" issues new, renews, or replaces lost or stolen diplomatic passports; individuals applying for diplomatic passports must apply with the Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs (ibid.).

3. Procedures to Obtain a New Passport, or to Renew or Replace a Lost Passport at the High Commission in Ottawa

3.1 Verification by the Department of Immigration and Passports, Headquarters in Dhaka

According to the embassy official, if an adult applicant (12 years old or older) is applying for their first passport at the Bangladesh High Commission in Ottawa, the High Commission cannot process their passport without verification from the Department of Immigration and Passports, Headquarters in Dhaka (Bangladesh 13 May 2015). The embassy official explained that

- The applicant must provide the following to the High Commission: name, date of birth, local Bangladesh address, Bangladesh birth certificate, and any documents that provide evidence that they lived in Bangladesh (for example, a school certificate or driver's licence).
- This information is provided to the headquarters in Dhaka, which then sends this information to the appropriate district police department, who then delivers this information to the local police superintendent.
- The local police conduct a "thorough" investigation:
 - Local police officers will go to the applicant's residence (place of residence provided by the applicant), will show the photo of the applicant to people living at the applicant's local residence or to the neighbours, and ask them if they know the applicant.
 - If there is no one available to speak with them, the police will return at another time.
- Once the police complete their investigation, their conclusions will be sent to the Bangladesh High Commission.
- The conclusion of the police investigation is final and the information cannot be reinvestigated.
- If any of the details that the applicant provided are false or if they made mistakes, the Bangladesh High Commission in Ottawa cannot issue a passport (13 May 2015).

According to the embassy official, the verification process takes a minimum of six months, but can take up to one year if the applicant's local address is remote (ibid.).

The embassy official further stated that the same process will be followed in the case of an applicant who does not have any proof of identity produced by Bangladesh authorities (including a Bangladeshi birth certificate [1], or Bangladeshi national ID) (ibid.).

3.2 Verification Not Required

According to the embassy official, if the applicant applying for a new passport is a child younger than 12 years old, the Bangladesh High Commission in Ottawa can process their passport without verification from the Headquarters in Dhaka (Bangladesh 13 May 2015). The parents (or a single parent) must provide the child's birth certificate; the High Commission will accept a Bangladeshi birth certificate or a Canadian birth certificate if the child was born in Canada (ibid.). The birth certificate must include

- the name of the child and the parents;
- the date of birth of the child;
- the place of birth of the child and parents; and
- the parents' nationality (ibid.)

The parent(s) must have a Bangladesh passport and the information on their passport must match the information on the child's birth certificate (ibid.). If the information matches, the Bangladesh High Commission in Ottawa "will process the child's passport application" (ibid.).

3.3 Issuance Procedures at the High Commission

According to the embassy official, for all types of passports and to obtain a new passport, or renew or replace a lost or stolen passport, an applicant must provide the following:

- old Bangladeshi passport (with two sets of photocopies);
- application form [which can be downloaded from the High Commission's website, or picked up at the High Commission (Bangladesh n.d.a)];
- a photocopy of their birth certificate or National Bangladesh ID (these documents "must be produced in Bangladesh");
- fee; and
- T 2 recent photographs of the applicant (2 additional photographs are taken at the High Commission for reference purposes) (13 May 2015).

The MRP application form on the Bangladesh High Commission in Ottawa website, which is attached to this Response (Attachment 4), requests that applicants indicate which of the following items have been enclosed with the application:

- Copy of National ID;
- Copy of Birth Registration Certificate;
- Copy of Government Order [applicable only to government officials; they must submit a Government Order, which demonstrates that they are currently employed by the government, when renewing their official passport at the High Commission (Bangladesh 13 May 2015)];
- Copy of NOC [No Objection Certificate] [not required when submitting an application to the High Commission, only applicable to applications in Dhaka (ibid.)];
- Copy of Previous Passport;
- Copy of Technical Certificates [certificates indicating profession; required when submitting an application for a new passport if the applicant would like to change their job title (ibid.)];
- Copy of TIN [Tax Identification Number] [optional for applicant to submit (ibid.)]; and
- Proof of Retirement [required only for former government officials who are applying for an ordinary passport (ibid.)] (Bangladesh n.d.b).

The MRP application form on the High Commission website also has a section that allows the applicant to affix an attested photograph, an attested photograph of their father and an attested photograph of their mother (ibid.). For further details on what information the applicant must provide, see the MRP application form (Attachment 4).

According to the High Commission's website, applicants are encouraged to either download the application form or "apply online" and "bring the print out of the completed forms" to the High Commission, along with supporting documents, to submit their application (ibid. n.d.a). Information on the Bangladesh Department of Immigration and Passport's online passport application website also provides that applicants are to report to the Passport Office with a "printed version of the Online Application form" (ibid. n.d.c).

Both the embassy official and the High Commission website state that applicants must bring their MRP application and all required documents to the High Commission in person to have their biometric information recorded (ibid. 13 May 2015; ibid. n.d.a). Information on the Bangladesh Department of Immigration and Passport's online passport application website provides that applicants must also "report to the Passport Office for providing biometric data" (ibid. n.d.c).

According to the embassy official, students applying for passports must be between 6 and 21 years old and must provide a valid student ID or report card as proof that they are currently in school (ibid. 13 May 2015).

According to the embassy official, in the case of lost or stolen passports, the applicant must provide the same supporting documents, but "instead of providing a copy of their passport they must provide a photocopy of their old passport," if possible, as well as a police report from the local police station where their passport went missing, demonstrating that they reported their lost or stolen passport (Bangladesh 13 May 2015).

The embassy official and the High Commission website state that there is a \$115 fee for ordinary passports and a \$35 fee for ordinary passports for students (Bangladesh 13 May 2015; ibid. n.d.a). The embassy official stated that there is no fee for official passports (ibid. 13 May 2015), while the High Commission website states that there is a \$35 fee for official passports (ibid. n.d.a).

The High Commission website states that the processing times for "regular," student, and official passports is "within 4 to 5 weeks" (ibid. n.d.a). The embassy official explained that once the application and forms are submitted, the information is sent electronically from the Bangladesh High Commission in Ottawa to the Department of Immigration and Passports, Headquarters in Dhaka, where it takes "approximately 4-5 days" to process the MRP (ibid. 13 May 2015). The "physical MRP is then mailed from the headquarters in Dhaka to the High Commission in Ottawa in a security envelope," which takes "22-30 days" (ibid.). The High Commission website states that "[t]he delivery time is about three to five weeks upon receipt of printed MRPs from Dhaka, Bangladesh" (ibid. n.d.a). The website also states that the delivery of the printed MRP "can be arranged if a self-addressed return prepaid express envelope" is submitted to the High Commission (ibid.).

The embassy official stated that all MRPs are valid for 5 years (Bangladesh 13 May 2015).

4. Old and Expired Passports

The embassy official stated that old passports contain an expiry date (Bangladesh 13 May 2015). The official noted that old, expired passports are not perforated and are returned to the applicant if requested (ibid.). He stated that a "cross reference number" is written in the old passport on an empty page; this number provides the applicant's new passport number and its date of issue (ibid.). A signature and stamp by the High Commission is also included on the same page as the cross reference number (ibid.). The old passport number is printed on the information page of the renewed passport, which allows the passport holder to use the old passport if it contains a visa that is still valid (ibid.).

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.

Note

[1] The website of the Bangladesh High Commission in Ottawa states that they can issue birth certificates, "valid only for MRP" applications, based on information found in the "existing or old passport/Union Parishad Chairman's/Ward Commissioner's certificate and or SSC certificate" (Bangladesh n.d.a). The website states that the birth certificates contain a 17 digit identification number and are issued for a fee of \$C5 (ibid.).

References

Bangladesh. 13 May 2015. High Commission for Bangladesh in Ottawa. Telephone interview with an official.

_____. 11 May 2015. Department of Immigration and Passports. "Machine Readable Passport (MRP)." <<http://www.dip.gov.bd/site/page/9813e916-b51a-48d0-8ca4-42886c36b91d>> [Accessed 5 May 2015]

_____. N.d.a. High Commission for Bangladesh in Ottawa. "Machine Readable Passports." <<http://www.bdhcottawa.ca/machine-readable-passports-mrp>> [Accessed 20 Apr. 2015]

_____. N.d.b. High Commission for Bangladesh in Ottawa. "Machine Readable Passport Application Form." <http://bdhcottawa.ca/images/pdf/MRP_Application_Form%5BHard%20Copy%5D.pdf> [Accessed 20 Apr. 2015]

_____. N.d.c. Bangladesh Department of Immigration and Passports. "Online Application for Bangladesh Machine Readable Passport." <<http://www.passport.gov.bd/Default.aspx>> [Accessed 21 Apr. 2015]

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including: Asylum Aid; Bangla2000; Bangladesh – Bangladesh National Web Portal, Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission; ecoi.net; Factiva; IRIN; United Kingdom – UK Visa and Immigration; United Nations – Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN UNHCR, Refworld; United States – US Passports & International Travel.

Attachments

1. Bangladesh. N.d. Ordinary Passport. Sent to the Research Directorate by an official at the High Commission for Bangladesh in Ottawa, 13 May 2015.

2. Bangladesh. N.d. Official Passport. Sent to the Research Directorate by an official at the High Commission for Bangladesh in Ottawa, 13 May 2015.

3. Bangladesh. N.d. Diplomatic Passport. Sent to the Research Directorate by an official at the High Commission for Bangladesh in Ottawa, 13 May 2015.

4. Bangladesh. N.d. Bangladesh High Commission in Ottawa. "Machine Readable Passport Application Form." <http://bdhcottawa.ca/images/pdf/MRP_Application_Form%5BHard%20Copy%5D.pdf> [Accessed 20 Apr. 2015]

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