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Immigration and
Refugee Board of Canada

Commission de l'immigration
et du statut de réfugié du Canada

Sri Lanka: Birth certificates, including issuance procedures and appearance; the language(s) that appear on the certificates; circumstances under which a Ministry of Foreign Affairs stamp would appear on the certificate. [LKA105434.E]

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Birth Certificates

1.1 Birth Registration

Information to be included in a 2013 report on birth registration, provided to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights by the Sri Lankan Ministry of Justice, states that it is the responsibility of "every Registrar" to register all births and deaths that occur in their Division (Sri Lanka 20 Nov. 2013, 2). According to the same source, each of the nine provinces of the country is a "separate administrative zone," each with an Assistant Registrar General (ibid., 9). The Registrar General is responsible for the "administration, general control and supervision" of birth, death and marriage registrations that occur in Sri Lanka (ibid.). Administrative districts have a "Government Agent/District Secretary" appointed as an Additional Registrar General, and Divisional Secretaries are appointed as the "District Registrar of ... their administrative divisions" (ibid.). The Divisional Secretary's Divisions are further divided into "small units, which are called ... birth and death registration divisions" and a Registrar of birth, death and marriages is appointed to register these events (ibid.).

According to the same report, the Sri Lankan Births and Deaths Registration Act provides the following:

Section 15

Subject to the provisions of subsection (1) of section 20, the father or mother of every child born alive, and in case the parents of the child are unable to provide the information relating to the birth hereinafter specified by reason of their death, illness, absence or other inability recognized by the Registrar General, the occupier of the house or building in which the child was born, each person present at the birth and the person having charge of the child shall, within 42 days of the date of birth, give information of such of the particulars relating to the birth required under this Act to be registered as the informant possesses, to the appropriate Registrar and shall, if called upon by the Registrar, sign the register of births in the appropriate place in the presence of the Registrar.

Where a birth occurs on an estate, the person or persons required to give information have to give such information to the Superintendent of Estate within seven days of the birth instead of to the Registrar. (Sri Lanka 20 Nov. 2013, 2)

According to information provided on the website for the Sri Lankan Registrar General's Department, a birth can be registered by submitting an application form in addition to the hospital birth record, the marriage certificate of the parents if applicable, and the birth certificates of the parents to the "relevant registrar of the division where the birth occurred" (ibid. n.d.c). If it has been longer than three months since the birth, the application should be submitted to the "divisional secretariat of the relevant division" (ibid.).

1.2 Issuance Procedures

According to the instructions provided on the "Citizen's Registrations" section of the government of Sri Lanka's Government Information Center website, in order to obtain a "Certified Copy of the Certificate of Birth," the applicant must submit an application form, which is available from any Divisional Secretariat, to the Divisional Secretariat in the area where the birth occurred (Sri Lanka n.d.a). If the date of registration or the registration number of the entry is given, the fee is Rs 100 [0.96CAD] (ibid.). If the information is not provided, and "a search of registers" does not exceed two years, the fee is Rs 200 (ibid.). If the birth has been registered, the applicant will be issued a birth certificate; if the birth is not registered, "a letter to the effect will be sent [t]" (ibid.). A copy of the birth certificate application form is attached to this Response (Attachment 1).

2. Appearance and Languages

Schedule A of the Birth and Dead Registration Act indicate the fields included in the Birth Registration Entry (Sri Lanka 1954). A copy is attached to this Response (Attachment 2).

The Sri Lankan birth certificate application states that the certificate "will be issued in the language it has been registered" and a separate application must be submitted if a translation is desired (ibid. n.d.b). According to the website of the Sri Lanka Deputy High Commission in Southern India, a birth can be registered in Sinhala, Tamil, or English (ibid. n.d.d).

2.1 Appearance of a Stamp from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Information on the appearance of a stamp or seal from the Sri Lankan Ministry of Foreign Affairs on a birth certificate could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

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

Sri Lanka. 20 November 2013. *OHCHR Report on Birth Registration: Information Received from the Government of Sri Lanka Ministry of Justice*.

<<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Children/BirthRegistration/SriLanka.pdf>> [Accessed 1 Feb. 2016]

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<<http://www.sldhcchennai.org/node/2>> [Accessed 2 Feb. 2016]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Sri Lanka- High Commission in Ottawa.

Internet sites, including: ecoi.net; Factiva; Sri Lanka – Department of Immigration and Emigration Sri Lankan Identity Overseas, High Commission in Ottawa; United Nations – Refworld, World Health Organisation; United States – Department of State.

Attachments

1. Sri Lanka. N.d. Government Information Center. "Application for Birth Certificate and/or Search of Registers." <<http://www.gic.gov.lk/gic/pdf/b63.pdf>> [Accessed 29 Jan. 2016]
2. Sri Lanka. 1954. "Schedule A of the Birth and Dead Registration Act." <<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Children/BirthRegistration/SriLanka.pdf>> [Accessed 1 Feb. 2016]

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