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Danish National ID Centre

Birkerød Kongevej 2-4
3460 Birkerød
Denmark

Phone +45 61 98 39 00
Email nidc@nidc.dk
Website www.nidc.dk

Pakistan: The Pakistani passport

Introduction

The following note describes the application procedure and requirements for applying for a Pakistani passport and the registration routines at the Directorate General of Immigration & Passports.

The note is primarily based on interviews conducted in Islamabad in March 2018.

For tactical information related to the Pakistani passport and other Pakistani documents, please see »*Pakistan - Tactical information related to Pakistani documents*«.

The Pakistani passport

The issuance of passports in Pakistan is regulated by the 1974 Passport Act and the 2006 Passport & Visa Manual.¹ According to the Directorate General of Immigration & Passports, every Pakistani citizen is entitled to a machine readable passport.² It is possible to apply for a passport at one of the 160 Regional Passport Offices and through one of the 60 Pakistani diplomatic missions.³

The application process is thoroughly described at the website of the Directorate General of Immigration & Passports and during the delegation's meeting with representatives from the Directorate General of Immigration & Passports in March 2018, it was confirmed that the website is continuously updated.⁴

Requirements

To apply for a Pakistani passport, one has to be a holder of a Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC)/National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis (NICOP) or related smart cards or a Child Registration Certificate (CRC). Each of these documents

¹ Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Passport, year of issue n/a.

² Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Islamabad, March 2018.

³ Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Passport, year of issue n/a; Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Offices, year of issue n/a.

⁴ Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Process, year of issue n/a; Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Islamabad, March 2018.

assures that the applicant is registered in NADRA's system (CRMS) with the required biographic and biometric data.⁵

It is likewise a requirement to present an original bank challan (receipt for payment) of 3,000 Rupees for normal issuance procedure and 5,000 Rupees for urgent issuance procedure if applying for a passport with a validity of five years; and 5,400 Rupees for normal issuance procedure and 9,000 Rupees for urgent issuance procedure if applying for a passport with a validity of 10 years. If the applicant is in possession of his/her old passport, this too needs to be handed in.⁶

According to the Directorate General of Immigration & Passports, it is a requirement to present an authorisation letter if one is to pick up another person's passport.⁷

Registration routines

It is a requirement to be registered in NADRA's digital CRMS when applying for a passport. The main reason is that the passport database is linked directly to the CRMS and that almost all of the information in the passport is transferred directly from the CRMS.⁸

It is not possible for employees at the Directorate General of Immigration & Passports to edit the information in the passport database, as it cannot differ from that of the CRMS.⁹

Online renewal of passport

It is possible to renew a passport online if the applicant is abroad and if no personal information has changed compared to the current passport. The applicant must upload a new photograph and if it has a high enough match with the old photograph according to the facial recognition software, the application is accepted.¹⁰

Children

The requirements for children are the CRC as well as the bank challan. Children below the age of 14 will not have their biometrics taken, however, all children, including new-born, have to be present during the application process, as a photo together with one of the parents is a requirement.¹¹

Only one of the parents will sign the document and only one of the parents has to be present during the application process, but both parents' CNIC cards must be presented. It is possible for the parents to write an authorisation letter to another

⁵ Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Ordinary Passport, year of issue n/a.

⁶ Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Ordinary Passport, year of issue n/a.

⁷ Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Islamabad, March 2018.

⁸ Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Islamabad, March 2018.

⁹ Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Islamabad, March 2018.

¹⁰ Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Islamabad, March 2018.

¹¹ Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Islamabad, March 2018.

adult person who can then pick up the passport. Children under 15 years of age will be issued passports with five years validity.¹²

Citizenship number (CNIC number)

The citizenship number (also called the CNIC number) is a unique 13-digit number, which is generated either during the issuance of the Child Registration Certificate (CRC) or during the issuance of the CNIC in case the child did not get a CRC.¹³

Passport issuance and the passport number

When a passport is issued, no additional personal information is registered in the CRMS. The applicant's data is simply checked up against the CRMS, including biometric data and place and date of birth. According to the representative from the Directorate General of Immigration & Passports, it was previously the routine to ask the applicant for e.g. place and date of birth and enter this information directly into the passport database. As it is now linked to the CRMS, this is no longer the procedure, and the representative stated that this routine combined with the biometric data check, including facial recognition, made dual registration with two different CNIC numbers impossible.¹⁴

It was furthermore stated that the date of birth in a person's birth registration certificate must be concurrent with the date of birth in that person's passport.¹⁵

According to the Directorate General of Immigration & Passports, the first passport issued to a Pakistani citizen must be issued in the same city in which that person had his/her CNIC issued. The exemption is if the person is a government official.¹⁶

When a passport is lost, the person is obligated to report it to the police, and the police file has to be submitted when applying for a new passport. If a third passport is reported lost, then it is not possible to get a new one.¹⁷

The passport number is unique for all passports but when a person gets a new passport, the passport number will only change the last digit. This last digit is serial meaning that a person's fourth passport will have a '4' as the last digit. The other digits remain the same for every passport a citizen will get.¹⁸

On page two of every passport the number of the previous passport will appear together with an explanation of why a new passport has been issued e.g. lost, stolen, expired: 'XXXX (passport number) was reported stolen'. It is, however, only the

¹² Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Ordinary Passport, year of issue n/a.

¹³ NADRA, March 2018.

¹⁴ Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Islamabad, March 2018.

¹⁵ Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Islamabad, March 2018.

¹⁶ Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Islamabad, March 2018.

¹⁷ Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Islamabad, March 2018.

¹⁸ Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Islamabad, March 2018.

latest passport and not all previous passports, which are mentioned. E.g. if the current passport is number four, then it is only passport number three which is mentioned on page two.¹⁹

Trustworthiness of Pakistani passports

The Pakistani passport is based on NADRA's registration, which again is based on the handwritten birth registration at Union Council level.²⁰ There is no additional scrutiny at NADRA or at the Directorate General of Immigration and Passport during the application and issuance processes, of the documents issued by the Union Councils.²¹ Consequently, the credibility of a Pakistani passport ultimately lies in the registration at Union Council.

¹⁹ Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Islamabad, March 2018.

²⁰ Directorate General of Immigration and Passport, Islamabad, March 2018.

²¹ Local Lawyer A, Islamabad, March 2018; Local Lawyer B, Islamabad, March 2018.

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