



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

In Bangladesh Studies (4BN1) Paper 01

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General comments

There were some excellent responses on this year's paper and the overwhelming majority of candidates were able to complete three questions with few signs of problems relating to time or rubric infringement.

In preparing candidates for the examination, centres might like to take note of the crucial requirements of each of questions (b), (c) and (d) in order to ensure that the impressive knowledge which is often demonstrated is used effectively. These are as follows:

- Q(b). This is a two mark question. It requires two very short responses. There is no need to write long sentences, nor to explain the answer. So, for example, 3 (b) asks for two reasons for British interest in the Indian sub-continent. It is sufficient to answer '*to trade*'. '*To get raw materials*'.
- Q(c) is a causation question. Candidates need to explain 'why', rather than write about 'what'. It is very good technique to use the words of the question in writing an answer. So, for example, a response in Q4(c) might begin '*Bengal was partitioned in 1905 because...*'
- Q(d) is a judgement question. Candidates should consider a number of factors and decide which was the most important/main etc. Best rewarded responses look at three factors. So in Q6(d) where candidates are asked whether Kazi Nazrul Islam was Bangladesh's greatest cultural figure, his contribution should be compared to that made by two other cultural figures (e.g. Begum Sufia Kamal and Rabindranath Tagore).

Comments on individual questions

Question 1

Candidates demonstrated a high degree of knowledge in answering on the Mukti Bahini and full marks were common for Q1(b). They were less successful in answering question 1(c) and it was surprising that Bangladesh's early problems as an independent country were not better known. These, of course, revolved largely around the impact of the War of Liberation. Question 1(d) produced some very interesting answers with most candidates agreeing that the most successful work carried out by Jinnah was helping refugees. Some candidates criticised Jinnah for his neglect of the needs of East Bengal but this could be rewarded only where it was linked to the overall question.

Question 2

A very small number of candidates attempted this question. Those that did had a good knowledge of the way Sufis influenced other religions and of the achievements of Ilyas Shah (Haji Ilyas). They were less secure in their explanations of how Bakhtiyar Khali took control of the Sena Dynasty, though the story of his attack on Nadia after approaching through the forests was usually explained in some detail!

Question 3

The reasons for Islam Khan establishing his capital at Dhaka were well-known and candidates generally scored well on Q3 (c). Candidates were almost unanimous in their agreement that the decline in its military power was the main reason for the downfall of the Mughal Empire (3d), with Aurangzeb's costly Deccan wars often being cited as the main cause of this decline. Other reasons given included poor administration, succession disputes and the strength of opposition, particularly British military prowess. Part (b) contained some misconceptions. Initial interest in the Indian sub-continent was for trade reasons and was not connected with Mughal decline (which had not occurred at the beginning of the seventeenth century) nor with British desires to build an empire.

Question 4

Q(b) proved difficult for some candidates, who did not know what the 1858 Allahabad Proclamation was, so gave details of other important proclamations, such as the 1930 Allahabad Address. In contrast, Q(c) produced some excellent answers, demonstrating a thorough understanding of the reasons for partition. Q(d) was also very well answered, with a wide variety of explanations for the War of Independence reaching an unsatisfactory conclusion. Rather than the intervention of the ruler of the Punjab, lack of co-ordination, poor leadership and British military strength were considered the main reasons.

Question 5

This question was very popular but proved challenging to some of the candidates. Whilst it is true that the details of the Amritsar Massacre were extremely well known, there were a lack of consensus on who did or did not like the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. Candidates needed to be clear that the acceptance of separate electorates was popular with the Muslim community, but little else was seen as acceptable. Congress was completely dissatisfied with the reforms and Gandhi's non-cooperation movement proved popular with Hindus and Muslims. On Q5d candidates were not always sure what events should be included in a discussion of negotiations

aimed at achieving partition. Best responses came from those candidates who limited their answers to three or four main events in the period 1942-47.

Question 6

This question had the fewest number of responses of all six options. Those candidates who did answer seemed to know a lot about the contribution to Bangladesh's culture made by Kazi Nazrul Islam, but did not always compare his work with other cultural figures. Bangladesh's successful relations with the United Nations were generally considered as what it has gained from membership, whereas there is much which could have been stated on what Bangladesh has contributed. The key word in Q6c was 'economic'. Some candidates did not spot this and wrote about the work of General Ziaur Rahman in general. This led to some significant parts of their response being irrelevant and unrewarded.

