



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

In Bangladesh Studies (4BN1) Paper 02

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General Comments:

- Candidates are required to answer all questions in the paper.
- Candidates usually wrote appropriate amounts for their responses within the spaces provided, very few required additional pages.
- The majority of this year's candidate cohort appeared well prepared for the examination in terms of their knowledge, understanding and willingness to confront questions.
- There was little evidence of candidates being unable to complete the paper in the allocated time.
- It was again heartening to see that there were very few candidates that didn't attempt questions, and nearly all responses were relevant to the question.
- Most candidates wrote answers in clear sentences and paragraphs with very few adopting simple lists of points which had been an issue raised with responses from the previous specification.
- Where questions in the paper were structured so that candidates should provide a number of responses in a question, for example, 'two factors', this structure was usually followed by candidates. Although in some questions where 'one impact' was required candidates would sometimes provide several reasons rather than developing just the one.
- This paper included questions with the command words 'assess' and 'evaluate'. Most candidates recognised the command word in the question and made an attempt to shape their answer to address this. It was encouraging to see that candidates seemed well prepared for approaching questions with these different command words and would often summarise their arguments, or would start with a sentence to attempt to address the command word. There were many examples of 8 mark questions with clearly structured answers where candidates were attempting to provide a balanced response to the question (for example human factors compared to physical factors). The most effective candidates presented their main idea as an introductory sentence, and reinforced this with a summary conclusion.

Section 1 A focuses on the Physical Environment.

For 1a(i) most candidates were able to interpret the map of gas fields to recognise where the region with the highest number was located. For **a(ii)** the majority of candidates were able to provide a suitable natural resource that is exploited in Bangladesh. The specification states the natural resources that should be studied are water, forest products, fish/shellfish and/or minerals, and nearly all candidates provided one of these. There were a few candidates who had missed the instruction that this should be different to oil shown in the previous question. For **(b)** many candidates tended to focus on the seasonal nature of climate in the tropical savannah climate zone in Bangladesh. There were many candidates who did not necessarily provide different points with both focusing on rainfall or temperature at different points of the year, for example. Two different points were required to obtain both marks, for example considering the

seasonal nature of rainfall, and a suitable temperature range. Few candidates commented on the vegetation characteristics of this climatic zone.

In part **(c)** candidates demonstrated what the Meghna floodplain was, and the fertile nature of soil in this area, linked to the impact on agriculture. Some responses were not always clear what characteristic they were focusing on, instead providing a description of the location. In these 3 mark 'explain' questions, candidates need to provide sufficient development of their explanation to reach the full 3 marks. Where candidates started with deposition of sediment during a flood, they tended to do this demonstrating good geographical knowledge about the formation of a floodplain.

For part **(d)** candidates were required to use a resource, a diagram with information about Cyclone Roanu, to suggest ways individuals can respond to tropical cyclones. Common responses focused on evacuation, storm shelters and provision of aid after the cyclone. Although candidates were often able to suggest two responses, they were not always able to develop these clearly. For example, some candidates successfully developed the point about evacuation to link this to reduced injuries, or developed a point about preparation kits for future events to ensure they had fresh drinking water. Some responses were also less focused on individual responses to tropical cyclone, but more those that would be completed by government or organisations, such as investing in flood defences.

In part **(e)** candidates were required to explain how non-renewable energy sources are being exploited in Bangladesh. Candidates demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding of the exploitation of non-renewable energy sources, in terms of what sources are used, their applications and their importance for the economic development of the country. The more effective responses would make clear reference to particular places or industries in Bangladesh.

For part **(f)** the command word 'assess' required candidates to consider the extent that coastal flooding in Bangladesh is caused by physical factors. The command word 'assess' requires candidates to consider a number of factors and give an explanation of the factor considered to be the most important. The majority of candidates took the approach to argue that coastal flooding is caused by both physical and human factors, which was quite effective. Candidates recognised the nature of the low-lying coastline and exposure to storm surges were important factors, but often included counterarguments related to urbanisation, deforestation and climate change. Candidates demonstrated excellent understanding of the nature and impact of coastal flooding in Bangladesh, with many providing relevant place details. The most effective responses would provide a clear judgement at the end, with many candidates explaining how it was the interplay of physical and human factors that caused coastal flooding in Bangladesh. Weaker responses did not provide as much detail to explain the factors, but would often just list a range of factors, focusing more on physical factors.

Section B focuses on the Human Environment

For 2a(i) most candidates were able to interpret the graph of rice production to identify the correct value from those provided. For **a(ii)** the majority of candidates were able to provide a correct total amount demonstrating their calculation skills. Where they did not gain marks they had misread the question or misinterpreted the graph.

For **(b)** many candidates were able to successfully state two ways to increase agricultural production. The most common responses related to the use of HYVs, fertilisers, use of machinery such as tractor. As this is a question with the command word 'state', one-word responses are sufficient and most candidates took this approach, making an effective use of their time.

In part **(c)** candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the impacts of globalisation on Bangladesh. Candidates were generally able to develop their responses more effectively to access the full 3 marks. There were clear explanations about impacts related to transnational corporations (TNCs), introduction to global cultures, economic growth and the growth of jobs.

For part **(d)** candidates were required to use a resource to suggest two factors that affect the location of tertiary sector employment in Bangladesh. There were 2 marks available for each factor. Candidates often provided clearly developed ideas around transport connections and availability of skilled labour. Occasionally responses were not clearly focused on the tertiary sector as they explored ideas about the growth of factories and the need to ship goods, which relate to the secondary sector.

In part **(e)** candidates were required to explain why the development of Bangladesh may be affected by its transport systems. Candidates took different approaches to this question either taking a positive or negative approach, and both were valid. There were some which explored the challenges of the transport system and how this restricted economic growth due to some limitations in transport networks. Alternatively, some candidates explored developments in the transport network, often with specific examples, to demonstrate how such developments were supporting economic growth. The most effective responses referred to specific forms of transport and places where developments were taking place.

For part **(f)** the command word 'assess' required candidates to consider the importance of remittances for economic stability in Bangladesh. The command word 'assess' requires candidates to consider how important remittances are for economic stability and gave an explanation to support this view. Answers were usually clearly focused on the impact of remittances for the economy of Bangladesh. Most candidates took a very balanced approach with a clear argument that remittances had an important role in the economy, but also created vulnerabilities. There were also some candidates that assessed the importance of remittances in comparison to other aspects of the economy, such as the importance of agriculture sector. Both approaches tended to be effective. Stronger responses usually included clear details that related

to Bangladesh, demonstrating an awareness of the value of remittances for the country, but also of the global connections that support these remittances taking place. Responses were usually very well structured with many providing a balanced assessment and a clear judgement at the end.

Section C focuses on Challenges for Bangladesh

For **3a(i)** most candidates identified the correct factor that contributes to the Human Development Index (HDI). For **a(ii)** the majority of candidates were able to define the term life expectancy. Occasionally there were some responses that appeared to confuse the term with birth rate or infant mortality rate.

For **(b)** most candidates were able to explore a suitable challenge created by rapid population growth in cities. This question requires development of the idea up to 3 marks. Many candidates demonstrated clear understanding of the challenges created with detailed answers related to housing shortages and traffic congestion.

In part **(c)** candidates were required to use a resource with some information about potential impacts of climate change on Bangladesh to suggest two potential impacts of climate change on the economy of Bangladesh. Candidates displayed a clear understanding of the impacts of climate change with many developed responses around the impact of sea level rise, changing rainfall patterns, and flooding.

In part **(d)** candidates were required to explain why education is a challenge for rural populations in Bangladesh. There were a lot of responses to this question which were able to identify challenges, such as a shortage of schools and teachers, but were not able to fully explain the ideas. The more effective responses tended to pick an economic and a social reason why education could be a challenge, moving their responses on from basic ideas around shortages of education.

For part **(f)** the command word 'evaluate' required candidates to consider the influence of human factors on the population distribution of Bangladesh. The command word 'evaluate' requires candidates to come to a conclusion/judgement which needs to be supported with an evidence-based argument. The majority of candidates took the stance that while human factors (such as jobs, education, industry, transport networks) were important, there were important physical factors as well (such as terrain and climate). The most effective responses tended to provide a very balanced argument choosing two physical and two human factors and providing a clear judgement. Most responses began with evaluative statement at the beginning of the response, as well as those with clear conclusions, which often supported the structure of the answer.

