



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

In Bangladesh Studies (4BN1)

Paper 02: The landscape, people and economy of
Bangladesh

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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, and 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 did not 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.
- 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 factors rather than developing just the one which could prevent full development of their ideas.
- 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. The most effective candidates presented their main idea as an introductory sentence, and reinforced this with a summary conclusion and would have at least two developed ideas to support their argument.

Section 1 A focuses on the Physical Environment.

For 1a(i) most candidates were able to interpret the map of mean annual rainfall to recognise which city had the highest rainfall.

For a(ii) the majority of candidates were able to provide a suitable reason for seasonal changes in mean annual rainfall. The most common responses were Monsoon or climate change, although many referred to changes in air pressure. As this is a state question, a short response is acceptable and there is no requirement to explain.

For (b) many candidates identified accumulation and ablation as the glacial processes. Although there were quite a lot of responses which had very vague answers that were more related to tectonic processes or rivers rather than glaciers. The specification in 1.2b requires candidate to

understand glacial processes that operate in the Himalayan landscape including long-term and seasonal accumulation/ablation of glacial systems).

In part **(c)** candidates demonstrated a good understanding of where mangroves were located and reasons for why they are distributed here. The most successful candidates tended to start by identifying where the mangroves are located and then used this as the starting point for their explanation related to the coastal saline water and how this was suitable for mangrove trees. Some candidates took a different approach related to how mangroves were planted to act as a coastal defence for storm surges which was a valid approach to this question. Responses that did not achieve full marks were either because they confused mangroves with other type of forests, or they were provided simple reasons without any development.

For part **(d)** candidates were required to use a resource, a selection of four photographs which showed different natural resources (water, coal, fish and forest products), to suggest two environmental impacts of exploiting a named natural resource. There were a range of responses and all of the photographs were used across the cohort of candidates. The most popular part of the resource was forest products with candidates providing very detailed responses about the impacts of deforestation to the local environment (usually with ideas about soil erosion), and the global environment (with ideas related to climate change). Some candidates did not score as many marks because they had missed the 'environmental' focus of the question and talked about the economic benefits of exploiting one of the natural resources, suggesting they had misread the question.

In part **(e)** candidates were required to explain how tectonic processes might affect Bangladesh. Candidates demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding of tectonic processes, usually in relation to earthquakes. Many candidates were able to name suitable tectonic plates and understood how the movement of plates can cause earthquakes. The question requires candidates to explain how they might affect Bangladesh and as such many focused on the impacts of tectonic processes rather than just explaining what the processes were. There were some very detailed responses which recognised the range of possible impacts from these tectonic processes. The more effective responses would make clear reference to named places or tectonic events or tectonic plates.

For part **(f)** the command word 'assess' required candidates to consider the benefits of exploiting renewable energy sources in Bangladesh. 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. Many candidates took the approach to argue that the benefits of exploiting renewable energy far outweigh the drawbacks. Candidates most often talked about the benefits of solar, wind and HEP and how this can reduce the carbon emissions. While the discussions for solar and wind were largely positive, candidates usually had a more balanced response when discussing the benefits of HEP, due to the range of economic and environmental drawbacks that can be associated

with HEP. There were some very good balanced responses, with clear understanding of how these renewable energy methods have been used in Bangladesh and how they can benefit the country. Many responses took a balanced approach and in doing so addressed the 'assess' command in the question. The most effective made a clear judgement at the end.

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 factor from those provided.

For **a(ii)** the majority of candidates were able to provide a suitable agricultural crop produced in Bangladesh. A few candidates missed the instruction 'one other' and simply provided rice which was not credited. Those who provided a specific different type of rice to those provided in the graph were still able to obtain this mark. The most common responses were jute, wheat, tea and sugar cane.

For **(b)** many candidates were able to successfully state two characteristics of rural craft-based (cottage) industries in Bangladesh. The most common responses included the small-scale nature of production, how it often took place in households and can involve artistic skills. Many candidates often provided examples which were not required. As this is a question with the command word 'state', short responses are sufficient and many candidates took this approach, making an effective use of their time.

In part **(c)** candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the environmental impacts caused by manufacturing (secondary sector) industries in 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 water pollution and air pollution. Quite a few candidates provided more than one impact including points about water and air pollution.

For part **(d)** candidates were required to use a resource to suggest two factors that might have affected the location of manufacturing zones in Bangladesh. There were 2 marks available for each factor. Candidates often provided clearly developed ideas around transport connections and availability of skilled labour which means they would usually be located near urban areas. Occasionally responses were not clearly focused on the manufacturing zones and ideas were provided about agriculture, but this was rare. It was encouraging that many candidates made reference to particular places on the map, demonstrating they had used the resource.

In part **(e)** candidates were required to explain why gender equality is important for the economic development of Bangladesh. Candidates were usually able to provide very detailed responses about the importance of gender equality. The most common ideas were related to increasing the workforce, which could increase production and wages in the country which would in turn reduce

the negative balance of trade. More broadly, candidate responses demonstrated a clear awareness of the importance of access to education for all young people and wider benefits this can have for the economy.

For part **(f)** the command word 'assess' required candidates to consider the extent to which globalisation has affected Bangladesh. The command word 'assess' requires candidates to consider how far globalisation has affected the country but does not specify what aspects should be covered. There were a variety of responses which considered the economic, social and cultural and environmental impacts of globalisation. The most popular responses focused on the role of TNCs, often in a balanced manner with discussions of the increase in jobs, but also aware of the potential for exploitation of people, economy and environment in some circumstances. Other detailed responses were often related to the role of global brands impacting consumer cultures in Bangladesh. Most responses went beyond describing impacts but explaining how they affected aspects of life in Bangladesh, often with named examples. 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 GDP per capita from those provided demonstrating they were able to correctly interpret the graph.

For **a(ii)** the majority of candidates were able to calculate the increase in GDP per capita for Bangladesh between 2001 and 2021 again demonstrating their skills in interpreting the graph, as well as their mathematical skills. If they did not achieve this mark, it was usually because they had misinterpreted the axis numbers for the data point in 2001.

For **(b)** most candidates were able to state two factors that caused life expectancy to increase. The most common responses were increased access to healthcare and increased education or literacy.

For **(c)** candidates were required to explain why changes in rural population structure may create challenges for rural communities in Bangladesh. This question requires development of the idea up to 3 marks. This was the weakest of the 3 mark explain questions on this paper. Some candidates appeared not to understand the term population structure. Where candidates identified a relevant change for example, reduced young population due to urban migration there was usually a very detailed response. However, there were lots of quite vague answers about population growth or decline. These could still gain some marks as they did relate to population but were more about its size than its structure. The most effective responses referred to the loss of young workers and the impact this had on the workforce in some rural areas.

In part **(d)** candidates were required to use a resource with some information about Dhaka, a megacity in Bangladesh to suggest two challenges for living in a megacity. Candidates displayed a clear understanding of the challenges of living in megacities and used the resource well to discuss ideas related to air pollution, traffic congestion, shortage of housing and strain on various services due to rising populations.

In part **(e)** candidates were required to explain how physical factors affect the population distribution of Bangladesh. Where candidates understood the term 'physical factors' responses were often very good with detailed explanations of how terrain/relief, climate and water availability can influence the distribution of population. There were some candidates that misunderstood this term and referred to human factors. It is important that candidates are able to distinguish between physical/natural factors and human factors that can affect population distribution. For questions that refer to distribution it is important that candidates address this part of the question and provide some explanation of where things are.

For part **(f)** the command word 'evaluate' required candidates to consider the strategies used to mitigate or adapt to the effects of climate change on Bangladesh. The command word 'evaluate' requires candidates to present a conclusion/judgement which needs to be supported with an evidence-based argument. The majority of candidates took the stance that while there had been significant efforts to mitigate climate change through reduced carbon emissions and adapt to the impacts of flooding, that these efforts were not enough due to the scale of some of the impacts. The most effective responses would start with an explanation of what some of the key impacts of climate change were and then moved onto consider mitigation/adaptation. The question did not require mitigation and adaption strategies, but many candidates included both. Many candidates demonstrated an excellent understanding of how climate change is affecting Bangladesh and the effectiveness of the various responses. Most responses would include some evaluation even if just briefly, which shows candidates had an awareness of the need to address the command words in these questions.

