BENGALI

| Paper 3204/01 |
| Composition |

Key message

To do well on this paper, candidates should:

*   write accurately
*   use a wide range of vocabulary and structures
*   provide a range of well-developed ideas
*   ensure their essays are fully relevant to the chosen topic, well organised and coherent.

General comments

In general, candidates performed reasonably well. Both parts were attempted by all candidates regardless of their ability. In *section A*, those who referred to all bullet points in a proper sequence and presented their work in a well organised manner with good vocabulary, correct spelling and varied sentence structures managed to score high marks. A few candidates lost marks for the lack of reference to the bullet points, inconsistent use of spelling, verbs and tenses. Likewise in *section B*, those who referred to the essay title consistently and addressed the question's demand in a concise format with appropriate vocabulary, good use of idioms and accurate spelling scored high marks. A small number of candidates wrote a lengthy answer and crossed out few parts that included some valid points just for the sake of word count, hence they lost marks. All these could have been avoided by drafting a plan prior to writing the piece.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Candidates were required to write a letter to their brother living abroad describing a camping holiday. All those who attempted this question seem to have enjoyed the theme and wrote a very realistic answer from their personal experience of an adventurous event well away from urban life. A small number of candidates, due to the lack of experience of such adventures, tried to imagine certain aspects of a camping holiday and gave an account of a general holiday abroad. Unfortunately, those points could not be awarded. It is therefore recommended that the candidates should read all parts of the question and make a realistic choice between the two prior to writing their answer.

Question 2

In this section, candidates need to write a report in a local newspaper in response to their municipal authority who invited the residents' suggestions for the areas of improvement to make the borough an ideal residential place for all. Those who attempted this question performed very well. This was another example of very realistic narration of local issues and possible remedy through real life experiences, appropriate vocabulary and good sentence structure with due regards to the bullet points. Only a small number of candidates overlooked the importance of interrelation between the local issues and possible solutions, hence the work lost consistency resulting in a lower score.

Section B

Question 3

Candidates were required to write an essay on 'My first day at school.' Apart from occasional slips, the overall quality of this response was quite good. It was a realistic narration of their personal experience. Each candidate seems to have taken a great interest in narrating their real life experience which helped them to bring originality of their work. A small number of candidates lost marks due to inconsistency, spelling and other grammatical errors. It is advised that the candidates proofread their work prior to handing it in.

Question 4

In this question candidates are expected to give their opinion on the 'Bad impact of the fast and irresistible advancement of modern technology in our family life.' Some candidates presented their work with numerous realistic examples and their personal opinion with a logical argument which helped them score well. A few candidates wrote a generalised view of this issue and failed to personalise their opinion, hence lost some marks. In order to achieve high marks, candidates must read carefully every word of the essay title to be fully familiar with question's demand.

Question 5

Candidates were required to write an essay about 'The cottage industry of Bengal.' Some candidates performed so well in this part as they seem to have personal experience of living in this particular culture. Hence the tone of the essay sounds original rather than using memorised language. They expressed their admiration for the products made in this industry and pointed out how this industry forms part of Bengal culture and the way forward to preserve it. An appropriate use of idioms, proverbs and good vocabulary made the essay very pleasant to read. Candidates in this category obtained high marks. A very small number of candidates narrated the 'Industry' with a generalised view rather than highlighting on 'cottage' so they scored relatively lower. It is essential that the candidates read every word of the essay title that should reflect on their answer throughout.

BENGALI

```
Paper 3204/02
Language Usage and Comprehension
```

Key messages

In order to perform well and gain a high score in this paper, candidates should have sound knowledge of the language and its structure, be able to comprehend, manipulate and express clearly and correctly in writing.

In addition, candidates are required to:

*   demonstrate that they understand adequately and able to express their thoughts and opinions in a meaningful way
*   evaluate information, select what is relevant to specific purposes and express it in their own words
*   exercise control of appropriate structures
*   understand and employ a range of apt vocabulary
*   recognise implicit meaning and attitude
*   demonstrate an awareness of the conventions of paragraphing and sentence structure
*   demonstrate adequate control of vocabulary, syntax and grammar, punctuation and spelling
*   ensure that their handwriting is legible

General comments

Candidates were tested on their knowledge of grammar, manipulation of sentences and comprehension skills through a variety of tasks. A large number of candidates demonstrated their skills aptly securing full marks. The performances of the majority of the candidates were outstanding, though there were examples of candidates who could have achieved better if they had practised their exam techniques for this examination. It was pleasing to note that the most candidates had completed the paper within the time allowed. There were very few examples of unfinished or partially answered questions.

Most candidates coped well with basic grammar tasks and the comprehension questions though at a varied level. The quality of the Bengali used in answers was very wide. Some candidates demonstrated the ability to manipulate the language very skilfully. There were also instances where candidates were unable to write answers in their own words, even at a very simple level. It should be noted that candidates who rely too heavily on the text cannot gain access to the higher marks for the quality of their language. On the other hand, attempts to write answers which make the effort to manipulate language are rewarded more generously, even when this results in increased inaccuracy, provided that it does not interfere with comprehension.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Section A1

This question requires the candidate to separate five words. Most candidates found it very accessible. Almost all the candidates answered **Question 1**, **Question 2** and **Question 5** correctly. The most mistakes were made during answering **Question 3** where many candidates have written রাজ + ঋষি instead of রাজা + ঋষি। In answering **Question 4**, many have written উৎ + চরণ or উদ + চারণ

Section A2

This question was a gap filling task using idioms, proverbs and words in pairs. Candidates needed to fill in the appropriate gaps in five sentences. A large number of candidates answered all five questions correctly. Although many found answering **Question 7** and **Question 8** easy but answering **Question 9** and **Question 10** was very challenging. They struggled to choose the correct idiom/proverb and scored fewer marks.

Section A3

Candidates needed to transform sentences based on clues either at the beginning or at the end of the sentence. Particular attention was needed for getting punctuation correct. This section was answered well by some candidates. The majority of candidates answered **Question 11** and **Question 12** correctly. The biggest problem was encountered in answering **Question 13** and **Question 14**. In answering **Question 13**, many candidates did not realise that they have to transform it to a negative sentence. In answering **Question 15** most candidates knew what was required for them, which is to change the sentence from direct speech to indirect speech this means changing the word আমি to তিনি. A substantial number of candidates used the pronoun সে instead of the respected form তিনি which resulted in deduction of one mark.

Section A4 (Cloze Passage)

In this section candidates have to choose a correct word from a list to fill in the blanks in a passage. This was the most challenging section for many candidates. Only a handful of them scored a full mark of 14 in this section. Most candidates answered **Question 16** and **25** correctly although many candidates used the word চর্চা instead of মাধ্যমে for **Question 25**. A large number of candidates made mistakes particularly on **Question 21** and **Question 22**.

Section B5 (MCQ comprehension)

Unlike the previous year, this time candidates found this section the easiest to answer. They have scored very well. Most candidates answered **Question 26**, **Question 30** and **Question 31** correctly.

Section C6 (OE comprehension)

This is the longest section to answer and requires the candidates to demonstrate their language skills. They have to answer six questions giving four short answers for each question by manipulating the language from the given text. The most important requirement is that candidates have to write the answers in their own words rather than lifting them from the text. Many candidates successfully overcame this challenge and performed very well. Candidates found answering **Question 35** the most difficult while manipulating the language in **Question 37** the easiest. Some candidates, who have done very well in previous sections, inadvertently scored poor marks in this section because of copying the text word for word. Some candidates have written a sentence which does not make any sense by omitting words from the text thinking it was manipulation. For example instead of writing নদী-নালা-খাঁড়ির বাঁকে বাঁকে ঝুলে থাকে অপার বিস্ময়ের হাতছানি they have written নদী-নালা-খাঁড়ির ঝুলে থাকে অপার হাতছানি।

Question C7 (Vocabulary)

In this section candidates are required to write the synonym of five words selected from the insert for *Section C6*. Performance in this section was very mixed. While most candidates answered **Question 40** and **Question 43** correctly, they really struggled with the correct meaning of the rest, especially **Question 42**. They found it most challenging. There were evidence of a wide range of answers which are completely opposite of what the word meant. For example, the word is বিরল which means '*rare*' whereas many candidates wrote অনেক which is '*plenty*'.