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There are over forty Commonwealth countries in the world which are located in all zones of latitude, between the equator and the polar regions. Because of this great range of latitude the climates in Commonwealth countries may be very different. Canada, the largest country on the North American continent lies among the mid and high latitudes, between 42°N and 83°N .

Bangladesh a small country in Asia, lies in the low latitudes between 22°N and 27°N . These two countries have very different climates which affect the ways of life of the people.

Climate is one of the most important things which affects the way people live. Climate affects the types of clothes people wear and the buildings that are needed. Climate is also important in the development of a country. A country which lies in the tropics, with a climate that is hot and often humid, is likely to have more problems, such as disease, and be less well developed than a country with a temperate climate.

There are many contrasts in the climate of Canada and Bangladesh. Bangladesh has three main seasons, the hot, dry season in March to May, the hot, wet season from June to September and the warm dry season from October to February. No areas in Bangladesh

have the cold winters and snow that most areas of Canada have, and the temperatures in summer are much higher in Bangladesh. Precipitation in Canada differs in amounts from the wet west coasts to the drier prairies, but all areas of Bangladesh have very heavy rainfall brought by the Summer Monsoon.

These differences in climate cause great contrasts in the agriculture.

The major food crop in Bangladesh is rice which grows well in the hot, wet areas of the Ganges Delta. Because of the heavy rainfall, the rivers flood and leave a fertile layer of silt, which is very good for growing rice. The main crop grown in Canada is wheat. Wheat grows well in the cooler, drier climate. Tea, sugar cane and jute, (which is used for making rope) are also grown in Bangladesh. The climate of Canada is too cold for all these crops. Fruits and vegetables are grown in Canada and the raising of livestock is important.

Climate affects the crops which can be grown and the crops affect the type of food which people eat. The main food in Bangladesh is rice and the staple beverage is tea. The staple food in Canada is bread and the beverages are milk and wine. There

is a much greater variety of food in Canada because of the climate and the fact that food is imported from other countries.

Buildings in Bangladesh and Canada also differ. Temperatures in Canada are cold in winter-time and houses need to be well built with thick doors and windows and need heating systems. The main building material is wood because trees grow well in Canada. Houses in Bangladesh often have no doors or windows and may be made of mud bricks and rushes. They are usually built on mounds or on stilts so they are above the flood level. Some people have no homes because of terrible floods, and even live in disused drain pipes. Shopping centres and commercial buildings are well built in Canada and may be covered in, or even underground.

Shops in Bangladesh are often open stalls because the climate there is much warmer.

There are many contrasts in the styles of clothing. People in Bangladesh need less clothing because the temperatures are warm year round. Women wear loose, fitting, long dresses called saris and men wear loose shirts and baggy pants. Light sandals or bare feet are all that is needed. Light materials such as cotton and silk are used.

By contrast, clothes in Canada need to be much thicker and warmer because the climate in winter is cold. Heavy coats, boots, hats and gloves are needed and clothing is made of warmer materials such as wool.

The climate has affected the development in some areas of Canada and in Bangladesh. The northern part of Canada has a very cold climate and the subsoil is permanently frozen. This makes it hard to develop mining and transportation. The heavy rain and terrible floods which occur cause problems of development in Bangladesh. Huge areas of farmland and many villages are destroyed. Transportation is difficult in the flooded and marshy areas except by boat. The high temperatures, heavy rainfall and marshy ground cause many health problems in Bangladesh. Diseases such as Typhoid, Malaria and Cholera spread throughout the countryside. The government does not have the money to build good dams or to bring relief to flooded areas. Floods are not the only disasters caused by climate. Sometimes huge cyclones and tidal waves occur, such as the one in 1970 which caused the deaths of about 600,000 people. Tidal waves leave a lot of salt on the land which makes it infertile.

Although other factors such as religion and education affect the life-styles in a country, climate has a stronger influence. It affects the clothes people wear, the food they eat, their houses and their whole way of life.

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