

Australia to help boost primary education in Bangladesh

In recognition of Bangladesh's pressing development needs, Australia will increase its aid programme by 40 per cent in 2007-08.

This was stated by Bruce Davis, director general of Australian Government's aid agency AusAID at the signing ceremony of an agreement in Raiganj on Sunday, says a press release.

Davis was in Raiganj to observe Australian aid programmes and sign a Tk 336 million (A\$6 million) agreement with UNICEF for primary education.

"While Bangladesh has made remarkable progress, much work remains to be done. Our

expanded assistance will focus on critical unmet needs for basic education and maternal and child health," he added.

Signing on behalf of UNICEF Representative Louis-Georges Arsenault said UNICEF is very pleased to receive this additional funding.

He said Australia's support will provide in-service training to 160,000 teachers, allow development of participatory plans for 3500 schools, and help bring thousands of disadvantaged children into the school system.

"Besides, Australia's funding

will expand our Meena TV programmes, which help raise countrywide awareness of education and other important issues relating to girls' development," he added.

In 2007-08, Australia's aid programme to Bangladesh is expected to reach A\$ 47.6 million which was A\$33.9 million in 2006-07.

The increase in Australia's aid for Bangladesh reflects the Australian Government's aim of doubling its global aid flows to around A\$4 billion annually by 2010.

Australia will support the government's Second Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP-II) for three years under this agreement.

PEDP-II aims at ensuring quality primary education for all children in Bangladesh through increasing primary school access, participation and completion.

It was launched in September 2004 by the government and is a coordinated and integrated sub sector-wide programme with technical and financial assistance from a consortium of 11 donors.