Construction of Manmunai Bridge through Japanese grant assistance commences in Eastern Province

The construction of Manmunai Bridge in Batticalaoa in the Eastern Province will be ceremonially commenced by the Minister of Economic Development, Hon. Basil Rakapakse together with His Excellency Nobuhide Hobo - the Ambassador of Japan to Sri Lanka on 16 October 2012. Hon. Nirmala Kotalawala, Deputy Minister of Highways, Mr. Harumi Ao, Chief Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and dignitaries from the Eastern Province including the Chief Minister of the Eastern Provincial Council will also participate in the ceremony.

The bridge will be constructed under a 1,206 million Japanese Yen (close to 2 billion Rupees at current rates) grant assistance from JICA. It will connect the East side of the lagoon where Batticaloa township is located, with the agricultural area in the West side. At present, access between the West and East sides are by a small ferry which can accommodate only 2 passenger cars. The area is affected by floods 2-3 times a year, during which the ferry cannot operate, and people have to detour about 30km to access the other side.

The new 210m long bridge will connect the improved provincial roads on either side of the lagoon, and enable access to markets and services in the East side especially for the farming community in the West side. It will also open an alternative road link to and from Batticaloa town to other areas of the country.

The project is implemented by the Road Development Authority of the Ministry of Ports and Highways in cooperation with JICA. “We are very happy to have commenced Manmunai Bridge construction in the year that Sri Lanka and Japan are celebrating 60 years of diplomatic relations. We hope this assistance will contribute to reducing regional disparities, and promote reconciliation among the Sri Lankan people”, says Mr. Harumi Ao, Chief Representative of JICA – Sri Lanka Office.

JICA’s recent assistance to Eastern Province includes reconstruction of rural and national roads including new Kallady Bridge, development of water supply systems and rectification of flood damaged roads and irrigation infrastructure through Official Development Assistance loans, and reconstruction of 5 bridges on A5 and A15 through grant assistance. The Manampitiya Bridge across Mahaweli River in North Central Province, and the Mannar Bridge connecting the mainland to Mannar Island in Northern Province were also JICA grant projects.

Attachments: 2 photos

Photo 1: Ferries plying the lagoon at Manmunai
Photo 2: Artist's impression of new Manmunai Bridge
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is the executing agency of Japan’s Bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA). JICA, the world’s biggest bilateral aid agency, works in over 150 countries and regions. In accordance with its vision of "Inclusive and Dynamic Development," JICA supports the resolution of development issues in developing countries. In Sri Lanka, Japan has been providing financial and technical assistance since 1954 and is one of the biggest donors to the country. On behalf of the people and the Government of Japan, JICA contributes to improve lives of the people in Sri Lanka.

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