President opens first east-west bridge across Batticaloa lagoon constructed through Japanese grant assistance

President Mahinda Rajapakse is to ceremonially open the Manmunai bridge in Batticaloa on 19th April 2014 together with representatives from the Embassy of Japan and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The bridge which is the first east-west land connection across the Batticaloa lagoon has been constructed through a 1,206 million Japanese Yen (close to 2 billion Rupees) grant from JICA.

The 210m long bridge enables land access to markets and services in the east side of the lagoon where Batticaloa township is located, especially for the farmer community in the west side. At present, access between the west and east banks are by a small ferry. The area is affected by floods 2-3 times a year, during which time the ferry cannot operate, and people have to detour about 30km to access the other side.

The new bridge also connects the improved provincial roads on either side of the lagoon, opening an alternative road link to and from Batticaloa town to other areas of the country.

The Project was implemented by the Road Development Authority (RDA) of the Ministry of Ports and Highways in cooperation with JICA. “Manmunai Bridge construction commenced in 2012, in the year that Sri Lanka and Japan celebrated 60 years of diplomatic relations. We are happy to see that the construction completed ahead of schedule, even though facing some difficulties due to floods in the beginning. We are also very pleased to note that this has been a very safe construction site with zero accidents or injuries. About 250 people of this area were employed by the Japanese construction company during the construction, in line with Japan’s ODA policy of contributing to improving the living standards of the people of recipient countries. We appreciate the great contribution and teamwork of RDA, Consultant and Contractor which made all this possible” said Mr. Kiyoshi Amada, 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 infrastructure through Official Development Assistance loans, and reconstruction of 5 bridges on A5 and A15 through grant assistance. JICA's 44th ODA loan package to Sri Lanka was signed recently, with a loan agreement for construction of the “Gateway to Colombo city” – a new 6-lane bridge over the Kelani river at Peliyagoda.

Attachments: 3 photos with captions
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.