

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Embassy of Japan organized “ODA media tour” in Dera Ghazi Khan  
and Muzaffargarh**

Islamabad: February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020

On 26 February, the Embassy of Japan organized the “Official Development Assistance (ODA) Press Tour”, participated by three journalists from esteemed media organizations in Multan. The purpose of this tour was to promote understanding of Pakistani media on Japan’s assistance for development in Pakistan, visiting the actual project sites with the journalists. Furthermore, it aimed to build awareness that Japan contributes to Pakistan’s sustainable development\*.

This time, the group, composed of the journalists and Embassy officials, visited two project sites; the Project for Widening & Strengthening of National Highway 70 (N-70) and the Project for Construction of Primary School in Baseera, District Muzaffargarh, Punjab.

Initially, the group visited a construction site of N-70 in Dera Ghazi Khan. N-70 is a main artery connecting Punjab and Balochistan and a section of 11.5 km near Fort Monroe is a traffic choke point with continuous steep slopes and sharp curves. Japan provided concessional loan (interest rate: 0.2%, repayment period: 40 years, grace period: 10 years) worth USD142 million to improve the above section of N-70, and its construction began in 2016. Japan’s advanced technology is utilized for this project, including box-shaped girders made of maintenance-free steel for 75 years and special embankment wall using light and strong materials. A single-truck road has been expanded to double-truck and sharp curves with a radius of 8 meters has been enlarged to 30 meters. As the result of the project, heavy-weight trailers can be passing with over 40 km/h, which would promote smooth transportation between the east and west of the nation.

Then, the group was present at the inauguration ceremony of a school project in Baseera. Health Oriented Preventive Education (HOPE), a local NGO running the school, started constructing the school building in 2017, utilizing Japan’s Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP)\*\* amounting to USD 88,355. The school building, which was earlier an old and small rented property, is now a brand new building accommodating 283 students up to the grade eight (23% increased after completing the project), out of whom 150 are female students. Students are now provided desks and chairs for studying, although they

were sitting on the ground of the classroom earlier. In addition, in the adjacent vocational training class of the school, 10 girls are currently learning skills of tailoring and embroidery. A total of 150 female students have completed the vocational training class since 2012. As described above, this project has supported not only local children to study in a better environment but also women to participate in the local economy.

The participating journalists appreciated Japan's contributions in the above two projects and expressed their hope that Japan's assistance would further strengthen the existing good relations between the two countries. (End)

\* In 2019, the Government of Japan provided USD82.12 million in total to Pakistan under the twelve new Grant Aid projects in different sectors including health, disaster-management, agriculture and water supply. In recent years, Pakistan has been the largest recipient of Japan's Grant Aid among the seven South Asian nations, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives.

\*\*GPP is a framework that essentially supports local NGOs and local public organizations that are working in eligible countries and regions, rather than the government of those countries, in order to respond to various development needs in a prompt and precise manner, but on a comparatively small scale.



Journalists listening to an official of NHA at a panoramic viewpoint of N-70 project



A distance view of beautiful looped bridges of N70



School children are welcoming Embassy staff and journalists at the entrance



At the opening ceremony of the school