

10.10.2019

Daily Mirror

B 1,4

## Sri Lanka's unemployment edges up to 4.9% in 2Q

Sri Lanka's unemployment rate has inched up to 4.9 percent during the second quarter of 2019, up from 4.7 percent in the quarter ended in March 2019, although the total number of employed persons has increased.

According to the quarterly bulletin of labour force survey carried out by the Census and Statistics Department with a 95 percent confidence interval, the number of unemployed persons in the second quarter in 2019 was

estimated at 420,231. These are the persons looking for work and took steps to find a job during the last four weeks of the survey period and are ready to accept a job, given an opportunity within the next two weeks.

As typical female unemployment rate is higher at the 7.5 percent level, while the male unemployment rate stood at 3.4 percent.

Despite the overall unemployment rate is still benign, the youth unemployment

i.e. between the ages of 15 and 24, is the highest at 20 percent and that is the highest reported unemployment rate among all age groups.

The survey results revealed that unemployment among females is higher in all age groups and the youth and female unemployment contribute more to the overall unemployment of the country.

Meanwhile, when the unemployment level is demystified among the different

education levels, the GCE Advanced Level and above group was found with the highest unemployment rate of 9.5 percent.

"The survey results further show that the problem of unemployment is more acute in the case of educated females than educated males, which was observed consistently over the results of previous survey rounds as well," the Census and Statics Department stated in the survey.

**MORE ON P4**

### Sri Lanka's...

Meanwhile, the survey also found that the total employed persons had increased to 8.2 million during the second quarter of 2019, from 8.18 million in the previous quarter and 7.97 million a year ago.

Distribution of employed population across the main industries showed that 47.5 percent of them were working in the services sector, slightly up from 47.1 percent a quarter earlier.

Meanwhile, the share of employed population in the industrial and agriculture sectors were 28.3 percent and 24.3 percent, respectively, barely changed from the previous quarter.

Further, by the end of the second quarter of 2019, 1.22 million persons were working in the public sector while 3.57 million were attached to the private sector, of which 84.3 percent in the non-agricultural sector.

There are 2.66 million own account workers, roughly a little over one-third is in the agriculture and the balance is in the non-agriculture-related work.

It has often been cited that fairly a large or one-quarter of the employed population in the agriculture sector is holding back the economy as the sector's contribution to the economy is less than 10 percent.

But so far little has been done to address this structural anomaly in the economy and the employment, which is holding back the economy from reaching its full potential.