

✓ Unemployment rises slightly to 5.1% in 3Q from 4.9%

UNEMPLOYMENT edged up slightly from 4.9% in the second quarter of 2019 to 5.1% in the third quarter, the latest data from the Census and Statistics Department showed yesterday, indicating the downturn in business sentiment after the Easter Sunday attacks.

The number of unemployed persons is estimated as 437,797 during the 3rd quarter of 2019. The unem-

ployment rate for the 3rd quarter of 2019 is 5.1%, the Department said. The estimated economically active population is about 8.6 million in the 3rd quarter of 2019, of which 65.2% are males and 34.8% females. The economically inactive population is about 7.9 million; out of this population, 26.5% are males and 73.5% females.

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The highest participation rate for males is reported from the age group of 30-39 years (95.9%), while that for female is reported from the 45-49 age group (48.0%). "During the 3rd quarter of 2019, the total number of employed persons in Sri Lanka is estimated at about 8.2 million. Of which, about 47.7% are engaged in the Service sector, 27% in the Industries sector and 25.3% in the Agriculture sector. Compared to 2nd quarter 2018, in 2nd quarter 2019, an increase in employment numbers can be observed in the Agriculture and Services sectors," the report said.

The highest employment share is in the Service sector and this is true for both male and female workers, while the lowest shares are for the Agriculture sector. Among employed females, 26.3% are in the Agriculture sector while this share is 24.8% for males. Overall unemployment rate reported for females is 8.5%, and it is 3.3% for male. Youth unemployment rate (age 15-24

years) corresponding to the 3rd quarter of 2019 is 23.3%, which is the highest reported unemployment rate among all age groups. Further, the unemployment rates for males and females are 17.5 and 33.9% respectively for the age group 15-24.

The survey results further reveals that the unemployment among females is higher than that of males in all age groups. Youth and female unemployment contribute more to the overall unemployment of the country.

The highest unemployment rate is reported from the G.C.E (A/L) and above group, which is about 8.7%. Corresponding percentages are 4.8% and 12.9% for males and females respectively. Female unemployment rates are higher than those of males at all levels of education.

The survey results further shows 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.