

✓ Lack of reliable statistics hampers rice distribution

The unavailability of correct statistics regarding the paddy harvest and related indices has hindered the Government's efforts to address the rice imbroglio, agriculture officials said.

They said that due to the failure of the Department of Census and Statistics to provide accurate data regarding the paddy harvest, many major problems have arisen, such as the inability to provide storage facilities and the inability to store rice stocks in a way that can meet consumer demand.

They alleged that the failure to provide those statistics properly was a major reason for the rice shortage.

Apart from the rice issue, the authorities are grappling with inaccurate data in a variety of sectors, Labour Minister Dr. Anil Jayantha Fernando said.

While on an observation tour of the Department of Manpower and Employment, Minister Dr. Fernando said the public service cannot be maintained positively without accurate data and information.

He said that data should have been collected from the entire country on December 18 as a one-day Census, but since the Census has not yet been completed, a serious problem has arisen with the accuracy of the data.

Although the Census should have been

prepared in four stages, namely mapping, listing, counting and revision rounds, this has not happened and therefore, a major problem has arisen with the data. Although the last census conducted in 2012 was conducted with a half-day holiday for all employees, this method has not been followed this time.

Director General of the Department of Census and Statistics, Anoja Seneviratne, said that the collection of information in 23 districts for the Census had been completed, but the Census in the Colombo and Gampaha districts could not be completed due to practical problems such as the complexity of the Census, the difficulty in finding officials, and the absence of householders at home.

There are two methods for the census and this time the information was collected based on the *De-jure* or usual residence method.

Responding to the accusations made regarding the lack of accurate data regarding paddy production, the Director General said that the discrepancies in the data collected by the Ministry of Agriculture, Agrarian Development and the Department of Census and Statistics regarding the amount of cultivated land was the reason for this.