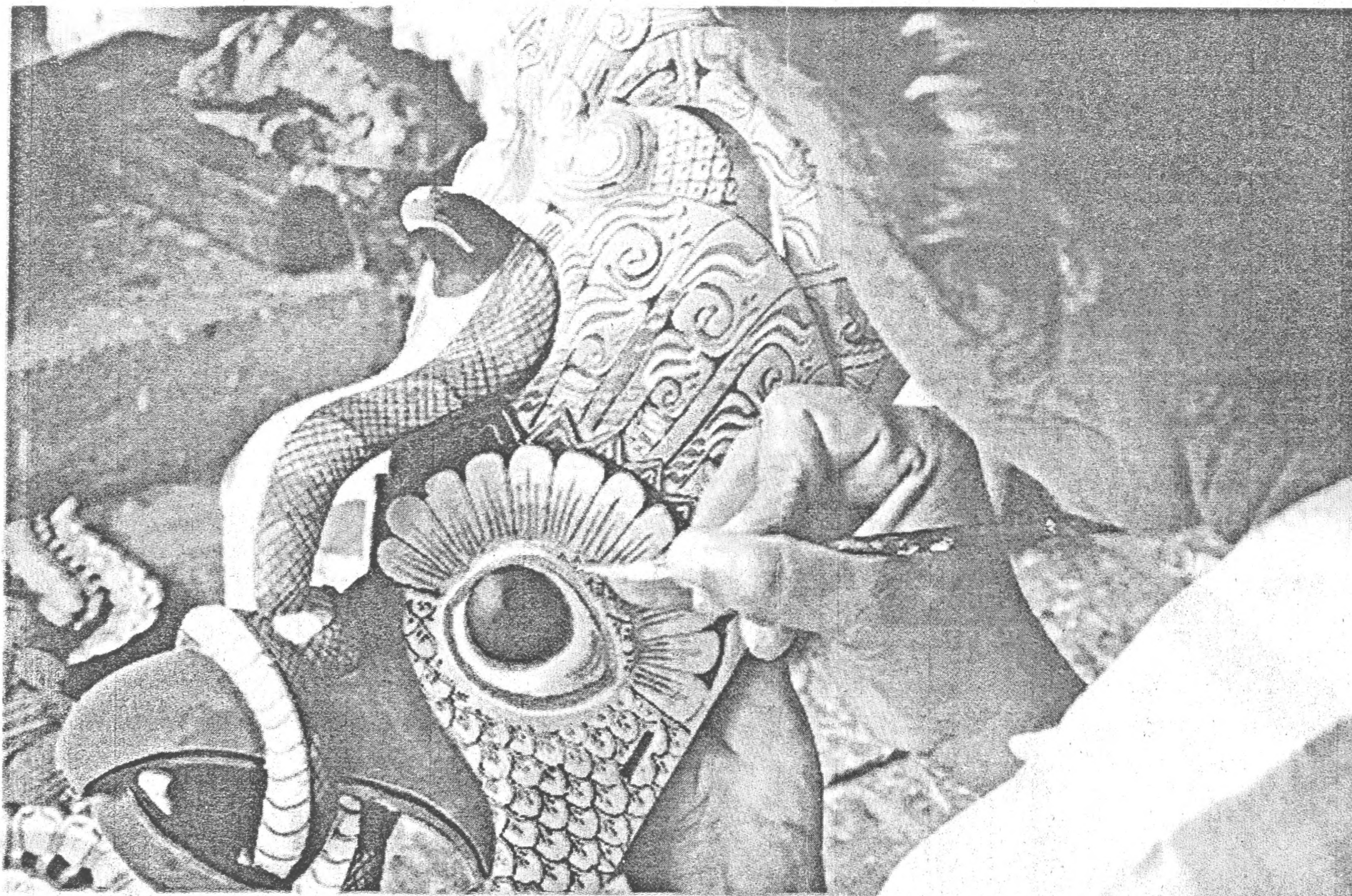


Business & Finance VIII

Economic census

Call to provide correct information



A craftsman puts the final touches to a mask

The Department of Census and Statistics calls upon entrepreneurs to support officials by providing correct information regarding their business ventures, during the second stage of the economic census that is now under way.

The second stage of the first-ever economic census of Sri Lanka is being conducted by the department and data

collection will continue till the first week of November, the Director General D.C.A. Gunawardena told *Sunday Observer Business*. Gunawardena said that the data collected in this census is nationally important as it will give all information related to economic activities in agriculture, industries and service sectors in the country.

"At present 98 percent of business

ventures in the country belong to the micro or SME sector which play a pivotal role in the economy. There is a dearth of information about these enterprises and through this census we expect to collect the information," he said.

The information is vital for policy formulation in the national economy. The sector and entrepreneurs will

benefit by such policies. For instance to formulate policies on the credit needs of the SME sector and the direction of micro finance schemes will be easy if correct details of the SME sector are available.

This census will also help evolve a clear definition for SMEs in Sri Lanka under current economic conditions. The department has employed over



A woman entrepreneur displays her products

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16,000 enumerators for data collection, he said.

"We will cover all establishments and households engaged in production or trade of goods or services other than for the purpose of their consumption. All these establishments are listed and it will set up a sampling frame that will be used in sample surveys in the future to obtain detailed information," Gunawardena said.

"During this stage we collect information such as name, contact details, employees, turnover and capital employed. Usually the public hesitate to give correct figures regarding turnover

and capital. We assure the public of confidentiality of the data collected as they are legally protected and we use them only for statistical purposes," he said.

The fast growing service trade and industry sectors have not been covered in the decennial Census of Agriculture and Census of Industries conducted by the department so far. Therefore, a comprehensive Economic Census will be conducted for the first time in 2013/2014 covering the emerging sectors; trade and services due to their importance in the economy. This census will be conducted in four stages so as to cover all economic activities undertaken during different seasons in the agriculture, industry, trade and service sectors.

During stage one, all estates (agricultural holdings with at least one employee and the size of which exceeds 20 acres) was listed. It was completed in July-August 2013.

All units engaged in industry, the construction, trade and services will be listed at the second stage which is now under way.

Detailed data collection from all agricultural holdings will take place during stage three due to be conducted from January to March, 2014. The final stage where detailed data will be collected will be held from July-August 2014. GW