

EDEX Kandy edition concludes today

Record participants for the event



Some highlights of the opening day



Central Province Governor Tikiri Kobbekaduwa opening the event



Central Province Governor TIKIRI KOBBEKADUWA addressing the gathering



EDEX Chairman, KAMAL ABEYSINGHE addressing the gathering



Royal College Principal, UPALI GUNASEKARA addressing the gathering

SHIRAJIV SIRIMANE in Kandy
A record number of visitors attended the EDEX Education exhibition organized by Royal College Union which commenced at the Kandy City Centre yesterday.

The chief guest at the opening ceremony, Central Province Governor Tikiri Kobbekaduwa said that each year EDEX Expo adds value to the educational sector of the Central Province and provides a better future in terms of educational options.

He said he was happy to note the high number of foreign education institutions taking part in the event. The Governor said this would also help promote tourism in the region.

He said EDEX has become a much looked forward event in Kandy, similar to the Bradby rugby encounter.

"The difference here is that all visitors and exhibitors return with happy memories while in rugby, are winners," he said.

EDEX Chairman Kamal Abeysinghe said this exhibition helps the student population to decide on their future educational path, while for exhibitors, it gives an opportunity to meet several thousands of students and parents in two days.

As per national Human Resources and Employment policy document, the labour force participation rate among youths is 34 percent.

"When the national unemployment rate is at a historical low of 4.2 percent, the youth unemployment rate is 19 percent. Among women, that num-

ber goes up to 26 percent," he said.

"Some of the root causes for this could be linked to numerous gaps observed in the education system," Abeysinghe said.

Among the graduates who form the cream of the crop and who mostly come from rural areas with arts and humanities degrees, spend a great deal of time trying to find employment that matches their degrees.

"Most are eventually employed by the state adding a heavy burden to public coffers. They mostly select the arts stream education not by choice but due to the lack of it."

As per available statistics in 2010, only 716 (7 percent) out of 9,685 schools in the country offered Advanced Level (A/L) Science stream education, with only 22 percent A/L students having access to Science education and another 25 percent to Commerce education. 53 percent of students had access only to Arts stream education.

In this backdrop, the government's 1,000 secondary school programme, aiming to offer Science and Commerce education to a wider student community, should be appreciated. There are also over 80,000 school drop outs before Ordinary Level (O/L) and over 100,000 youths who either do not sit the O/L exam or fail the exam, he said.

Therefore, it is imperative that school leavers, who do not get an opportunity to further tertiary education, consider vocational training as a viable

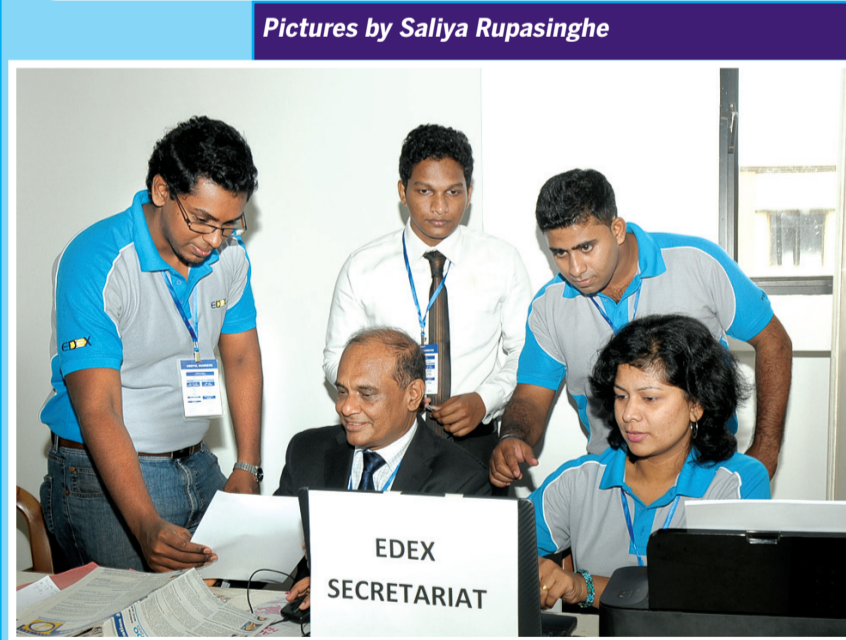
and "respectable" option, Abeysinghe said.

"This will help them to be better prepared for job opportunities that will be available in the growing Sri Lankan economy and making them valuable to themselves and the society. Coaching and guiding them towards entrepreneurship could also be a possible solution to this issue," he said.

EDEX has captured the aspirations of all these youth for a decade and has attempted to empower them to be globally competitive through right education, market relevant skills leading to gainful employment.

The Print Media sponsor for the event was Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited. Organizers said the publicity provided helped them to woo more exhibitors as well as visitors.

The event concludes today.



Some students at the venue