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ICT sector picking up fast

Ensure sustainability for further growth

- Prof. Samaranayake

BY SUDARSHANA PERERA

Those who have embarked on ICT projects with foreign donor assistance must work hard to ensure the sustainability of the projects for the future growth of the ICT industry in Sri Lanka, said Professor V. K. Samaranayake the Director of University of Colombo School of Computing (UCSC) in an interview with *Daily News* recently.

Although the downturn in western economies experienced during last few years brought a setback to our ICT industry, we are once again picking up fast and the country has ventured into massive projects such as e-Sri Lanka said Prof. Samaranayake.

The Professor who has pioneered the modern IT policy formulation and implementation in Sri Lanka said that his institution "University of Colombo School of Computing" will implement e-tasting to its training mechanisms thus turning a new leaf in the structure of IT education in the country.

"We are also planning to establish a computer research centre which has been a pressing need to broaden our education system and this initiative will also allow Lankan students to improve their innovative skills in the field of ICT. This will also strengthen the research activities allowing us to compete with foreign countries, he said.

Speaking on the training courses conducted at the institution he said "the inclusion of IT external degree course to its curriculum is a new step



Professor V. K. Samaranayake

and we have received a good response from students".

"Our institution will continue to play a major role in taking ICT to grass roots level and one of the projects undertaken us is to assist in establishing Multi Tele Centres islandwide, said Prof. Samaranayake.

When asked to comment on the strategy he adopts in carrying out the affairs of his institution he said that he follows win-win methods in obtaining the service of other local and foreign IT establishments.

The collaborative measures taken in exchanging resources such as reading materials, technical know-how and other assistance have brought fruitful results in taking our service to a wider section of society, he said.

Talking on e-Sri Lanka initiative he

said that there were so many policies to make use of ICT to develop the country in the past, the relevant authorities in charge of the initiative have to concentrate on the implementation strategy of e-Sri Lanka initiative. The implementation is the crucial factor for the realisation of this initiative, he said.

"Our institution plays a vital role in the affairs of the ICT sector in the country and they have placed confidence and trust in us, he said. Providing consultancy is also a part of our service. We also conduct radio and TV programs on IT for the general public in order to educate them on basics of computer technology, he added.

Prof. Samaranayake who is also scheduled to leave for UK next week to follow a three month program on "Digital Governance" at National Center for Digital Governance Harvard University said that the knowledge and experience he is hoping to gather while in UK will contribute towards the further development of the ICT sector of Sri Lanka. I am optimistic that this program will be helpful to our institution in particular and country in general, he said.

He is also currently working on a side supported project at UCSC on e-learning with emphasis on student learning as opposed to teaching.

"We have no business interests, we mainly focus on producing quality students to be on par with international standards. The low cost basis adopted by us has moved us forward successfully, he said.