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Junior Inventor of the Year 14/03/01 Daily News competition - IESL

Day to day life brings about numerous problems and situations where one has to think and find solutions. Problems could be big or small but nevertheless need some thinking to solve. We also sometimes fall into traps where, seemingly, we cannot find any apparent solutions. In these circumstances we not only require thinking but also require innovative thinking. Basically, the key to life will revolve not only on how much we could think and solve problems but also on our ability to come up with innovative solutions, states Dr. Shahane De Costa, Chairman of the JIY committee.

He add in this context it becomes imperative that we groom and train our young ones not only to be able to think but also to think creatively and innovatively.

If we look at the developed world their ability to be creative and innovative is enormous. Take Japan for example. They produce new products with new features for the market almost on a daily basis. Rice cookers, photocopiers with extra features, motorcars with new and better features come into the market daily. This enables them to generate more and more income which in turn, assists them to be more innovative.

In a highly competitive world, Sri Lanka's way forward, too, is no doubt dependant on its ability to be creative and innovative. The Institution of Engineers, Sri Lanka (IESL), now in its 96th year of existence, has always been in the forefront in contributing to the nation in this area. It not only attempts to contribute in this area through its members but also attempts to be innovative in finding ways and means in contributing as well.

In an attempt to train the young ones of this nation to be creative and innovative, the Institution of Engineers, Sri Lanka, has been conducting an annual

competition titled "Junior Inventor of the Year" for the past 13 years. This year too a competition would be conducted.

This competition is open to Sri Lankan children aged between 5 and 20 years. The children are encouraged to produce some item (product) which would be a new item altogether or a modification/alteration to an existing item. Basically, the item would have to signify the child's creativity and innovative ability and, have some utility value.

The items would be graded and the top winning items would be awarded prizes at the Annual Sessions of the Institution of Engineers due to be held in October 2001 at the BMICH. The winning items would also be displayed at the Techno 2001 exhibition scheduled for the same period. The winner of the competition would be awarded the prestigious title "Junior Inventor of the Year". In addition there are many other prizes, including scholarships, offered to the winners. The winners of the competition could use this as an added qualification for University admissions as well.

Application forms and other relevant information regarding this competition could be obtained from the Executive Secretary, Institution of Engineers, Sri Lanka, 120/15, Wijerama Mawatha, Colombo 7 (Vidya Mawatha off Maitland Crescent), Tel 698426 or 685490. The closing date of applications is 30th March 2001. The items would have to be presented by the 15th of July 2001.

Usually this competition has drawn much enthusiasm and wide participation from many schools in Sri Lanka and this year too the same is expected. It is hoped that school principals and teachers will actively encourage the children to participate in this competition.