

ACBC takes Sri Lanka towards innovative renewable energy

—By—
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Initiated by the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress (ACBC) in unison with many institutions, a renewable energy promoting exhibition and forum was held at the premises of the organisation in Baudhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 7 on September 11 and 12.

The exhibition of inventions and renewable energy entrepreneurship as well as the connected forum and follow up activities in this regard was carried out in collaboration with the Inventors Commission and Bank of Ceylon (BOC), with the support of the Sustainable Energy Authority, the Vidatha Resource Centre, the National Engineering Research and Development Centre (NERD), Industrial Technology Institute (ITI), the Arthur C. Clarke Centre, and national universities.

The overall objective of the event was to make the renewable energy sufficiency of Sri Lanka a reality in the short and long term, assisting the country to have renewable energy goals systematically within five years and thereby help transform the nation's economy positively.

Around 80 inventors for innovations around the theme of renewable energy were provided free stalls at the ACBC premises. Some of these inventions were a water sealed bio gas unit by inventor Harsha Kumara Gallage, mountain rain harvesting and distributing technology system, charcoal making machine by W. S. Karunadasa (alongside around six more inventions related to alternate coal energy cooking solutions), electric bicycle by S. Thesigan, R. Lekass and V. Shathurankan and a hydro-dynamic sea water power plant by Madusha Perera, among others. The *Sunday Observer* will feature some of these inventions in the upcoming editions.

The BOC which has already commenced a renewable energy promoting loan scheme for households and industries to change to renewable energy, as part of their 83rd anniversary

celebrations on August 1, will support the renewable energy entrepreneurs and inventors selected for the exhibition to follow up on assistance to improve their products.

Exhibitors

The business arm of the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress (ACBC) will provide the exhibitors with the technical know-how needed and support for bank loan facilitation through the BOC.

The aim of the exhibition is to motivate schoolchildren and youth to develop innovations linked to entrepreneurship and start export-oriented businesses making use of the highest quality industrial raw materials available in the country, especially as an answer to the current economic context.

Schools were encouraged to apply for the innovations its students had carried out and all six schools that had applied received special certifications awarded by the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress (ACBC).

The schools are Colombo Devi Balika Vidyalaya, Kandy Girls' High School, Wariyapola Sumangala Vidyalaya, Kankasanthurei Hindu Vidyalaya, Gampaha Rathnavalee Vidyalaya and C. W. W. Kannangara Vidyalaya.

The ACBC renewable energy experts point out that Sri Lanka's resources such as graphite and ilmenite (titanium) are exported cheaply now as raw materials. With adequate research and development these can be made into high priced finished products to earn foreign exchange badly needed by Sri Lanka, ACBC President Chandra Nimal Wakishta (retd DIG) said.

He said that the organisation's focus on renewable energy was taken up by the technical committee of the ACBC set up three years ago to concentrate on vital sectors relevant to the development of Sri Lanka such as micro and macro economy areas connected with environment, health, education, national self-sufficiency and sustainability.

"Energy related self sufficiency of a nation is its backbone of economic security as well as national security. This is what we hope to address," the ACBC President said.



The point made collectively was that fossil fuel dependency could be reversed with a national awareness on renewable energy.

Buddhist values

"This is what the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress (ACBC), as one of Sri Lanka's apex national institutions is attempting to. The event that was held on September 11 and 12 at the ACBC premises was not just a single event but the beginning of a national mission and we will commit to maintain its consistency," Wakishta said adding that the ACBC is an institution committed to upholding Buddhist values of non prejudice and thereby works for the wellbeing of the nation and not just one community.

"Our vision is to have a country known for its human resources connected to innovation linked to renewable energy.

We wish to have every roof in Sri Lanka connected to solar energy and where other natural resources such as water, wind and bio gas is used as well, to create not just energy consumers but energy producers as well who can sell their excess renewable energy to the CEB. This event is the first seed of this objective," he said.

Among the audience at the September exhibition were children and youth of the country as well as the entrepreneurial community, investors and average citizens.

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"The stalls set up at the ACBC premises were made available free for inventors and entrepreneurs who want to showcase their work connected to sustainable energy," Dr. Harsha Wijewardena, head of the Technical Committee of the ACBC said.

The selection of the inventions showcased was carried out by the Inventors Commission which has worked previously as well with the ACBC to promote entrepreneurship and innovation.

"We at the inventors' commission are accelerating our work to encourage invention in respect to renewable energy", Nalin Dolawatte, director at the Inventors Commission who handled the planning of the September invention exhibition told the *Sunday Observer* adding explaining that follow up activities are being planned with school inventors clubs to create renewable energy awareness in all parts of the country.

"We will be evaluating and following up on the exhibition to fol-

low through what we commenced until Sri Lanka reaches the goal of renewable energy self-sufficiency," Dolawatte said.

Dr. Anupa Herath, Assistant Commissioner said that the Inventors' Commission had received around 500 applications from inventors around the country in response to the call for exhibitors for the ACBC event.

Dr. L. M. Keerthi Tillekeratne, Vice President of the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress and former Inventors' Commissioner from 2000 to 2008 said that the ACBC hopes to work with a long term objective with the education sector of the country to promote the creativity of children that could lead to useful inventions.

It is time that Sri Lanka taps all its natural resources as part a meaningful economic policy connected to renewable energy and what we are doing is contributing to the start of this," he said.

"We showcased at this event some remarkable innovations from

Sri Lanka, most of which is directly linked to diverse solutions to the challenges we are facing currently. One or two of the innovative findings may appear very simple but it is extremely profoundly useful," Dr. Tillekeratne said.

Complex

"Sometimes we think that innovative findings should be very complex but most of the time it is not," he said.

Engineer Parakrama Jayasinghe, ACBC Technical committee member and expert on renewable energy said that Sri Lanka should stop strengthening the economy of foreign countries by buying planet jeopardising fossil fuel and shift to renewable energy with basic common sense driven rationale that a country such as this, blessed in over-abundance with sunlight, streams and wind should transform this bounty into energy and thereby money.

"Affordable and clean energy is the seventh sustainable development goal among the seventeen related goals and is interconnected and relevant to all other categories mentioned.

What we have to do is educate people, influence policy and encourage indigenous solutions however small that will look at fulfilling domestic energy requirements. Solar and bio gas options we could promote as part of a gamut of indigenous alternatives," he said.

This newspaper will feature in detail the inventions showcased at the exhibition and renewable energy forum of the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress (ACBC) as part of the *Sunday Observer* national renewable energy awareness creating mission which focuses on food and energy sustainability examined through Sri Lanka's intangible heritage and culture.

Frances Bulathsinghala is part of a team of professionals promoting renewable energy as part of an integrated, sustainable and holistic economic, social and earth focused wellbeing model and carrying out an integrated island wide campaign to promote green energy as alternatives to fossil fuel.