

Daily Mirror 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2003

# Govt. to set up all powerful disaster management body

Amidst calls from Sri Lanka's engineers to set up a powerful authority to deal with natural disasters, the National Disaster Management Council headed by the President held its first meeting on Monday and decided to introduce legislation to set up a high powered institute capable of handling any type of natural disaster.

A Presidential Secretariat news release said that the

council also decided that the President and the Prime Minister should respectively be the chairperson and the vice chairman of the proposed institute.

Ministers Karu Jayasooriya, Thilak Marapana, John Amaratunga, and Ravindra Samaraweera also participated at the meeting.

Responding to a query raised by the President on relief activities launched by the government, Minister

Jayasuriya, who heads a cabinet sub committee on disaster management, arrangements were underway to utilize all aid, loan and donations both foreign and local for the relief of needy.

The President emphasized the importance of developing early warning systems regarding disastrous situations through scientific and hi- tech research. She also pointed out the importance of combined efforts

of Central Environment Authority and the Ministry of Environment in association with foreign expertise in combating natural disasters, the Presidential Secretariat release said.

Last week, the Institute of Engineers of Sri Lanka urged the government to set up a powerful authority under the Ministry of Policy Planning for better and more effective disaster management.