UNSC nears agreement on inspection process

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 23: The UN Security Council appeared Friday to have inched toward ending a stalemate on how to inspect Iraq's disarma-ment after December's US-British air strikes, diplomats said, reports AFP.

The council's 15 members are discussing a "procedural proposal presented by Canada and amended by Argentina to end the stalemate stemming from deep disagreements on the issue within the UN body, diplomats reported.

Brazilian ambassador Celso Amorim, the council's president, told reporters after a closed door meeting, "On sev-eral issues, I think it will be possible to approximate posi-

"I have the impression we are on the right track," he

However, it is not clear yet, he said adding that discussions will resume Monday afternoon. "We're actually making good progress said British ambas-

sador Jeremy Greenstock. Canada's proposal would have Iraq's disarmament pro-

BEIJING, Jan 23: China has

launched a three-year-propa-

ganda campaign aimed at

stamping out religion in Tibet

and ending support for the Dalai Lama living in exile, the

Tibet Information Network

Lhasa on January 8 and broad-

cast on Tibet Television on

January 10 promotes atheism

as the only way to economic de-

to strengthen the struggle

against separatists, to reso-

lutely resist the Dalai clique's

reactionary infiltration and to

help peasants and herdsmen

free themselves from the nega-

tive influence of religion," TIN

quoted Tibet Television as say-

Tibet in 1951, but are still fight-

ing a battle to control the hearts

and minds of many Tibetans

who remain loyal to their spiri-

tual leader, the Dalai Lama, de-

spite lengthy campaigns to dis-

from Manila.

Philippines.

fourth victim.

set ablaze.

Southern Command.

others. AP says from Alabama.

Chinese troops "liberated"

"It is an important measure

velopment and stability.

The campaign, launched in

(TIN) said today, reports AFP.

cess assessed at a joint meeting of UNSCOM, the existing UN Inspection Team, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the meeting would be chaired, not by UNSCOM chief Richard Butler, but by Jayantha Dhanapala, a top UN disarma-ment official.

Argentina ambassador Fer-nado Petrela proposed that Amorim chair the UNSCOM-IAEA meeting.

Canada accepted the Argen-tine proposal, as did a clear majority of the council, said Cana-dian ambassador Robert

In the majority's view, in-cluding the United Kingdom, "it is an entirely sensible way of moving forward," said Britain's Greenstook.

"I think we will go looking for unanimity on that proposal because it just got quite a lot of support," he added.

Otherwise, the council did not debate proposals by France and Russia to lift the embargo and install a new system for inspecting Iraqi disarmament, diplomats said

During Indo-Pak visit next week

Talbott to suggest new ideas to resolve nuclear differences

get that process advanced fur-

WASHINGTON, Jan 23: US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott will suggest new ideas for resolving nuclear differences with India and Pakistan when he goes to South Asia next week for high level talks a senior official said on

Friday, reports Reuters.

Bruce Reidel, a top White
House aide also said Islamabad and New Delhi will be reminded that President Bill Clinton is eager to visit South Asia late this year and would recommend a lifting of US sanctions if there was progress on nuclear issues.

Despite State Department statements of concern earlier this week that India and Pakistan were preparing new mis-sile tests, Reidel did not focus much on the issue during a briefing at the US foreign press centre.

"We hope the tests are not imminent this, we've made clear our views that additional missile test at this time will not help encourage the atmosphere which we think is important

for bringing about improve-ment in ties", he said. Reidel said that when Talbott journeys to South Asia next week, he will be going back to the region with some ideas from our side about how we can

lamabad three days later. ther on the nuclear issues. Reidel refused to divulge the new proposals. Talbott has held seven rounds of separate meetings with Indian and Pakistani officials since the two governments stunned the world by conduct-

· ing nuclear tests last May. He has been seeking to persuade both governments to sign a test ban treaty and take other steps to halt a regional arms race, such as for swearing development and deployment of nuclear weapons and missiles.

There was enough progress on the subject that late last year that Clinton temporarily eased tough economic sanctions imposed on India and Pakistan after the tests.

But Reidel, senior director for Near East and South Asian affairs at the National Security Council stresed that more movement was needed and would be sought by Talbott, the meetings begin in New Delhi on Jan, 29 and then move to Is-

Our ultimate goal is to have the President visit South Asia before the end of the year and inaugurate a new era in US rela-tions with India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, Reidel said.

The objective is to "expand this relationship with South Asia to see that it goes beyond the confines of discussing pro-liferation issues to as broad and rich an agenda as possible", he

Toward that goal "we hope by next fall as well see sufficient progress on nuclear issues that we'll be able to go to congress and encourage indefinite ex-tension and lifting of sanctions as were not there yet though", Reidel said.

Ethnic riots in Indonesia: Death toll rises to 45

JAKARTA, Jan 23: Searchers looked for more victims Saturday in the ashes of burned out houses set on fire during bloody religious rioting in Eastern Indonesia. Troops patrolled the streets as the death toll from clashes between Christians and Muslims hit 45,

report AP. A curfew was imposed to prevent further fighting beiween rival gangs on Ambon, Sanana and Seram island, known in Dutch colonial times as the Spice Islands.

The islands in eastern Maluku province are the latest site of rioting that has plagued crisis-ridden Indonesia in the

News reports Saturday said the situation after three days of

mayhem was tense but calm. Wary residents in the provincial capital of Ambon city guarded their homes Friday night with knives and swords amid reports that gangs of armed men were roaming the

Violence in Kashmir: 5 killed

NEW DELHI, Jan 23: Five people including an Indian soldier have been killed in separatist-linked violence in the troubled region of Kashmir, the Press Trust of India said on Friday, reports AFP.

An Indian soldier was killed Friday in an ambush by Muslim separatists fighting for an independent homeland in the Baramulla district, an official spokesman told the news

He said a militant was killed during a gunbattle with Indian security forces in the same district late Thursday.

Militants also gunned down a villager on Friday and shot dead two former renegades in the southern district of Anatnag

overnight, the spokesman said. Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, has been plagued by separatist violence since 1989 in which more than 24,000 people have died.

The region is claimed by both Pakistan and India. The arch rivals have fought two of their three wars over Kashmir since the subcontinent's independence in 1947.

During Ramadan 157 killed in road accidents in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 23: At least 157 people have died on Malaysian roads during a holiday rush at the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, police said Saturday, reports

A spokesman at Malaysia's federal police headquarters said more fatalities were expected as travellers clog roads this weekend ahead of the unofficial end to post-Ramadan cel-

ebrations on Monday. The end of the Muslim fasting month, known as Hari Raya in this Southeast Asian nation, fell on Tuesday and Wednesday Many stretch the holiday out

for a week, flooding roads in an annual exodus. Hoping to curb the number of traffic accidents, police launched a 15-day alert around

the festive period, stationing 1,500 police near the country's 500 most dangerous accident

Last year, 274 people were killed during the 15-day period tracked for Hari Raya and the Chinese New Year, which was celebrated the same month.

UNSC 'concerned' over fighting

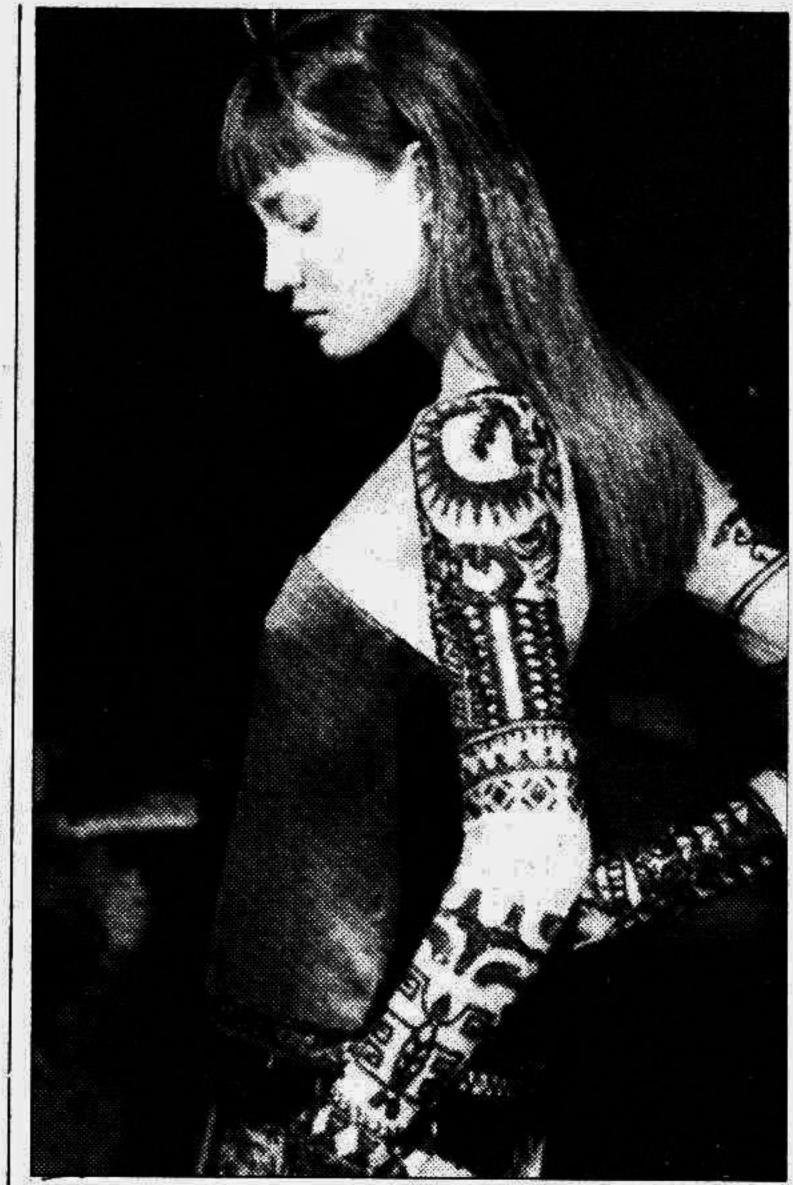
in Sierra Leone UNITED NATIONS, Jan 23:

The UN Security Council said Friday it is "deeply concerned" about the worsening of the humanitarian situation after two weeks of fighting in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, reports AFP.

The 15 members of the council are equally concerned about the "increasing number of refugees" fleeing the fighting. said the council's president, Brazilian ambassador Celso Amorim, as he left a closeddoor meeting.

The council called on all parties to "ensure the safety of all humanitarian personnel, to allow them to work effectively and to respect their impartiality and neutrality."

The Sierra Leone government has expelled workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross, accusing them of aiding rebels by letting them use the organisation's telephone, a charge the Red Cross has denied.



A model presents an evening dress, part of Italian designer Fausto Sarli collection, during Spring-Summer 1999 high fashion show in Rome Friday. - AP/UNB photo

Off the Record

No dumb clucks

ATLANTA: The funky chicken rules the roost, according to a British scientist, reports Reuters.

Chickens appear healthier and happier, and lay more eggs, when farmers play music to them, researcher Bryan Jones told an international poultry farmers gathering in Atlanta on

Jones, of Edinburgh's Roslin Institute, said he set out to discover if music could soothe ruffled feathers and boost egg production. "We wanted to determine whether the mythology was based

on fact," said Jones, whose institute produced Dolly, the world's first cloned sheep. After surveying more than 100 poultry farmers at a British

pig and poultry fair, Jones said researchers found that 46 per cent of the farmers routinely played music to their birds. "The most important question we asked them was whether they had noticed any benefits," he said.

The answer was an overwhelming yes. Ninety per cent said birds dosed with music were calmer, 52 per cent said they were less aggressive, 20 per cent reported the overall health of the flock had improved, and 16 per cent

claimed increased egg production, Jones said. Jones dismissed reports from farmers that some types of music actually increased the bird's anxiety level, and that the

birds preferred easy-listening or top-40 selections.
"We asked the farmers whether some types of music were better than others, they indicated that heavy metal was the

worst but chickens didn't like opera or jazz, either," he said. "I suspect what we are seeing here is a reflection of the farmers preferences rather than the chickens," he added.

Jones also sought to clear up another controversy surrounding chickens. He said contrary to their reputation, they are not

Where pigeons fail the dope test!

SWEDEN: Athletes on performance-enhancing steroids have. become common these days. There have even been reports of race horses being doped. But now the unsporting practice appears to have surfaced in an unlikely arena - carrier pigeon competitions in Sweden!

At the Swedish National Championships for carrier pigeons held in this southern city, two competing fanciers were disqualified for five years after their pigeons failed dope tests. reports IANS.

"I am deeply disappointed," said Viggo Elofsson, chairman of the Federation of Carrier Pigeons. "This constitutes unprincipled cruelty to animals of the most obnoxious kind." The pigeons were reportedly fed cortisone which renders them tougher and brings about greater unnatural efforts. The birds cease to feel pain and can fly longer, often until they collapse or drop dead.

Tests on the pigeons' excreta were carried out in a laboratory in Germany. "The evidence was crystal clear," writes the local newspaper Ystads Allehanda. Both fanciers have appealed against the federation's decision to shut them out for five years and disqualify them and their entries for the Swedish championship.

The scandal was magnified by the fact that one of the doped pigeons was last year's national gold medallist and the favourite this year as well.

Big differences remain: DPRK

US-North Korea resume talks in Geneva

GENEVA, Jan 23: The United States and North Korea resume talks here today over Washington's demand to inspect an underground site it suspects is being used to revive Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programme, reports AFP.

The two sides met last weekend but a North Korean official said big differences remained in their positions.

The talks are aimed at saving a 1994 agreement under which communist North Korea agreed to freeze its nuclear programme in return for aid and the easing of Korean War era sanction.

Pyongyang, which says the site is for undisclosed civilian proposes, has demanded Washington pay 300 million dollars to take a look.

Washington has rejected the demand.

In August a US spy satellite spotted activity at an underground complex at Kumchangri, near Yongbyon, where North Korea's mothballed nuclear reactors are located.

The US Congress has threatened to block further funding

'Titanic' director's

for the 1994 accord amid concerns over Pyongyang's nuclear and missile capabilities.

UŞ plans to promote Iraqi opposition

injured have been hospitalised.

from West Bengal

WASHINGTON, Jan 23: As part of its efforts to bolster Iraqi opposition groups, the United States plans to promote them in the media as the authentic voice of the Iraqi people, a senior US official said on Friday, reports Reuter.

of the White House national security council, acknowledged many of the groups had serious differences that hindered their ability to work together.

briefed reporters at the US foreign press centre.

China launches anti-religion

campaign in Tibet

BRIFIN

10 bodies found in Manila: The bodies of 10 men have been found inside five steel barrels in a remote

village north of Manila, authorities said yesterday, AP reports

A wood cutter discovered the steel barrels - marked "New

Zealand Milk Products" — late Friday in a ravine in Norzagaray

in Bulacan province, police said. Police made the gruesome

discovery after using acetylene torches to open the barrels. They

found two bodies covered in cement in each of the five barrels.

Muslim rebel killed in Philippines:

Government soldiers killed a suspected Muslim rebel and two

militiamen have also died in clashes in the southern

Philippines, the military said Saturday, AP reports from

for members of the Muslim extremist group Abu Sayyaf en-

countered armed men outside Patikul town in Sulu province,

said Col. Rafael Romero, a spokesman for the military's

Gas blast kills 3 in US: An explosion

apparently caused by a natural gas leak leveled three buildings

Friday, killing three people and critically injuring several

southern state of Alabama. Chuck Phillips, chief investigator

for the Jackson County Sheriff's Department, confirmed three

were dead and said authorities were searching for a possible

Australian working with leprosy patients in India and his two

young sons were burnt to death in the eastern state of Orissa, a

and 10, died when their car was torched by unidentified people

late Friday. He said Staines and his sons were sleeping in the

car at a village in Orissa's remote Keonjhar district when it was

Japan to resume talks with DPRK:

Japan is ready to resume talks with North Korea frozen since

August last year when Pyongyang launched a ballistic missile, a

With the resumption of a dialogue, Japan aimed to make

North Korea adopt more reforms and an open-door policy, the

Sankei Shimbun said. Japanese Foreign Ministry officials met

with North Korean UN on cials in New York in December last

year, and during their taiks the Japanese side proposed a

bilateral deputy vice-minister's level meeting, the daily said.

One burnt alive in W Bengal:

woman was burnt alive and 17 others were injured in a clash

between two groups, while 49 houses were torched and looted

rendering 400 homeless at a village under Basanti police

station Thursday night, according to the police, PTI reports

said, bombs and pipeguns were used in the clash at Nirdeshkhal

Atun Para village, which occurred over a land dispute. The

South 24-Pargana's Superintendent of Police A K Maliwal

report said yesterday, AFP reports from Tokyo.

An official at the Australian High Commission in New Delhi said that Graham Stewart Staines, 58, and his two sons aged 7

diplomat said yesterday, AFP reports from New Delhi.

Some nearby businesses were heavily damaged in the

burnt to death in Orissa: An

The suspected rebel died Saturday when marines searching

At least two of the bodies were headless.

"The campaign to encourage the spread of atheism is further evidence of the authorities concerns over the private loyalists of Tibetan cadres and their failure to eradicate Tibetans support for the Dalai Lama," TIN said in a statement received

"It represents a strengthening of the anti-Dalai Lama campaign in Tibet and is aimed not only at Tibetan cadres but also at ordinary members of

society," it added. The new campaign was not directly reported in Tibetan newspapers available in Beijing, but the January 12 and 14 editions said that more than 240 cadres involved in propa-ganda work in Lhasa had been sent out in 57 teams to disseminate the "meaning" of the Jan-

Some herdsmen and peasants are constrained by the negative influence of religion and are unable to accept scien-

uary meeting.

tific knowledge.

US analysts, politicians believe

Performers on the float representing West Bengal and the theme of World Peace rehearse

Friday in New Delhi for the annual Republic Day Parade. Every state has a float and a

theme in the parade, which is approved by a central committee. After the committee re-

jected West Bengal's plan to have a float with a mushroom cloud caused by a nuclear at-

Independence of Kosovo only solution to Balkan crisis

WASHINGTON , Jan 23: It is the policy shift that dare not speak its name in official Washington, but many US analysts and politicians believe it is time to consider an independent Kosovo as a way out of the latest Balkan crisis, reports

tack, they changed the theme to World Peace.

Reuters. Officials from the White House to the Pentagon shy away from any acknowledgment of that possibility, insisting the aim is a negotiated agreement for political autonomy for the ethnic Kosovo Albanian majority within the Yugoslav framework.

The argument, which is driving US policy, is that chipping Kosovo off the already shrunken Yugoslavia could threaten even wider disintegration in the Balkans and undermine the fragile Bosnia peace

As international leaders seek a way forward after last week's massacre of 45 Kosovo villagers. White House spokesman David Leavy held tight to the accepted text when asked if independence was even

being talked about. "We're focused right now on getting an interim political settlement which would give the Kosovo Albanians a high degree of autonomy," he said, avoiding any mention of the "I" word.

But with NATO air forces reviving their warplanes once again in response to the latest atrocity in the smashed and impoverished land, many in Washington are asking whether that tenet of alliance policy can be sustained.

"Hope is triumphing over experience that there is a political settlement to be had here" said lvo Daalder, a Balkan specialist at the independent Brookings institution.

"Washington and its allies should begin to prepare to engage Kosovo's neighbours in an effort to manage the regional consequences of independence - be it de facto, de jure or somewhere in between," he said. No less a figure than Gen

Colin Powell, former chairman of the joint chiefs of staff and one of the country's most respected leaders, said independence must be on the table. "The difficulty in this situa-

tion is what is the political option: will we continue to recognise Kosovo as a part of Serbia, should we push for autonomy. or push for independence," he said on NBC's Today Show this

"Whatever you do with respect to the use of a military force that underlying political question has to be dealt with

and that's the most difficult question of all," he said. Sen Mitch McConnell, a conservative republican form Kentucky, said in an article in the Washington Post the Clinton administration should "accept reality."

UNB/AP photo

He wrote "Our policies must recognise the essential goal: independence for Kosovo."

The senator, influential as chairman of the senate committee that appropriates funds for foreign operations, also said it was time to start arming the Kosovo guerillas. Analysts concede that there

is very little support in Europe for such a move and that it is not likely to be a major factor in senior level meetings of NATO and the contact group on former Yugoslavia in coming

US leaders stress they are trying to be evenhanded, not encouraging or helping the proindependence struggle that is now overwhelmingly backed by ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.

House seeks Starr's help to make Monica testify WASHINGTON, Jan 23: US now, the Senate has not voted

House of Representatives impeachment prosecutors obtained Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr's help Friday in attempting to force Monica Lewinsky to talk to them, contending her immunity agreement requires it, two congressional officials confirmed Friday, reports AP.

Starr's prosecutors and lawyers for Lewinsky went to court late Friday afternoon to argue whether she had to cooperate. US District Judge Norma Holloway Johnson made no immediate ruling.

Lead prosecutor Henry Hyde wrote to Starr on Thursday seeking his help with Lewinsky, who rejected being interviewed by the House team.

Two House sources, speaking

on condition o anonymity, said Hyde cited Lewinsky's immunity agreement with Starr in

The July 28 agreement said. Lewinsky "will testify truthfully before grand juries in this district (Washington) and elsewhere, at any trials in this district and elsewhere, and in any other executive, military, judicial or congressional proceed-

In a letter Friday to Starr, Lewinsky's lawyers contended that the immunity agreement with him "does not require us to be interviewed" by the House impeachment managers.

"The Senate itself has pro-

vided its own rules for witness

interviews. As we understand

them, there must be a deposi-

tion with equal access. As of

respond to a subpoena to appear and testify before the Senate." The House has urged the Senate to allow witnesses in

Clinton's impeachment trial, a controversial issue that could be fought out next week along sharp partisan lines. Most Republicans have backed the call for witnesses and virtually all Democrats have opposed live testimony.

for depositions," her attorneys

wrote. "Lewinsky will of course

The managers have not yet submitted their witness list. But House prosecutors during the Senate trial have said repeatedly that her testimony could clarify who is telling the truth about her sexual relationship with President Clinton and any cover-up efforts.

Lay off the pizza, hamburgers and live longer, say experts people. Walford thinks it fol-Starved mice not only have lows that the anti-ageing effects

would be the same, too. Other experts think they are closing in on an explanation of

a stress response that rescues cells from dying, said James Nelson of the University of Texas health sciences centre. Cell death also is an important

component of ageing. Nelson said several experiments in creatures such as the fruit fly showed that the same genes that become active when an animal fights off stress such as a toxin, become active when calories are restricted.

healthier hearts, but lower instances of cancer and auto-immune diseases, Walford said. longer than normal mice.

eat less, but have to eat better, Walford said. The key is to make sure you

are getting enough vitamins and other nutrients, while losing a little weight, he said. How much that adds up to

noted metabolism varies from person to person. "One 120 pound (50 kg)

woman will maintain her weight on a 2,500 calories a day diet but another will maintain her weight on 1,700," Walford

Walford was so impressed by the findings that he keeps to a disciplined restricted-calorie

marriage ends Walford and Nelson both NEW YORK, Jan 23: Being married to James Cameron was

a titanically miserable experi-So says actress Linda Hamilton, who filed for divorce from

the director of "Titanic" and "The Terminator" after nearly eight years of marriage, reports "I wanted to be the one to do the final destructive act. It's an

day's USA Today. Linda said that even at last year's Academy Awards — when

Cameron's "Tittanic" won 11 trophies and he shouted,

in media

But the official, Bruce Reidel

Reidel, President Clinton's Special Assistant for Near East and South Asian Affairs,

ANAHEIM, California, Jan 2, an experiment aimed at de-23: It is actually easy to live longer-just lay off the pizza and hamburgers, experts said on

Friday, reports Reuters. Experiments on mice - and one unplanned experiment on people - show that following a

lifetime diet about 30 per cent lower in calories than the average American diet can set in motion physical responses that help the body resist ageing, the researchers told the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Dr Roy Walford of the University of California, Los Angeles was among eight men and women sealed inside biosphere

termining whether humans could ever live in space. From 1991 to 1993 they were

locked away from the rest of the world, having to grow every bite of food, generate their own air supply and recycle all their water. But they ran low on food and Walford saw the perfect opportunity to run an experiment.

He knew of studies in mice that showed mild starvation caused them to live longer. Perhaps, he thought, the same was true of people. As the biosphere team members ate less, Walford observed

their body statistics. "The men

lost an average of 18 per cent of

ference. Blood pressure fell on average by 20 per cent. Indicators for diabetes, such as blood sugar

body weight, the women 10 per

cent," Walford told a news con-

and insulin levels, decreased by 30 per cent on average. Cholesterol levels fell from an average of 195-considered normal - to 125, considered extremely healthy. It would take years to tell if

humans really live longer on such a diet. Most of the biosphere team, with the exception of Walford, have since gone back to eating normal American diets. But since the physiological effects of mild starvation were the same in mice and

why steady dieting might benefit the body. Gentle starving may start up

they were working hard, growing rice, tilling fields and doing other chores.

They also stay fertile much People who want to try this low-calorie diet cannot simply

will vary from person to person. In the biosphere, each person got 1,800 calories a day. But

But Nelson admits he does

not. "Probably for the same reasons that most people have difficulty doing this sort of thing." he laughed. "I just happen to be graced with genes that make me skinny."

important thing for me personally not to feel like the victim," Linda Hamilton said in Fri-