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The World on Time

## Down to Earth

## Unwanted Business Activities

By A S M Nurunnabi

A particular business centre in the heart of the city presents an obnoxious spectacle. This refers to the wholesale fish market at Kawran Bazar which is located within five hundred yards of the city's one of the five-star hotels. The fish market occupies quite a big area. The business transaction at this centre starts from early dawn, but a large number of trucks laden with fish of various kinds begin to assemble at this site over night through various routes from their loading points spread over a wide network covering areas with supplies of fish catches. With the beginning of business transactions from early dawn, the place wears a look of hectic activities, with the wholesalers and retailers jostling to clinch deals. Apart from the crowd of buyers and sellers, there is an overwhelming prevalence of fishy smell which spreads far and wide. Even when the day's transactions are over within two or three hours in the morning, the fall-out of fishy smell hangs on in the area, so much so that passersby, riding on vehicles or just walking along, are not spared this evil smell.

Some may wonder how a big wholesale fish market could be allowed to operate in a select area where there is a five-star hotel. The Dhaka City Corporation is aware of the circumstances under which such a fish market is functioning and also whether the City Corporation has any plan for shifting the market from its existing site. Whatever be the actual position in this regard, there is no denying that the location of the fish market is utterly unwanted in its present site and the sooner it is shifted elsewhere, the better for its environs, now subject to such obnoxious smell. In this context, it may not be forgotten that there is a

sprawling slum nearby. The existence of the fish market and the slum may be regarded as adverse factors for the environmental degradation of the area. A couple of weeks ago, a large number of employees of the adjacent hotel came down and took up the job of cleaning and painting the long stretch of traffic island in front of the hotel. But it is felt mere face-lifting of such a nature is not enough unless positive steps are taken by the authorities concerned to improve the look of the whole surrounding area. In that case, the beauty of the architecturally impressive fountain at the busy road junction near Kawran Bazar may not be detracted by the existing loathsome scenes created by the fish market and the adjacent city slum.

A source of serious miseries

for the residents of Hazaribagh and its adjacent areas of the city arises from the large number of existing tanneries in the area throwing heavy amounts of chemical and other wastes into the low-lying areas near Rayer Bazar outside the Dhaka flood protection embankment. The tannery wastes are polluting fresh areas, involving destruction of a vast stretch of arable land and all kinds of marine life. As reported, the lethal wastes previously flowed into the river Buriganga from the Hazaribagh Sluice further downstream. Now, as per report, the waste materials have to be diverted to the new areas, as the old channel was blocked by a recently built tannery.

According to a study by the Bangladesh Environment Lawyers' Association, due to the City Protection Embankment, the low-lying lands from Lalbagh to Rayer Bazar Shikder Medical College are filled with poisonous wastes and the toxic chemicals are even polluting

## Samad Azad leaves for Jeddah

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad left Dhaka yesterday for Jeddah on a three-day official visit to Saudi Arabia to review different dimensions of Dhaka-Riyadh ties, reports UNB.

During the visit, the Foreign Minister will call on King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz.

Azad will hold talks with his Saudi counterpart Prince Saud Bin Faisal, covering the entire gamut of bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues of common concern.

They will mainly discuss matters relating to the interest of Bangladeshis working in the Kingdom, and expansion of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

Problems facing the Muslim Ummah and its unity and solidarity will figure in the discussion.

## CAB

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taxes, instead of taking measures to reduce the expenditure for buying essentials and educational materials, and on house rent, transportation and treatment.

The sufferings of common consumers would double due to imposition of taxes on small and cottage industries, fertiliser, educational, agricultural and medical necessities.

introduction of VAT on new items and increasing its rate, and compulsory submission of income tax return by telephone subscribers, it added.

The CAB demanded that the budget be approved only after necessary amendment considering the interests of the people.

## Kesri

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in the Congress, Kesri said her (Sonial) primary membership of the party was beneficial of both the party and the Congressmen.

The Congress chief said there was no question of asking Sharad Pawar (who contested him in the party presidential election) to resign as the party's leader in the Lok Sabha. "I have no hatred or ill will against any body," he added.

Asked about the Congress nominee for the Indian presidential election scheduled to be held on July 23 he said the party had now started thinking about it. But he made it clear that he will not be a candidate.

Kesri pointed out that the party needed to be rejuvenated with the energy, enthusiasm and dynamism of the youth.

He said that he was happy to find that most of the PCC (Pradesh Congress Committee) presidents were young persons.

However, observers feel, his stress on youthful energy and enthusiasm in the party had ominous overtones for the bulk of detractors.

## Myanmar national dies in Ctg jail

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, June 13: One Myanmar national died in Chittagong Jail this morning, police said.

He was identified as Mr Auye, 35. Police said Auye was under treatment in the jail as he was sick for some days.

## JP won't tolerate rigging in bypolls: Ershad

Jatiya Party Chairman H M Ershad yesterday cautioned that his party will not tolerate any rigging or discriminatory attitude during the coming by-election in Manikganj, reports UNB.

Speaking to leaders and workers of Manikganj JP at his Gulshan house, Ershad asked them to take the by-election as a challenge and work for the JP candidate.

Ershad hoped that the present government would not turn the Manikganj election into a Magura election to face the fate of BNP government.

He said JP workers will have to give reply through the by-election to the hostile attitudes shown against the Jatiya Party in last two general elections.

Editor : Mahfuz Anam

Printed by the Editor from City Publishing House Ltd., 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000 and published by him on behalf of Mediaword Ltd., 52 Motijheel C.A., Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmoni R/A Dhaka-1205. PABX: 5000924, Commercial: 500091, Fax No: 3035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. Email: dstar@bangla.net

## The Daily Star

## 700 doctors' posts vacant at thana, dist levels

By Naimul Haq

The thana health complexes and district hospitals in the country are facing a shortage of more than 700 doctors.

According to Health Information Unit of the Directorate of Health, there are slightly more than 7000 doctors against 7,833 posts sanctioned by the government for those hospitals and health complexes.

The people of northern districts are the worst sufferers due to the doctors, followed by those in greater Khulna district. According to available statistics, there are almost 30,000 doctors in the country, one doctor for every 5,000 people.

A senior official of the Health Directorate explained that the vacant posts are created when doctors are sent for training after they are hired.

"So in the real sense, a permanent 'vacuum' has been created." To resolve this crisis, about 800 doctors on special duty (OSD) were recruited re-

cently, he said.

While talking to The Daily Star, the official said the government is going to appoint about 1000 doctors shortly.

Another 300 may be appointed later.

"We have also forwarded a plan to the Ministry of Health for creating more posts of doctor. We are yet to get any response," he said.

The Directorate had suggested recruitment of 1056 physicians through the 17th BCS examination but only 139 posts of assistant surgeons were accepted," he said.

One source said a good number of doctors are awaiting promotion. Lack of quick decision on the issue has also stood in the way of recruitment of new doctors. When contacted, the official concerned admitted this. More than 1000 doctors were given senior grade last March while another 300 await promotion to that grade, he said.

## Primary Edn Week begins today

The National Primary Education Week, 1997 begins today throughout the country, reports UNB.

Education Minister will inaugurate the week in Kushtha through tree plantation.

In a message yesterday, President Shahabuddin Ahmed called for turning the campaign for eradication of illiteracy and expansion of education into a social movement.

He said the mass awareness created to free the nation from the curse of illiteracy will have to be geared up.

In another message, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urged all to work unitedly to eradicate illiteracy for ensuring unhindered progress of the nation.

"It is our national duty to remove illiteracy to make the path of development free from all obstacles," she said.

## Govt to set up some specialised hospitals

The government plans to set up some specialised institutes and hospitals under the 1997-98 Annual Development Programme (ADP), reports UNB.

The plan is aimed to ensure health for all by the year 2000 and to stop the people from going abroad for treatment, according to the ADP document.

Under this programme, 87 development projects including 67 investment and technical assistance projects will be taken up with an allocation of Tk 587.74 crore including Tk 425 crore in local currency. Seventeen of these projects are new.

The allocation in the health sector is 5.09 per cent in the 1997-98 ADP.

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## Basu's belief

From Page 1

about the ability of the securitymen to save the lives of the VIPs in the event of assassination attempts.

A British minister, while travelling by a car, asked his bodyguard in the front seat, "John, can you save me if anybody tries to kill me?"

"No sir, I can't save you," the guard replied instantly.

"Then why are you travelling with me?" the exasperated minister asked.

"To be a witness to your murder, Sir," the guard answered with a straight face.

Basu said even the presence of a large number of security personnel had failed to save former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi.

"Can they save me if someone tries to assassinate me?" the octogenarian Marxist leader sarcastically questioned pointing at the two alert armed securitymen standing behind him.

## Surcharge to alleviate poverty

From Page 1

enhanced duties on paper, for example, has been proposed to help the local paper industry.

Tariffs on a number of items have been rationalised and nearly 200 items will be out of quantitative restrictions that will boost exports.

When his attention was drawn to the possible effect on textile industry following withdrawal of zero duty on raw cotton imports and reduction of yarn import duties, Kibria agreed that there could be discussions with the textile sector.

Asked on the missing target of GDP in the coming fiscal in his budget speech on Thursday, Kibria said: "The growth has been targeted at 6 per cent. Current year's growth is being computed and we expect it to be around the 5.7 per cent."

Kibria reacted sharply when asked how many people are coming under the expanded tax net. He said newspapers have misinterpreted the proposal on making it mandatory for people owning buildings more than one storied, motor vehicles and subscribing telephones. "If you do not have any income to report, you can state that. It has been done to bring more people under the tax net."

NBR Chairman Shah Abdul Hannan was told to provide the figure that the new measure would bring 3/4 lakh people under the net. "We should have four million tax payers in the country. But there only seven lakh people enlisted as tax-payer, of whom only three to four lakh actually pay tax," he added.

Kibria said that people owning buildings, vehicles and subscribing telephones are required to submit tax returns in India and Pakistan. He assured that the rationalisation and simplification of taxation sys-

tem would not harass anyone. Rather, it would help people to pay tax easily.

On the thorny issue of bank defaulters wriggling their way out, the Finance Minister said they are now realising that they cannot escape. "But I would not like to bracket the people whose industry and business ran around with the wilful defaulters. We are taking measures against those who resorted to fraud and cheated the banks. We have already realised about Tk 2,000 crore from the defaulters."

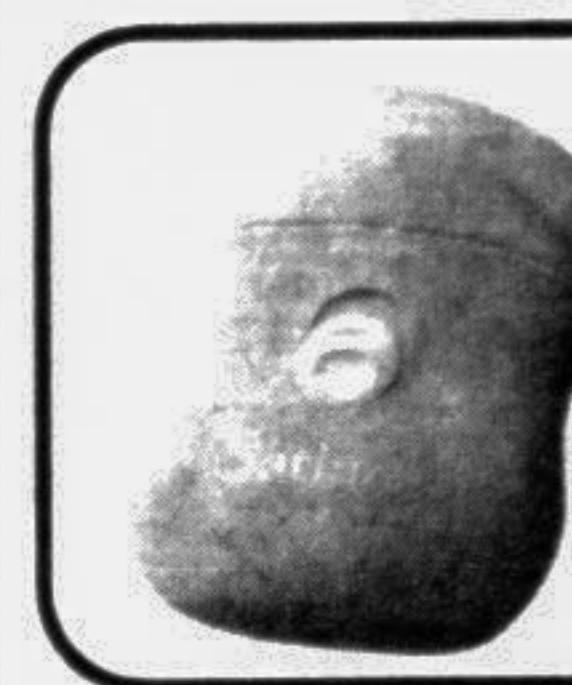
In this connection, Tofael Ahmed said the past government had patronised its partisans, providing them with loans liberally that virtually left the banks reeling under liquidity crisis. "Go and look at the banks, you would not find that our Prime Minister had made any request for loans for anyone. The culture of bank loans for partisans began after 1995."

Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir in this connection blasted late President Ziaur Rahman saying "he had introduced this culture and his good disciple Saifur Rahman should be asked to elaborate on the issue."

However, his remarks were interrupted when MD of Rupali Bank Nazmul Huq slumped in his chair and had to be carried out of the conference venue, apparently suffering heart problems.

Kibria later said that Bankruptcy Court and the relevant Act are taking care of the defaulters. A task force of the Bangladesh Bank is also doing its job in this regard.

Kibria, however, came out heavily on newspapers, one paper in particular which he declined to name, saying it had misinterpreted the revenue expenditures on Defence and Edu-



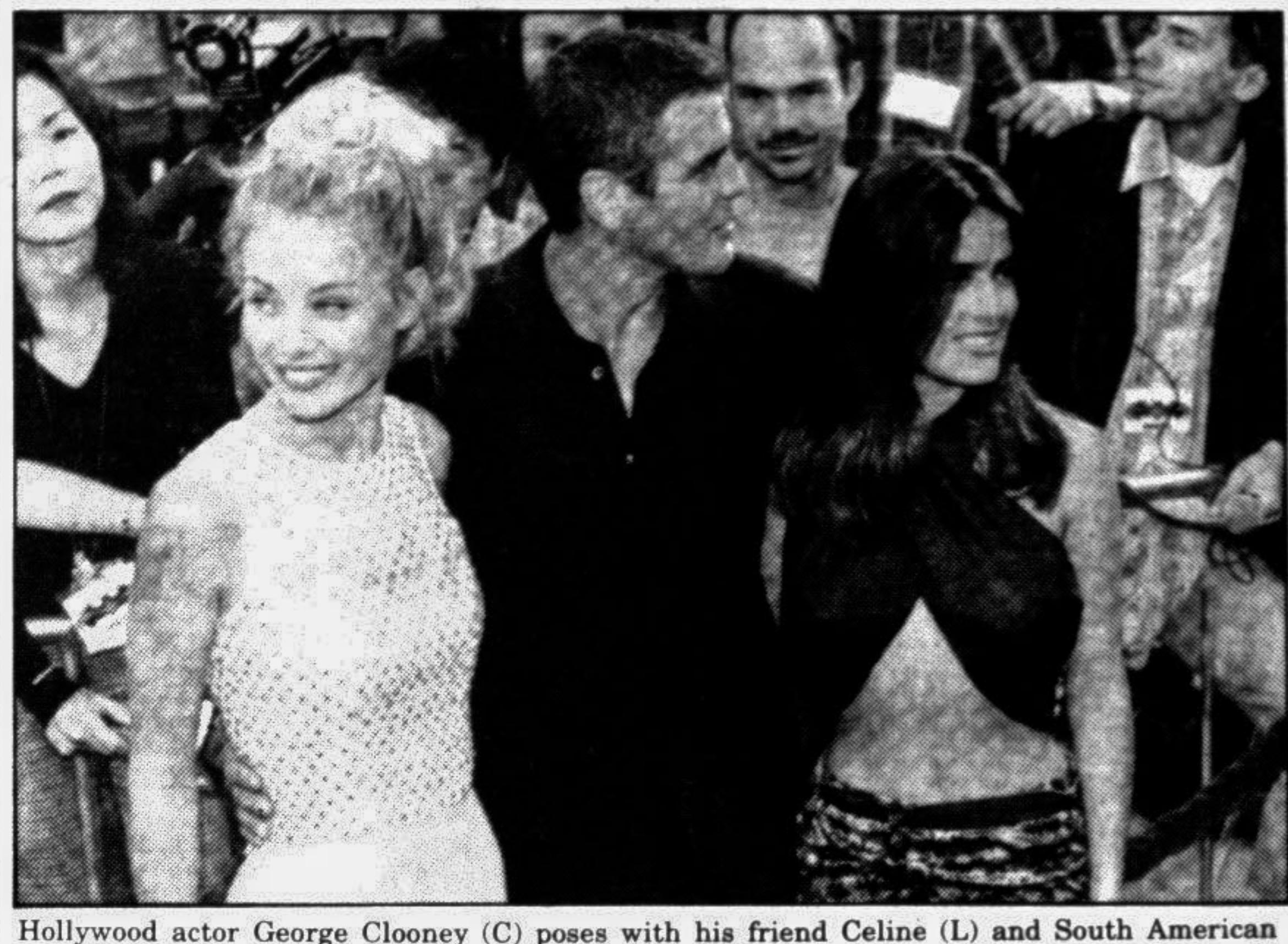
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PHILIPS



Hollywood actor George Clooney (C) poses with his friend Celine (L) and South American actress Slama Hayek as they arrive at Mann's Village and Bruin Theaters for the world premiere of Warner Bros' Batman and Robin on Thursday.

— AFP/UNB photo

## CPI team due in city today

A delegation of the Communist Party of India (CPI) arrives in Dhaka today on a visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Four members of the five-member delegation are: Shamim Foyez, editor of the weekly New Age, Jalaluddin Ansari, MP, Ramon Majumder, member of the party's international cell and Sunil Munshi, editor of the Dainik Kalantar.

Comrade A B Bardhan, General Secretary of CPI, who will lead the delegation, will arrive on June 16.

During the visit the delegation will exchange views with different political parties and organisations, a CPB press release said in Dhaka yesterday.

## 3-nation cricket

## Pakistan edge past NZ

HYDERABAD, India, June 13: Pakistan edged past New Zealand today with a 16-run victory to reach the final of the three-nation one-day cricket tournament being played in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad, reports AP.

Pakistan lost key batsmen Saeed Anwar, Shahid Afridi, Ramiz Raja (captain) and Salim Malik early in the game, but Moiz Khan's brilliant 103 off 87 balls and Inzamamul Haq's 79 off 72 balls helped them to score an imposing 306 for seven.

New Zealand lost three wickets in the first two overs to paceman Azhar Mahmood.