Sir Edmund Hillary hospitalised: Mount

Everest conquerer Sir Edmund Hillary was in intensive care in

hospital Wednesday with a suspected lung infection after

returning to New Zealand from an Antarctic cruise, AP says

Hillary, 78, was taken from the ship Marco Polo by ambu-

lance after the vessel docked from its cruise in the southern

oceans. Hospital officials said the infection may have started as

a cold during the trip, then turned to flu. Hillary has imposed a

Clinton plans to visit S Asian states: us

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright Tuesday said President

Bill Clinton plans to visit the South Asian countries later this

year to explore closer economic ties, press concerns about

committee that we have begun to seek a strategic dialogue be-

2 armed Sikh militants held in India:

Two Sikh militants armed with explosives were arrested in

Northern India ahead of an election tour by Prime Minister

Inder Kumar Gujral today, newspapers said, AFP reports from

The militants were taken into custody Tuesday when the po-

lice raided a Sikh temple complex in Jalandhar, an industrial

city in the state of Punjab from where Gujral is seeking re-elec-

tion to parliament. The Press Trust of India (PTI) quoted the

police as saying "a huge cache of arms and ammunition" were

Cohen to visit US carrier in Gulf: The

United States is prepared to maintain a two-carrier presence in

the Gulf as long as necessary to keep pressure on Iraq's Saddam

Hussein, US Defence Secretary William Cohen says, AP reports

Gulf region Wednesday, scheduled a visit to the USS George

Washington for lunch with the 5,500 men and women aboard

ROK fishing boat sinks in S Coast: A

South Korean fishing boat sank after colliding with a nuclear-

powered US submarine off South Korea's south coast

military command in Seoul said, AP reports from Seoul.

Wednesday, but the boat's five crewmen were rescued, the US

The submarine was not damaged in the pre-dawn collision

Nawaz Sharif arrives in China:

Pakistan's Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif arrived

in China yesterday, on a week-long official visit aimed at

improving economic ties between the two neighbours, officials

would seek "a stronger friendship with China," and his tour was

aimed at "exploring new avenues of economic co-operation." He

lauded "China's unstinted support to Pakistan on critical junc-

Strong quake shakes Japan:

An earthquake measuring 5.0 on the Richter Scale shook

northern Japan yesterday, but there were no immediate reports

of damage or injuries, and no danger of tidal waves, the

GMT), was off the coast of Urakawa in Hokkaido prefecture,

some 770 kilometres (481 miles) north of Tokyo, the agency

said. Its focus was located some 60 kilometres (38 miles) below

hunger-striking Cuban dissidents have been freed from prison.

along with a seventh colleague, on the condition that they leave

Pope John Paul II had asked President Fidel Castro for a ges-

the island nation, a doctor working with them told AFP

ture for prisoners during a January 21-25 visit in Havana, and

the dissidents in the central city of Santa Clara had been con-

sidered likely beneficiaries. Some of the dissidents were freed

January 31 and others on Fell uary 1, said Dr Armando Ocana,

a member of an illegal human rights group to which the dissi-

Forces kidnap 11 in Chad:

Security forces killed 11 people and captured 19 when they

carried out an operation to free four French nationals taken

hostage in southern Chad, Defence Minister Oumar Kadjalami

irg itself the Union of Democratic Forces (FDU), were freed on

Sunday after intervention by security forces and calls from

The four hostages, taken by an anti-government group call-

disclosed Tuesday, AFP reports from Ndjamena.

Paris for maximum discretion in the operation.

Cuban dissidents freed: Six

The epicentre of the quake, which occurred at 11:25 am (0225

Meteorological Agency said, AFP reports from Tokyo.

Before departing Pakistan, Sharif told Chinese reporters he

and was sailing to the southern naval port of Chinhae with the rescued fishermen, Jim Coles, a command spokesman, said.

Cohen, who was wrapping up his four-day swing through the

tween the world's oldest democracy and the world's largest.

proliferation, and to seek better, mutual cooperation across the

Referring to India, Albright told the Senate foreign relations

NEW YORK, Feb 11: The travails and tribulations of Bangladeshi and other South Asian immigrants to the U.S. and the cultural crosscurrents in which they are often caught are the subject of a television film by a young Bangladeshi flimmaker in New York, according to India Abroad News Service.

The \$30,000-budget film 'Ovibashee' (immigrant), by Enayet Karim (Babul), a graduate of the Film Institute in Pune, western India, is based on what the director calls says "real life drama" and revolves around the life of "a young and brilliant" Bengali who comes to "his dream land America" in pursuit of higher studies.

But soon his dream is shattered as he is unable to pay for the tuitions and he takes to cab driving to meet the expenditure. But gradually, his ambition takes a back seat as he is forced to become a professional cab driver.

"Building a castle of lies," the man gets married to an unsuspecting woman in Dhaka for whom "a U.S.-educated husband" is a dream come true. Her dreams flounder on the rock of

from Christchurch.

New Delhi.

ban on information about his illness.

board, PTI reports from Washington.

seized and two men were being interrogated.

from Doha.

reports said, AFP says from Beijing.

sea level.

Tuesday.

dents also belonged

tures," the official Xinhua News Service said.

reality as soon as she comes to the U.S. three years after marriage. She feels cheated and ultimately gets separated from her husband.

The second part of the film revolves around the lives of a couple and their two children. While the couple achieves educational goals and financial securities, they are tormented by the fact that their children are far removed from the Bengali culture which the parents have nurtured all their lives. The conflict becomes so acute that the family disintegrates with the parents going back to Bangladesh without their chil-

In the end, one of the children "realises his mistake" and he gets to know his roots and "accepts Bengali culture." Ultimately, he returns to Dhaka to meet his parents.

"What I sought to portray in the film is the fact that while immigrant Bengalis want their children to retain their native culture, the young generation often does not want to do that. This conflict between the parental values and the values of children is the focus of my film," Karim said.



Airmen drag an air-to-air missile beside an EA-6 Prowler, an all-weather jet used in tactical electronic warfare, aboard the aircraft carrier USS George Washington Tuesday. The plane is being readied to carry out a mission in support of Operation Southern Watch on Iraq. AP/UNB photo

Diplomacy running its course to resolve UN-Iraq crisis

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 11: Diplomatic efforts to resolve the UN-Iraq crisis have nearly run their course - unless Washington or Baghdad accepts a solution that falls short of cur-

rent demands, reports AP. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said as much Tuesday, after seeing weeks of mediation attempts by Middle East and European envoys run into brick

If the two sides stick to their public positions, "we will not find a solution," Annan told the British Broadcasting Corp.

"I appeal for that kind of courage, that kind of wisdom, that will allow us to make the kinds of judgments that will allow us to get out of this."

Intense diplomacy in Baghdad and other capitals has produced the broad outlines of a settlement. The Iraqis have narrowed the list of off-limits sites to eight, whose secrecy they say is essential to protecting national security and President Saddam Hussein.

Diplomatic sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, say the Iraqis have indicated they might be willing to open even those sites to international inspections.

But the conditions attached are so far unacceptable to the United States.

They also fall short of the "full and unfettered access" demanded in a series of council resolutions.

The main stumbling blocks are the timetable for the inspections and the question of who would perform them.

Another report adds: As Defence Secretary William Cohen travels through the Gulf US officials say international support is growing for a military strike on Iraq if diplomacy fails resolve the standoff over UN arms inspections. While delaying a decision on

whether to bomb Iraq, the Clinton administration raised the stakes Tuesday by threatening another attack if President Saddam Hussein managed to rebuild his weapons arsenals after a first assault.

Clarifying its strategy, it also said it does not need approval from Congress to hit

President Bill Clinton noted new support from Canada and Australia, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told a Senate committee that the Netherlands, Germany and Argentina backed force, and Cohen added Oman to what is still a short list of Arab allies.

"Friends and allies share our conviction that Saddam must not be allowed to develop nuclear chemical and biological weapons or the missiles to deliver them," Clinton said at a White House ceremony.

Later Tuesday, Clinton discussed strategy with Albright national security adviser Samuel Berger and a representative for Cohen. The White House session was the latest of their regularly scheduled meetings on the standoff with

Cohen, en route to Qatar, said "a real coalition" was forming to destroy Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. While Albright told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that Clinton had not decided to attack, the president said at the White House, "We must be prepared to act, and I am very grateful that others are prepared to stand with America."

The administration contends it does not need the approval of other countries, a new UN resolution or an act of Congress to punish Iraq. But the hedged response around the world, particularly among Arab nations is a sore point and also potentially encouraging to Sad-

"This is a real coalition." Cohen said. "These are countries who are pledging their assistance and material support, and we are very happy to receive

A senior defence official travelling with Cohen said Oman had agreed to allow five KC-10 tankers to be sent to the country. The huge refuelers would be positioned in a strategic spot to refuel B-52 bombers flying out of the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia for potential bombing runs or cruise missile strikes against Bagh-

Paula Jones case

Judge denies Clinton's plea to move up trial

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas, Feb 11: A US federal judge on Tuesday rejected President Bill Clinton's aftempt to move up a sexual harassment lawsuit against him and said she would leave the May 27 trial date intact, reports AP.

Clinton's lawyers had asked that the trial begin next month, telling a federal judge that gag-order violations by lawyers for Paula Corbin Jones, a former Arkansas state employee, were undermining the president's defence. In her order, Judge Susan

Webber Wright noted recent motions' in which Jones' lawyers said they would ask for more time to question potential witnesses.

The judge also cited a request filed under seal asking her to reconsider her exclusion of evidence involving former White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

Lewinsky has been taped claiming she had an affair with the president, but also denied that in a deposition given for the Jones case, sources familiar with the testimony say.

The judge said she would

consider earlier questioning of potential jurors so the trial could begin as close to the

scheduled date as possible. The judge told lawyers last week that she was dismayed by leaks of information since she imposed a gag order on Oct. 30, but said she could not deter-

mine who was releasing tidbits

of information to news media. Clinton lawyer Robert Bennett had said Jones' lawyers had leaked information and cited a Newsweek magazine article with references to Clinton's videotaped testimony in the case and a separate New York Times article quoting a

Jones-team investigator. Bennett said punishing the gag-order violators could get the case bogged down in litigation. He said the judge could solve the problem by setting the trial for March 23

Jones claims Clinton propositioned her in a Little Rock hotel on May 8,1991, when he was Arkansas governor and she was working at an Arkansas economic development conference. The president denies her claims.

As intellectuals try to

fathom the effect of Diana's

death and her elevation to

cultural icon, 'Dianaology' is

fast becoming an integral part

southern England, hosted a

conference called "new

sensibilities," feminists.

psycho-analysts, historians,

sociologists and also a priest

met to analyse the nation's

Two weeks ago the

reaction to Diana's death.

university of east London

Last week Kent University

of many university curricula.

Off the Record

Dianaology!

becoming subjects of serious academic study as university dis-

ciplines around the country try to explain what the outpouring

staged a conference entitled: "The Princess, the Premier and the

People: Authority new Britain," and Lancaster University held a

Better late than never

his first real iceberg until Tuesday - after his disaster epic

plane's captain came back to congratulate him and tell him to

was a huge ice floe below us with hundreds of icebergs, big ice-

bergs scattered in the ice flow, and I'd never seen an iceberg be-

fore," Cameron told The Associated Press by phone after land-

nations were announced in Beverly Hills because the plane's

phone system wasn't working. The studio had to fax news of the

"So it was just such a strange confluence of a moment."

Cameron was flying from Moscow to New York when the

We were just approaching the coast of Greenland and there

Cameron was left in suspense immediately after the nomi-

Cameron said he never thought about the Academy Awards

scored a record-tying 14 Oscar nominations, reports AP.

LOS ANGELES: "Titanic" director James Cameron didn't see

one-day Dianaology conference in November.

nominations to the airliner by satellite phone.

while making the 200 million dollars disaster epic.

look out his window.

ing in New York.

of national grief had to say about British society, reports AFP.

LONDON: The life and death of Diana, Princess of Wales, are

Arab League, OIC reject any step violating Iraq's sovereignty

CAIRO, Feb 11: Arab League and Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) leaders issued a joint statement Tuesday rejecting any steps violating Iraq's sovereignty in its crisis with the United Nations, reports AFP.

Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdel Meguid and OIC Chief Ezzedine Laraki rejected "any efforts aimed at violating the regional sovereignty of Iraq."

"Recourse to force will further complicate the crisis and expose the region to serious dangers," they said.

Abdel Meguid has been meeting with Laraki here since Monday over Iraq's deadlock with the United Nations over arms inspections.

Abdel Meguid and Laraki also affirmed "the necessity for Iraq to apply international res-olutions" calling for full access to its arms sites for UN inspec-

The Arab League chief receive a letter from Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi on "the crisis and contacts undertaken by Iran as president of the OIC summit" in Tehran last

December, officials said. Meguid also met Tuesday with Belarus' Foreign Minister Ivan Ivanovitch.

US citizens in ME urged to take precautions

WASHINGTON, Feb 11: The US State Department on Tuesday urged US nationals living in the Middle East, South Asia and southern European nations to take precautions because of the US standoff with Iraq, reports AFP.

In a statement, the department reminded US nationals living in affected areas to have their passports and other official documents handy, register with US embassies, fill vehicles with gasoline and stock up on food and clean water.

This sort of warning is generally given when the situation in a nation is deteriorating to the point where Americans may be forced to leave the country. "Although we see no direct

threat to American citizens in the region, we believe it prudent for Americans to heed the standing preparedness advice for American citizens living abroad," the department said in a statement.

Yugoslav official rules out extradition of war criminals

BELGRADE, Feb 11: Ignoring strong international pressure, Yugoslavia's top legal official on Tuesday ruled out extradition of citizens sought by the UN war crimes tribunal, reports

During talks with the court's chief prosecutor, Louise Arbour, Justice Minister Zoran Knezevic said his country would try war crimes suspects itself, according to a government statement reported by the Tanjug news agency.

Arbour is on a five-day visit in Yugoslavia, which now consists only of Serbia and Montenegro, to urge authorities to hand over three Yugoslav army officers charged with organising a 1991 massacre of 200 Croats.

Knezevic reiterated Yugoslavia's position that the country's constitution does not allow extradition of its citizens. Tanjug reported that Arbour called for a constitutional change to allow extradition.

Yugoslavia has in the past accused the tribunal of an anti-Serb bias. Knezevic also called for a "balanced approach" in the court's work. Most of those indicted by tribunal in The Hague. Netherlands, are Serbs.

Love affair sparks violence in Karachi

KARACHI, Feb 11: A Romeo and Juliet story between lovers from two traditionally rival ethnic groups set off mob vio-lence in Pakistan's largest city Wednesday, reports AP.

Gangs of Pathans set fire to a van and stoned the home of Karachi's chief minister, the highest elected official of the province, to protest the alleged "kidnapping" of a Pathan girl by a Mohajir boy.

The boy's family say the couple eloped, and no kidnapping took place. The two lovers were in hiding. The boy, Kanwar Ahson, is a nephew of a member of the National As-

sembly. Other scattered incidents were reported in several districts after the Pathans called a

strike of public transportation. a sector they dominate. It was the first clash between the two communities since

1990, and authorities feared it could reignite ethnic tensions that have led to past violence. In 1986, a traffic accident that killed a Pathan girl set off months of fighting that killed

about 1,000 people. To show its concern, the state administration suspended a senior police officer Tuesday for failing to find the couple

and defuse the crisis. Pathans, a conservative Muslim group who originate from the hills of northern Pakistan and Afghanistan, are the

third largest group among

Karachi's 13 million people.

Snowfall disrupts relief efforts in northeast Afghanistan

KEZER, Afghanistan, Feb 11: Fresh snowfall again disrupted relief efforts to earthquakeravaged northeast Afghanistan Wednesday, as survivors shivered under blankets near the crumbled shells of their former homes, reports AP.

One week after a magnitude-6.1 earthquake and subsequent landslides killed more than 4,000 people, snow, fog. mud and civil war continued to frustrate rescue efforts.

inches) of snow burying the closest airstrip, Red Cross and United Nations officials in Pakistan said relief flights to the isolated mountainous region may be canceled for the second day in a row. Relief supplies piled up at staging points in neighbouring Tajikistan, Pakistan and India, awaiting transportation to more than 15,000 people left

With 40 centimeters (16

homeless by the tremors. A World Food Programme truck convoy that reached the quake zone Tuesday after a twoday, 120-kilometer (72-mile) journey over icy mountain passes, found whole villages on their maps had virtually dis-

appeared. The four vehicles brought nearly 20 tons of food as well as blankets, tents and cooking stoves - barely enough to blunt the misery of the homeless in the below-freezing weather. Survivors used shovels to

search the rubble for lost relatives in the devastated village of Kezer at the base of a mountain 17 kilometers (10 miles) east of the district capital Rustaq.

"We buried 200 people in this village and we sent another 100 to the hospital in Rustaq," said Sher Mohammed, stepping around the bodies of sheep and goats that lay scattered across the muddy ground. "We put 15 to 20 people in each grave, because there weren't enough people left

The mountain looming over the village was split in two by last Wednesday's quake, sending thousands of tons of rocks and muddy earth crashing down onto sleeping villagers below, said Mohammed.

Villagers erected a makeshift tent from wooden posts and scraps of fabric to house survivors too badly wounded to be taken to the closest health clinic in Rustaq.

Women and children huddled inside the shell of the village school, one of the least damaged buildings despite the gaping holes in its walls.

Children were coughing and feverish. "If they don't get help soon, they will die," said Mohammed. Unburied animal carcasses further raised fears of disease.

As of Tuesday, relief teams traveling by donkey and in 4wheel drive cars had reached less than half of the 27 villages

damaged or destroyed by the earthquakes. Roads reached few of them and they were slimy with mud.

"Please help us, we have loss everything," shouted a veiled woman stumbling down the muddy road from Kezer as personnel from Doctors without Borders drove past. A man standing at her side simply

Survivors continued to flee towards flatlands to the south. apparently fearing more tremors.

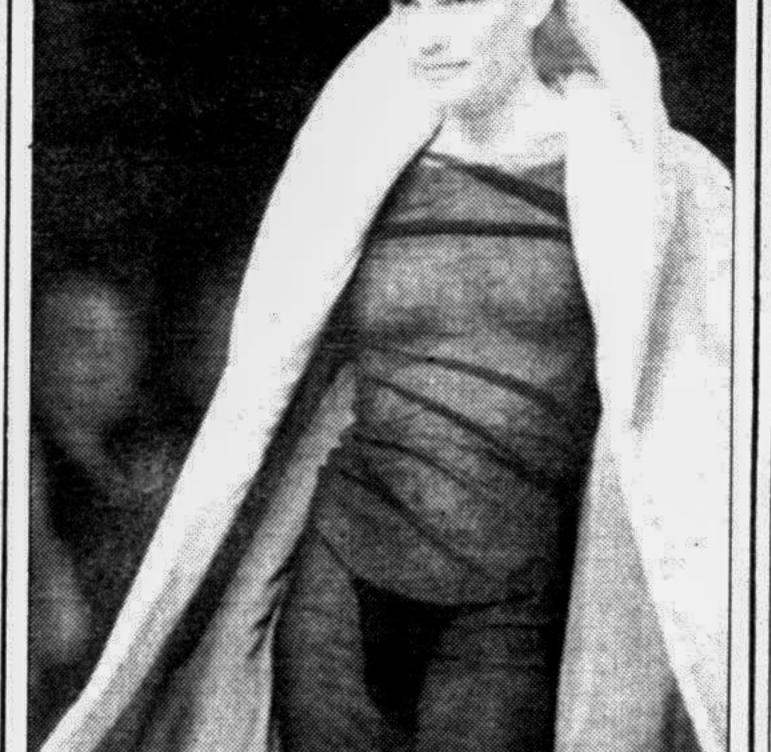
Reuter adds: An international aid official said on Tuesday last week's earthquake in northern Afghanistan had claimed about 4,200 lives and bad weather was hindering delivery of humanitarian aid to survivors.

Some of the survivors in this remote village told the first group of reporters to reach the disaster area they would soon start dying of hunger unless food arrived quickly. Afghan and aid officials said

that Ghanj was the worst hit of up to 28 villages in the country's northern region of Rustaq where aftershocks were still being felt on Monday.

"The main problem is now the weather," said Sheila Hall, Medical Coordinator for medicines sans frontiers, who said the agency's estimate for total dead was now 4,200.

'Titanic' appears in Oscar with a big bang



An unidentified model presents a winter coat with a transparent dress during Pasarela Fall/Winter fashion show in Madrid Tuesday. - AP/UNB photo

DPRK refugees flee to China to escape famine

HONG KONG, Feb 11: Thou sands of North Koreans were fleeing to China to escape the famine which has claimed at least two million lives, it was reported here today, says AFP.

Many of the refugees crossing the frozen Yalu river into China ended up begging for food and shelter in the small border town of Changbaishan, the South China Morning Post

The report quoted a middleranking official, interviewed in China, as saying nearly 10 per cent of the North Korean population - about two million people — had died in the famine gripping the country.

I've travelled to different parts of the country and so many people are dying that no one now bothers to keep a record of the deaths," the official, described as a well-con-

nected Worker's Party member.

She also claimed little food was reaching ordinary people. One North Korean who had made it to China said that in

the three-day train trip from her home town to the border, eight people in her carriage had starved to death. Kim Aesang, who left her two children aged five and seven with their grandfather in North Korea's Hamhung, she had no work and no access to food in

North Korea. She said she received five days' ration of grain at spring festival on January 28, but before that had received nothing for two years.

"I heard there was food from America but the cadres take all of it and when they have eaten their fill we just get the leftovers," Kim, 32, said.

BEVERLY HILLS, California, Feb 11: A year after "Titanic" had all but run aground and ap-

peared headed for one of the most spectacular disasters in Hollywood history, the movie received 14 Oscar nominations, more than any picture in nearly half a century, reports AP.

The three-hour epic about a fictional love affair on the doomed ship was nominated Tuesday for best picture, best actress for Kate Winslet, best director for James Cameron and best supporting actress for Gloria Stuart — at 87 the oldest performer sever nominated for an acting Oscar.

Hollywood's most expensive

movie ever at 200 million dollars, "Titanic" was so mired in delays it missed its release date by almost six months. Cameron's obsession with authenticity drove the cast and crew to the breaking point, and studio executives began laying

odds over whose heads would

Instead, "Titanic" has earned 337 million dollars and is steaming toward the all-time box-office record.

"Titanic" tied with 1950's "All About Eve" for the most nominations in the 70-year history of the Academy Awards. "Anchors aweigh!" Stuart said from her home in Los Angeles. Of the film's doubters, she said: "They were dissing it all around. That happens in Hol-

lywood. "L A Confidential" and "Good Will Hunting" each received nine nominations, including best picture. The other best picture nominees were "As Good As It Gets" and the crowd-pleasing British stripper comedy "The Full Monty. "It don't know how I'll cele-

brate, but it's not going to in-

volve taking any clothes off,"

said Mark Addy, who played the

hefty sidekick Dave.

Steven Spielberg's Dream-Works studio fared poorly in its first Oscar year. His "Amistad" was not nominated for best picture, nor was Spielberg for directing it. Anthony Hopkins was nominated for supporting actor, but Djimon Hounsou, the star of "Amistad," was overlooked.

The two movies that made the most money in 1997 — "Man in Black" and Spielberg's "The Lost World: Jurassic Park" - got a meager four nominations altogether, all in minor categories. Winslet was nominated for

best actress along with three fellow Englishwoman — Helena Bonham Carter of "The Wings of the Dove," Julie Christie of "Afterglow" and Judi Dench of "Mrs Brown" and one American, Helen Hunt, of "As Good As It

On the strong lineup of British women. Winslet said English actresses aren't better. The nominees, she suggested, were lucky to get good roles. "One can't help but feel: Good on the Brits," she said.

Robert Duvall's self-financed starring role in "The Apostle" earned him a best actor nomination. He will face Matt Damon from "Good Will Hunting," Peter Fonda from "Ulee's Gold," Dustin Hoffman from "Wag the Dog" and Jack Nicholson from "As Good As It Gets.

Absent from the nominations was Winslet's "Titanic" costar, young Leonardo DiCaprio. who has teen age girls going back to theaters several times to see the move. "Titanic" was also nomi-

nated for art direction, cinematography, costume design, editing, makeup, score, song "My Heart Will Go On," sound,

sound effects editing and visual The Academy Awards will be

presented March 23 in Los An-

In the best director category, Cameron faces Peter Cattaneo for "The Full Monty," Gus Van Sant for "Good Will Hunting," Curtis Hanson for "LA Confidential" and Atom Egoyan for

"The Sweet Hereafter. The nominees for best supporting actress were Stuart, Joan Cusack in "In And Out," Minnie Driver in "Good Will Hunting," Julianne Moore in "Boogie Nights" and Kim Basinger in "LA Confidential."

Burt Reynolds was nomi-Will Hunting."

nated for best supporting actor for "Boogie Nights." The other nominees were Robert Forester from "Jackie Brown," Hopkins from "Amistad," Greg Kinnera from "As Good As It Gets" and Robin Williams from "Good