

## China for strengthening defence coop with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Feb 20: Chinese Defence Minister General Chi Haotian arrived here late Friday for talks with Pakistani officials on strengthening bilateral defence cooperation, officials said, reports AFP.

The 16-member Chinese delegation, which included senior military commanders, was greeted at the Islamabad airport by Pakistani Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz and defence secretary Iftekhar Ali Khan.

In a statement on his arrival Chi said military relations between China and Pakistan were an important "component of the inter-state relations."

He said frequent exchanges of visits by leaders of defence institutions and the armed forces as well as the development of military relations through friendly cooperation helped facilitate peace and stability in the region.

"My current visit is aimed at enhancing mutual understand-

ing and trust, promoting friendship and cooperation, and strengthening the comprehensive partnership of cooperation towards the 21st century between our two countries and two armed forces," the defence minister said.

"The force of the wind tests the strength of the grass, and time reveals a person's heart," he said, adding that Sino-Pakistani friendship had stood the tests of time and changing circumstances.

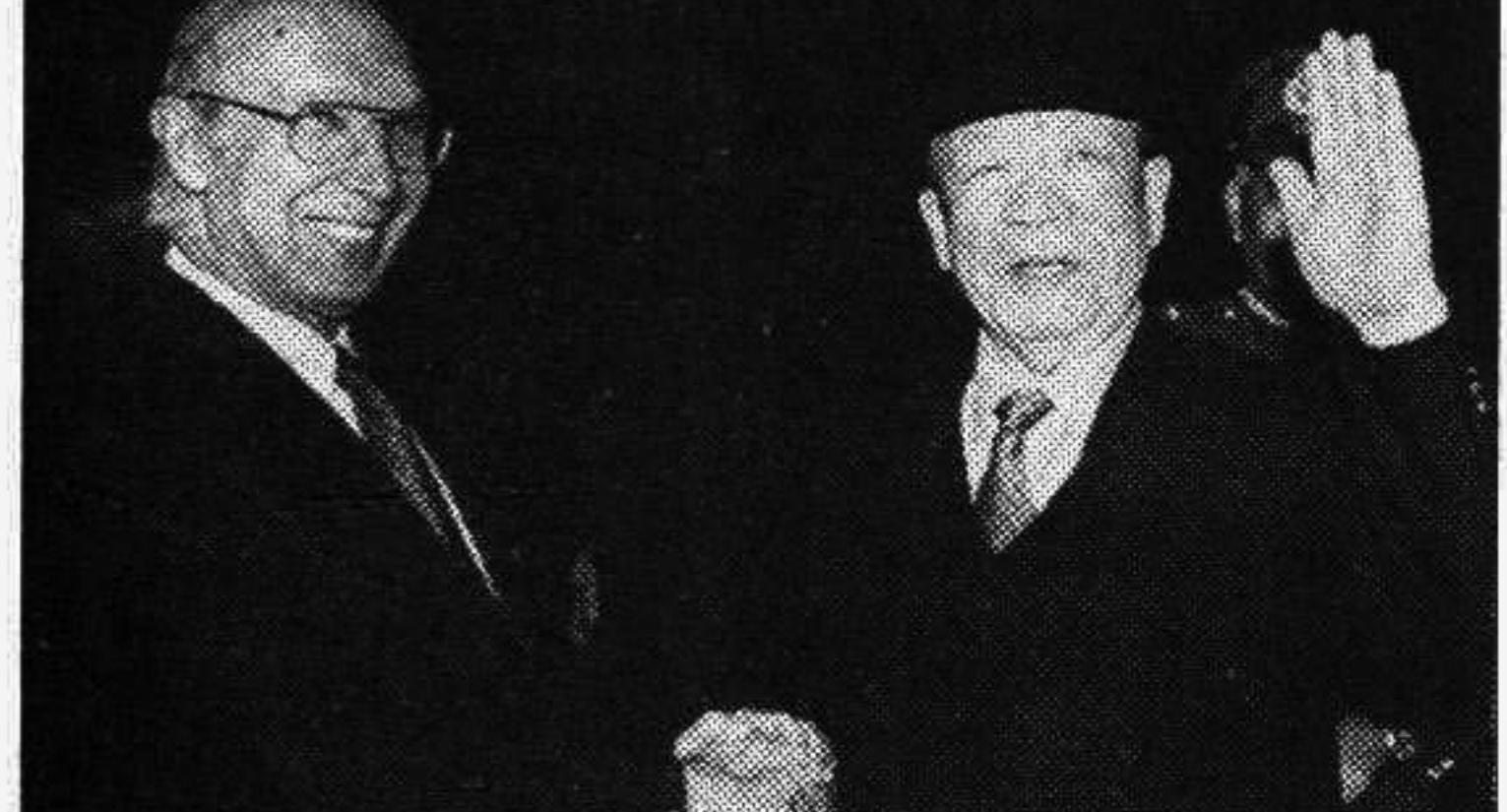
The Chinese team will hold talks with Pakistani officials today.

Earlier Aziz told state-run television that the visit was of great importance.

Both sides would discuss ways to further cement defence relations, he said.

Officials said the wide-ranging talks would cover political, regional and international issues and peace and security in the region.

"My current visit is aimed at enhancing mutual understand-



Chinese Defence Minister General Chi Haotian (R) waves while being greeted by Pakistani Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz at the Islamabad airport Friday. Chi, who heads a 16-member delegation that arrived here for a five-day visit, said military relations between China and Pakistan were an important "component of the inter-state relations."

— AFP photo

## Indian SC rules Mother is also natural guardian of her children

NEW DELHI, Feb 20: In a landmark judgement upholding the cause of gender equality in India, the country's Supreme Court ruled that the mother is also "the natural guardian of her minor children," reports IANS.

The pathbreaking decision by the apex court came on a petition filed by renowned Indian author Githa Hariharan and environmental activist Vandana Shiva, with the assistance of the Lawyers Collective Women's Rights Initiative. The petition challenged the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) refusal to let Hariharan make an investment in the name of her minor son on the ground that Section 6 (a) of the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act (HAMA) allowed the mother to be a natural guardian only "after" the father.

The Supreme Court interpreted the words "after him" in Section 6 (a) of HAMA to clarify that both parents were the natural guardians of the child and

that the mother, in the absence of the father, would be accepted as the natural guardian. The father's absence, it ruled, could be on several accounts — illness, inability to discharge parental responsibilities, travel or desertion. The petitioners' case, argued by noted lawyer Indira Jaisingh, director of the Lawyers Collective, cited the need for equality in the area of parental responsibility as well as the right of a child to equal access and care by both parents.

According to the Lawyers Collective, Jaisingh drew examples from countries like Britain, arguing how legislative changes in this area had led to an abandonment of the "guardianship-control" approach in favour of a "care-responsibility" approach in that country. The verdict was delivered by a bench of judges headed by Chief Justice Adarsh Sein Anand. The ruling is being seen as a considerable shift in favour of women's custody rights over their children.

The pathbreaking decision by the apex court came on a petition filed by renowned Indian author Githa Hariharan and environmental activist Vandana Shiva, with the assistance of the Lawyers Collective Women's Rights Initiative. The petition challenged the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) refusal to let Hariharan make an investment in the name of her minor son on the ground that Section 6 (a) of the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act (HAMA) allowed the mother to be a natural guardian only "after" the father.

The Supreme Court interpreted the words "after him" in Section 6 (a) of HAMA to clarify that both parents were the natural guardians of the child and

Kabila returns to Kinshasa

## Rebels shoot down Zimbabwian war plane in Congo

KIGALI, Rwanda, Feb 20: A Congolese rebel commander said yesterday that his forces shot down a Zimbabwean warplane in southern Congo, where the Rwandan-backed insurgents were preparing to lay siege to a major diamond centre, reports AP.

Bob Noy, the deputy rebel commander, said the fighter plane was downed Thursday over Kabalo, about 350 km east of the mining centre, Mbuji-Mayi.

Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia and Chad are defending Congolese President Laurent Kabila from the rebel coalition of ethnic Tutsis, disaffected Congolese soldiers and opposition politicians who took up arms in August.

The insurgents, backed by nearly Rwanda and Uganda, accuse Kabila of mismanagement, corruption and ethnic warmongering. They now control the eastern half of Congo, Africa's third-largest nation.

Meanwhile, Kabila returned to the capital, Kinshasa, on

Friday after days of uncertainty over his whereabouts. The usually reliable New Congo Net, an Internet site reporting on the Congo war, said Kabila went to Saudi Arabia for a medical check apparently related to his cardiac problems.

"I'm as healthy as can be. There's nothing wrong with me except that I'm probably too fat. I rested for three or four days. It was a rest," Kabila said in remarks broadcast on state TV.

The Sudanese TV reported Kabila made a stopover in Khartoum, where he met with President Omar el-Bashir. Congo's ambassador to Washington, Mififi Faida, told Congolese journalists that Kabila was on a "restful leave," but declined to elaborate.

Kabila, seen at Kinshasa Martyrs' Stadium, where young men were signing up for military service, invited the opposition leader, Arthur Zanidi Ngoma, who recently left the main rebel movement to return to Kinshasa, Congolese state radio reported.

# Contempt petition against Clinton

LITTLE ROCK (Arkansas), Feb 20: A woman who says President Bill Clinton defamed her by denying they had an affair asked a federal court here Friday to begin criminal contempt proceedings against him.

Dolly Kyle, Browning's request came after Judge Susan Webber Wright said Tuesday that she might hold Clinton in contempt to court for providing misleading testimony about his affair with Monica Lewinsky in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case.

It was not clear if Browning, who was a witness in the case, has standing to ask for recusal.

Browning - who is represented by Judicial Watch, a conservative anti-Clinton group - is a former high school classmate of Clinton.

Clinton strode into the East Room with visiting President Jacques Chirac for his first post-impeachment news conference, a session limited to only three questions each from French and American reporters. Clinton declined an opportunity to stay longer.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case.

It was not clear if Browning, who was a witness in the case, has standing to ask for recusal.

Browning - who is represented by Judicial Watch, a conservative anti-Clinton group - is a former high school classmate of Clinton.

Clinton strode into the East Room with visiting President Jacques Chirac for his first post-impeachment news conference, a session limited to only three questions each from French and American reporters. Clinton declined an opportunity to stay longer.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case.

It was not clear if Browning, who was a witness in the case, has standing to ask for recusal.

Browning - who is represented by Judicial Watch, a conservative anti-Clinton group - is a former high school classmate of Clinton.

Clinton strode into the East Room with visiting President Jacques Chirac for his first post-impeachment news conference, a session limited to only three questions each from French and American reporters. Clinton declined an opportunity to stay longer.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case.

It was not clear if Browning, who was a witness in the case, has standing to ask for recusal.

Browning - who is represented by Judicial Watch, a conservative anti-Clinton group - is a former high school classmate of Clinton.

Clinton strode into the East Room with visiting President Jacques Chirac for his first post-impeachment news conference, a session limited to only three questions each from French and American reporters. Clinton declined an opportunity to stay longer.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case.

It was not clear if Browning, who was a witness in the case, has standing to ask for recusal.

Browning - who is represented by Judicial Watch, a conservative anti-Clinton group - is a former high school classmate of Clinton.

Clinton strode into the East Room with visiting President Jacques Chirac for his first post-impeachment news conference, a session limited to only three questions each from French and American reporters. Clinton declined an opportunity to stay longer.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case.

It was not clear if Browning, who was a witness in the case, has standing to ask for recusal.

Browning - who is represented by Judicial Watch, a conservative anti-Clinton group - is a former high school classmate of Clinton.

Clinton strode into the East Room with visiting President Jacques Chirac for his first post-impeachment news conference, a session limited to only three questions each from French and American reporters. Clinton declined an opportunity to stay longer.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case.

It was not clear if Browning, who was a witness in the case, has standing to ask for recusal.

Browning - who is represented by Judicial Watch, a conservative anti-Clinton group - is a former high school classmate of Clinton.

Clinton strode into the East Room with visiting President Jacques Chirac for his first post-impeachment news conference, a session limited to only three questions each from French and American reporters. Clinton declined an opportunity to stay longer.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case.

It was not clear if Browning, who was a witness in the case, has standing to ask for recusal.

Browning - who is represented by Judicial Watch, a conservative anti-Clinton group - is a former high school classmate of Clinton.

Clinton strode into the East Room with visiting President Jacques Chirac for his first post-impeachment news conference, a session limited to only three questions each from French and American reporters. Clinton declined an opportunity to stay longer.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case.

It was not clear if Browning, who was a witness in the case, has standing to ask for recusal.

Browning - who is represented by Judicial Watch, a conservative anti-Clinton group - is a former high school classmate of Clinton.

Clinton strode into the East Room with visiting President Jacques Chirac for his first post-impeachment news conference, a session limited to only three questions each from French and American reporters. Clinton declined an opportunity to stay longer.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case.

It was not clear if Browning, who was a witness in the case, has standing to ask for recusal.

Browning - who is represented by Judicial Watch, a conservative anti-Clinton group - is a former high school classmate of Clinton.

Clinton strode into the East Room with visiting President Jacques Chirac for his first post-impeachment news conference, a session limited to only three questions each from French and American reporters. Clinton declined an opportunity to stay longer.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case.

It was not clear if Browning, who was a witness in the case, has standing to ask for recusal.

Browning - who is represented by Judicial Watch, a conservative anti-Clinton group - is a former high school classmate of Clinton.

Clinton strode into the East Room with visiting President Jacques Chirac for his first post-impeachment news conference, a session limited to only three questions each from French and American reporters. Clinton declined an opportunity to stay longer.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case.

It was not clear if Browning, who was a witness in the case, has standing to ask for recusal.

Browning - who is represented by Judicial Watch, a conservative anti-Clinton group - is a former high school classmate of Clinton.

Clinton strode into the East Room with visiting President Jacques Chirac for his first post-impeachment news conference, a session limited to only three questions each from French and American reporters. Clinton declined an opportunity to stay longer.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case.

It was not clear if Browning, who was a witness in the case, has standing to ask for recusal.

Browning - who is represented by Judicial Watch, a conservative anti-Clinton group - is a former high school classmate of Clinton.

Clinton strode into the East Room with visiting President Jacques Chirac for his first post-impeachment news conference, a session limited to only three questions each from French and American reporters. Clinton declined an opportunity to stay longer.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case.

It was not clear if Browning, who was a witness in the case, has standing to ask for recusal.

Browning - who is represented by Judicial Watch, a conservative anti-Clinton group - is a former high school classmate of Clinton.

Clinton strode into the East Room with visiting President Jacques Chirac for his first post-impeachment news conference, a session limited to only three questions each from French and American reporters. Clinton declined an opportunity to stay longer.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case.

It was not clear if Browning, who was a witness in the case, has standing to ask for recusal.

Browning - who is represented by Judicial Watch, a conservative anti-Clinton group - is a former high school classmate of Clinton.

Clinton strode into the East Room with visiting President Jacques Chirac for his first post-impeachment news conference, a session limited to only three questions each from French and American reporters. Clinton declined an opportunity to stay longer.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case.

It was not clear if Browning, who was a witness in the case, has standing to ask for recusal.

Browning - who is represented by Judicial Watch, a conservative anti-Clinton group - is a former high school classmate of Clinton.

Clinton strode into the East Room with visiting President Jacques Chirac for his first post-impeachment news conference, a session limited to only three questions each from French and American reporters. Clinton declined an opportunity to stay longer.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case.

It was not clear if Browning, who was a witness in the case, has standing to ask for recusal.

Browning - who is represented by Judicial Watch, a conservative anti-Clinton group - is a former high school classmate of Clinton.

Clinton strode into the East Room with visiting President Jacques Chirac for his first post-impeachment news conference, a session limited to only three questions each from French and American reporters. Clinton declined an opportunity to stay longer.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case.

It was not clear if Browning, who was a witness in the case, has standing to ask for recusal.

Browning - who is represented by Judicial Watch, a conservative anti-Clinton group - is a former high school classmate of Clinton.

Clinton strode into the East Room with visiting President Jacques Chirac for his first post-impeachment news conference, a session limited to only three questions each from French and American reporters. Clinton declined an opportunity to stay longer.

Browning also asked that Wright recuse from the case and that the matter of contempt be transferred to a court outside Arkansas, after Wright said she would do so at the request of any of the parties in the Jones case