

Nixon's letter to Yahya

FROM PAGE 12
 exception of two-- an independent member and the president of the Moslem League -- had pressed for immediate recognition of Bangladesh.
 Indira Gandhi, according to these sources, said at the closed meeting that India was delaying a decision not because of the threat of war with Pakistan or out of fear of a confrontation with Communist China, but for "more weighty reasons".
 Gandhi wanted to see if the Bangalee independence fighters could establish effective administrative control over a sizeable area. What other governments do about recognition will also be a factor, but not the deciding one, these sources said.
 She told the opposition leaders that India had sounded out several friendly countries on the recognition issue, but that at least for now these countries tended to regard the crisis as a Pakistani internal matter.
 Indira Gandhi reportedly contended that Indian recognition now might hurt the Bangalees' cause by seeming to substantiate the Pakistani charge that the

independence struggle was engineered by India and was being kept alive only by Indian arms aid.
PRESS IS WARNED ON 'IRRESPONSIBLE' REPORTS
 The military government of Yahya Khan warned the newspapers today "not to jeopardize efforts to bring the country back to normalcy by publishing irresponsible reports".
 An official announcement said newspapers would not be allowed to infringe on a martial law regulation that bars publication of anything calculated to harm the integrity of Pakistan. The regulation was promulgated on March 26, when General Yahya announced the military crackdown.
 "The nation today is faced with a crisis and everything has to be subordinated to it," the new announcement said.
 "Some newspapers have started acting in an irresponsible manner which is against the interest of the nation," it added.
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Migrant workers board an overcrowded bus to return to their cities and villages after the West Bengal state government imposed a partial lockdown to limit the spread of the coronavirus disease in Kolkata, India yesterday.
 PHOTO: REUTERS

Buses back on streets; crowds

FROM PAGE 1
 "Train and launch services will remain suspended as the ongoing restrictions have been extended ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr," he said.
 Although public buses did not run on the city streets for 22 days amid the Covid-19 restrictions, traffic had been increasing over the past few days. In the absence of public transport, people took rickshaws, CNG-run auto-rickshaws and cars on rent to reach their destinations.
 Yesterday, after the bus started operating again, Dhaka once again witnessed its perennial traffic congestion. Police said it happened due to a huge pressure of shoppers ahead of Eid, which will be celebrated in a week.
 Buses started leaving their depots in the morning and ran on roads, including in Dhanmondi, Mirpur, Uttara, Banani and Mohakhali, at half capacity.
 Passengers were seen wearing masks and strictly following the Covid safety protocols.
 Those people, especially office-goers, expressed relief over the resumption of public transport.
 Saeed Ahmed, who works at a private organisation in Gulshan, said it had cost him Tk 200 to go to work from his home in Mohammadpur in a CNG-run auto-rickshaw.
 Yesterday, he spent only Tk 30 as he took a bus.
 But experts said buses often carry passengers more than the stipulated capacity and if they do so again, the coronavirus infection may spread further.
 Heavy traffic congestion was seen on Mirpur Road, Elephant Road and other prominent streets in Gulshan, Banani, Mohakhali, New Market, Bangla Motor, Panthapath, and Karwan Bazar areas.
 The congestion got even heavier in the afternoon. Traffic police at some key intersections were seen busy controlling traffic movement.
 The government imposed restrictions on movement of people and public transport on April 5 to contain the second wave of Covid-19. The restrictions were extended till May 16 in phases.
 As per a new government circular, public transport, including buses and minibuses, were allowed to operate only inside the territory of each district from yesterday. However, inter-district bus services would remain suspended in the country during the ongoing "lockdown".
 Meanwhile, a huge number of cars and minibuses continue to carry passengers to and from Dhaka on rent, charging almost double the usual bus fare. The number of such vehicles is expected to go up during

the Eid.
 The rush at the ferry terminals is also increasing every day.
 With Eid-ul-Fitr ahead, shopping centres and malls are filled with customers.
 Sellers at different shopping centres and malls said the number of customers increased yesterday. They think they would see a heavier rush at the malls today as it is the last weekend before Eid.
 Visiting some major shopping malls and markets in Dhaka -- New Market, Chandni Chawk, Gausia, Noor Mansion, and Bashundhara City Mall -- yesterday, The Daily Star correspondent found customers pouring into the shops from 10:00am.
 At most shopping centres, maintaining the health and safety rules appeared a big challenge due to the heavy flow of customers.
 At the entry points of some markets, antiseptic mix was sprayed on customers, instead of providing them with hand sanitisers. Besides, there was not enough space inside most of the shops to maintain physical distancing.
 Lifestyle brand Aarong's Asad Gate branch was fined Tk 1 lakh for not maintaining health safety rules by a mobile court. Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam accompanied the team. DNCC Executive Magistrate Tajwar Akram Sakapi Ibne Sazzad said the outlet was heavily crowded. Children were being allowed to enter without masks.
 Mobile courts in the capital also conducted raids in Mouchak and Bailey Road areas yesterday to ensure compliance of the health rules.
 A total of 23 people were fined Tk 8,500 at two shopping centres for not wearing masks.
 Although food courts in the malls were asked not to allow people to sit and eat, the shops in the Bashundhara shopping mall were seen calling customers to do so, dodging law enforcers.
 Whenever they sensed any trouble, they put their shutters down.
 During iftar, many were seen sitting in groups on the floors of the malls and taking their meals.
 During the last one month, the government, however, has relaxed many of the Covid-19 restrictions. It reopened shopping malls ahead of Eid and thousands of shoppers are thronging them every day, ignoring health safety rules.
 It has alarmed health experts.
 The experts said the Covid situation in Bangladesh could worsen due to the increased public movement centring the Eid. They warned that the situation can turn dangerous if a new variant found in India made its way here.

Mamata takes centre stage

FROM PAGE 12
 described her as a courageous grassroots leader and a modern "Jhansi ki Rani" who proved that no matter the odds, "Goliaths can be humbled".
 Another senior Congress leader Manish Tewari also called Mamata the "Rani of Jhansi who has rewritten history", and Anand Sharma said her win "has given a ray of hope to all those who believe in an inclusive and democratic India".
 Perhaps the most ringing endorsement came from veteran Congress leader Kamal Nath, former chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, who said Mamata was "the leader of India".
 Even amid the fulsome praise for Mamata, who broke away from Congress in 1987, all the aforementioned Congress leaders avoided going into the issue of putting up a common face of the opposition to take on Modi in the next general elections.
 Kamal Nath, who had led his party to victory in the heartland state in the 2018 assembly polls there against the BJP, had to step down as chief minister of Madhya Pradesh when a majority of Congressmen defected to the BJP in 2020, bringing the saffron party back to power there.
 Asked if Mamata, the leader of TMC, could be the face of the opposition in the 2024 electoral battle, Nath stated the obvious on Wednesday: it is for the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) led by Congress to decide.
 TMC and its electoral symbol of the "Jora Ghas Phul" is not part of the UPA, which ruled India from 2004 to 2014 under Manmohan Singh's prime ministership and Sonia's chairmanship of the alliance before it was voted out by the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA).
 But that the senior Congress

leaders are publicly lavishing praise on Mamata's leadership is itself significant -- political observers see it as a curt message to the Gandhi family (Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka) to go for the much-needed organisational changes.
 What appears to have strengthened Mamata's claim to be the opposition's face is no doubt TMC's unexpectedly momentous win in Bengal. But there are still hurdles she has to negotiate and many questions and considerations with which the opposition has to contend.
 First is an anti-BJP front possible without Congress and is it fair to write the political obituary of the grand old party just because it has lost in the recent round of assembly elections in Kerala, Assam and was wiped out in Bengal?
 Many political pundits tend to write off Congress every time it loses general elections or state-level polls. The same pundits then hail the party's resilience when it overcomes setbacks and returns to winning ways like the party had done in the assembly elections in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in 2018.
 One must not forget that Congress is still the party with the highest number of Lok Sabha seats (51) after BJP -- more than any regional party.
 Secondly, Congress continues to retain its pan-India footprints and is in power in three states -- Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Punjab which together account for a total of 49 Lok Sabha seats. By contrast, no regional party has appeal beyond the border of a state. Congress too had won against the might of the BJP in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh assembly elections in 2018.
 Thirdly, regional parties are more concerned with protecting their respective state turfs where

they are in competition with either BJP or Congress and, unlike Congress, lack a pan-India agenda or vision. Only Tamil Nadu witnesses a direct fight between two regional parties -- Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and its principal rival All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam.
 Fourthly, observers think Mamata is not the only powerful regional leader to set up a national network of regional parties. Sharad Pawar, the head of Nationalist Congress Party, is also regarded as an influential prime mover of opposition unity.
 Pawar's party, also an offshoot of Congress, is a key constituent of the ruling coalition in Maharashtra with the second highest number of Lok Sabha seats (48) after Uttar Pradesh (80).
 Without Congress in it, the framework of a joint anti-BJP opposition has to be essentially a sum total of regional parties and states as an alternative to the Modi-led BJP. Can these parties with state-specific agendas have a common national programme and agree on a common prime ministerial candidate? How durable will such an arrangement be and how appealing will it be to voters who often vote differently in state assembly and national elections?
 One saw how in 2015 an opposition alliance led by Nitish Kumar crumbled in Bihar and how Mamata herself had unsuccessfully tried to put together an anti-BJP front through a series of meetings in 2018 in the run up to the 2019 general elections.
 The history of regional party leaders or breakaway Congress leaders becoming PMs like Charan Singh, H D Deve Gowda, Morarji Desai, V P Singh, Chandrashekhar and Inder Kumar Gujral does not inspire confidence about the stability of governments under them.

Hasina greets

FROM PAGE 12
 people of two Bengals.
 "At this critical time of the global coronavirus pandemic, we are committed to working together on the basis of friendly regional cooperation aiming to overcome the crisis," said the PM.
 She said India is a genuine friend of Bangladesh. "Particularly, our relations with the people of West Bengal are very close, hearty and everlasting."
 Hasina recalled with gratitude the contributions of the people and the political leaders of West Bengal to the Liberation War of Bangladesh as well as the same cultural heritage and lifestyle of both Bengals on the auspicious moment when Mujib Year, the Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh's independence and the 50 years of India-Bangladesh diplomatic relations are being celebrated in 2021.
 The premier wished Mamata good health, long life and continued success.

Spread of Covid

FROM PAGE 12
 state of Uttar Pradesh - home to about 200 million people - "there are deaths in almost every second house", he said.
 "People are scared and huddled in their homes with fever and cough. The symptoms are all of Covid-19, but with no information available many think it is seasonal flu."
 India's Goa state, a hugely popular tourist destination on the western coast, has the highest rate of Covid-19 infections in the country, with up to one in every two people testing positive in recent weeks, government officials said.
 Evidence suggests the pandemic is moving eastward of India and a rise has been noticed in the number of daily cases in five eastern states, including West Bengal and Assam, along with rising mortality, according to the Indian Health Ministry.
 This was stated at a high-level meeting on Wednesday chaired by Indian Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan. States officials from Assam, West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar and Jharkhand attended the meeting, reported our New Delhi correspondent.
 Several states have imposed various levels of social restrictions to try and stem infections, but the federal government has refused to impose a national lockdown.
 India's southern state of Kerala, which has 376,004 active cases, announced it will impose nine days of curbs on movement from Saturday.
LIFE AND DEATH DECISIONS
 In the capital Delhi, fewer than 20 of more than 5,000 Covid-19 intensive care beds are free at any one time.
 Student doctors like Rohan Aggarwal, 26, recruited to fight the second wave, are being forced to make life and death decisions.
 His Holy Family Hospital in Delhi normally has a capacity for 275 adults, but is currently caring for 385. "Who to be saved, who not to be saved should be decided by God," Aggarwal told Reuters during a grim overnight shift.
 "We are not made for that -- we are just humans. But at this point in time, we are being made to do this."
 Experts have said vast vaccination can be a solution to get out of this crisis.
 While India is the world's biggest vaccine maker, it is struggling to produce enough product for the surge in infections. Its two current vaccine producers will take two months or more to boost total monthly output from the current 70 million to 80 million doses.
'POORER HOUSEHOLDS'
 Around 230 million Indians fell into poverty due to the pandemic last year with young people and women the hardest hit, and the current second wave threatens to make matters even worse, a new study has said.
 India's stringent months-long lockdown from last March put around 100 million people out of work, the report by the Bangalore-based Azim Premji University said, with around 15 percent unable to find jobs even by the end of the year.

দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন		প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা	
"সবাই নিজে গড়বে দেশ, দুর্নীতি মুক্ত বাংলাদেশ"		মাইক্রোবাস আউটসোর্সিং সংক্রান্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি	
নং-০০.০১.০০০০.১০৩.৬৪.০০১.২১.১২১০৮		তারিখঃ ০৫/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ	
১।	মহাপালা/বিজ্ঞাপন/প্রজ্ঞাপন	১।	দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন, ঢাকা।
২।	সরঞ্জাম/সরঞ্জামের নাম, বোলা ও কোড	২।	দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন, ঢাকা, ৬৩৫০১।
৩।	যে কারনের জন্য দরপত্র	৩।	১ জুলাই ২০১১ থেকে ৩০ জুন ২০২১ পর্যন্ত দরপত্র সিডিউল বর্ণিত শর্তাদি সাপেক্ষে দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকার কর্মকর্তা ও কর্মচারীদের অফিস যাত্রাবাহকের জন্য ৫টি এবং কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারীদের অফিস আনা-নেওয়ার ব্যয়সম্পন্ন কারের ব্যবহারের জন্য ৪টি অর্থাৎ মোট ০৯ (নয়টি) সিডিউল চালিত ১২ আসন বিনীট Climate Controlled মাইক্রোবাস (২০১৪ বা তৎপরবর্তী মডেলের বনবিক ০৫ (পাঁচ) সীট ব্যবস্থার হেজেরে এনামি) ভাড়া।
৪।	দরপত্র সূত্র ও তারিখ	৪।	নথি নং-০০.০১.০০০০.১০৩.৬৪.০০১.২১-১২১০৮ তারিখঃ ০৫/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ।
৫।	সরঞ্জাম পদ্ধতি	৫।	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র (OTM)।
৬।	বাংলা ও অর্ডার উদ্দেশ্য	৬।	দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশনের রাজস্ব বাজেট।
৭।	দরপত্র প্রচারের তারিখ	৭।	০৭/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ।
৮।	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	৮।	৩০/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
৯।	দরপত্র বাবিনের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	৯।	৩১/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১০।	দরপত্র বোকার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	১০।	দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন, প্রধান কার্যালয়ে পরিচালক (অর্থ ও হিসাব) এর অফিস কক্ষে আদালী ৩১/০৫/২০২১খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকায় দরপ্রস্তাবদাতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) দরপত্র বোলা হবে।
১১।	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের স্থান/সম্প্রদায়	১১।	দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ১, সেগুনবাগিচা, ঢাকা-১০০০।
১২।	দরপত্র বাবিনের স্থান/সম্প্রদায়	১২।	দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ১, সেগুনবাগিচা, ঢাকা-১০০০।
১৩।	প্রতিবেদন দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	১৩।	প্রতিবেদন দরপত্র ডকুমেন্টের মূল্য ২,০০০/- (দুই হাজার) টাকা (অন্যসহযোগ্য)।
১৪।	দরপত্রের নিরাপত্তা জামানত	১৪।	দরপত্রের সাথে দরপত্র জামানত হিসেবে প্রতিটি মাইক্রোবাসের জন্য ২০,০০০/- (দুই হাজার) টাকার ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পেমেন্ট অর্ডার যে কোন ব্যক্তিগত ব্যাংক (সিডিউল বাকস) হতে সংকর্তা পরিচালক (অর্থ ও হিসাব), দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা-এর অনুমোদিত ব্যাংক করতে হবে। অন্যথায় দরপত্র সরাসরি বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
১৫।	দরপত্রের বৈধতার মেয়াদ	১৫।	দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশনের কার্যবিধি (Validity) দরপত্র বোকার তারিখ হতে ১২০ (একশত বিশ) দিন পর্যন্ত বৈধ থাকবে।
১৬।	দরপত্রের যোগ্যতা ও প্রয়োজনীয় দলিলাদি	১৬।	মাইক্রোবাসের প্রকৃত মালিক/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান। দরপত্রের সাথে দরপত্রের হোল্ডিং/বিল/পত্র, সিডিউল সাইটসিট, ট্যাক্স টোকেন, গ্রেড সার্টিফিকেট, আন-টু-কেট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সাইটসিট, জাট, টিআইএন সাইটসিট ও আয়কর পরিশোধের প্রত্যয়নপত্রের ফটোকপি সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
১৭।	বিশেষ নির্দেশনা	১৭।	ক. কর্তৃক কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন বা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল অথবা যে কোন দরপত্র প্রবেশের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করবে। খ. দরপত্রের বিজ্ঞপ্তি শর্তাবলী দরপত্র সিডিউলে উল্লেখ থাকবে। গ. অনির্দিষ্ট কারণবশত নির্দিষ্ট তারিখ ও সময়ে দরপত্র প্রবেশ করা সম্ভব না হলে পরবর্তী কার্যক্রমে একই সময়ে ও স্থানে দরপত্র প্রবেশ করা হবে।
১৮।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর নাম	১৮।	মোহাম্মদ আব্দুল আওয়াল।
১৯।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর পদবী	১৯।	পরিচালক (অর্থ ও হিসাব)।
২০।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর ঠিকানা	২০।	দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ১, সেগুনবাগিচা, ঢাকা।
২১।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর সাথে যোগাযোগের বিবরণ	২১।	০২-৫৮-৩১৬৪ ৭৬ (অফিস)।

asked if Mamata, the leader of TMC, could be the face of the opposition in the 2024 electoral battle, Nath stated the obvious on Wednesday: it is for the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) led by Congress to decide.
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 But that the senior Congress

The earliest known human

FROM PAGE 12
 wrapped in a shroud with her or his head resting on what was probably a pillow, "indicating that the community may have undertaken some form of funerary rite", said lead author Maria Martinon-Torres, director of the National Research Centre on Human Evolution, in Burgos, Spain.
 The extraordinary find highlights the emergence of both complex social behaviour among Homo sapiens, and cultural differences across populations of modern humans in Africa and beyond.
 Fragments of the child's bones were dug up at the Panga ya Saidi caves in 2013, but it wasn't until

five years later that the shallow, circular grave -- three metres below the cave floor -- was fully exposed, revealing a tight cluster and decomposed bones.
 "At this point, we weren't sure what we had found," said Emmanuel Ndiema of the National Museum of Kenya. "The bones were just too delicate to study in the field."
 Archaeologists stabilised and plastered them into a bundle and transported them, first to the museum and then to the research centre in Spain.
 "We started uncovering parts of the skull and face," Martinon-Torres said.

"The articulation of the spine and the ribs was also astonishingly well preserved, even conserving the curvature of the thorax cage."
 Subsequent microscopic analysis and luminescence dating confirmed that Mto's tiny body had been carefully covered with dirt from around the pit, and had rested undisturbed for nearly 80,000 years.
 Homo sapiens originated in Africa, but little is known about mortuary practices on the continent compared to Europe and the Middle East, where even older human burial sites have been unearthed, including one in Israel thought to be 120,000 years old.

Its reduction

FROM PAGE 12
 the new Global Methane Assessment by the UN-led Climate and Clean Air Coalition.
 Technical solutions -- mostly in the fossil fuel and waste sectors -- are "readily available" and can reduce humanity's methane emissions by more than 30 percent this decade, the analysis found.
 Together with other measures that are currently available, the reduction could be as much as 45 percent, it said.
 Many of these solutions are low cost and some even have "negative" costs, meaning that they would more than pay for themselves, the report found.
 It said the more ambitious 45 percent reduction could avoid nearly 0.3 degrees Celsius of warming over the next two decades and reduce ground level ozone pollution.
 It would also, each year, prevent 255,000 premature deaths, 73 billion hours of lost labour from extreme heat, 775,000 asthma-related hospital visits, as well as effectively increasing global crop yields by 26 million tonnes.
 "Fast and ambitious methane mitigation is one of the best strategies available today to deliver immediate and long-lasting multiple benefits for climate, agriculture, human and ecosystem health," UN Environment Programme (UNEP) chief Inger Andersen said in a forward to the report.

World powers back US plan

FROM PAGE 12
 Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday said he supported the idea of a waiver on patent protections for coronavirus vaccines and urged his government to consider lifting them for Russia's jobs.
 "We are hearing from Europe an idea that, in my opinion, deserves attention -- namely, to remove patent protections from vaccines against Covid-19 altogether," Putin said during a televised meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Tatiana Golikova.
 Russia has registered three coronavirus vaccines, and yesterday approved a fourth -- a single-dose version of its Sputnik V jab called Sputnik Light, reports AFP.
 Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government welcomed Biden's announcement.
 The Africa Union's health watchdog also praised the United States' support for waiver on patent protections as a "remarkable expression of leadership".
 But the US move is opposed by a consortium of big pharmaceutical companies, which described the decision as "disappointing"

and warned it could hamper innovation.
 Drugmakers said Biden's move could disrupt a fragile supply chain, and urged rich countries instead to share vaccines more generously with the developing world.
 The International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations said a waiver would invite new manufacturers that lacked essential know-how and oversight.
 While Wall Street's main indexes opened flat on Thursday, vaccine makers' shares fell. Moderna was down 9.1% at 1351 GMT. Pfizer fell 3.6% and Novavax fell 6.2%. In London, AstraZeneca, which has sold its vaccine at cost price, was down less than 0.1%.
 Shares in Asia-listed vaccine makers -- including Shanghai Fosun Pharmaceutical, CanSino Biologics and JCR Pharmaceutical -- tumbled yesterday after the US announcement.
 The move "probably isn't great news for the vaccine manufacturers who will now face generic copies of their vaccine", said Olivier d'Assier,

head of APAC applied research at Qontigo GmbH.
 More than 155 million people have been reported to be infected by the coronavirus and almost 3.4 million have died, according to a Reuters tally.
 Meanwhile, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch yesterday urged the Covax global vaccine-sharing scheme to "enhance transparency" and publish its contracts with job manufacturers.
 In a joint statement, HRW, Amnesty and the US consumer rights advocacy group Public Citizen said they had written to Covax with recommendations relating to transparency, and vaccine availability and affordability.
 "Governments and other donors funding Covax should demand maximum transparency and accountability, including to verify all commitments with companies to supply Covax at non-profit prices or minimal profit pricing through third-party audits whose results are publicly shared," they said.