

(1) Only One...

process secret and why only one company sent in quotes.

It is said that the NPA sent out a request to 13 different companies, in the US, Europe and UAE, but the request was not put out to public tender.

In a letter to each company, the NPA reportedly asked for prices of various devices. The value of the contract is \$16 million USD.

According to the letter, the NPA asked for prices of computers, cameras for computers, finger print machines, backdrops for cameras, printers, tools boxes and solar energy devices. The authority said it needs 6,500 units of each.

Only UAE-based Prologix reportedly participated in the process while none of the companies from the US and Europe responded, said the source.

"Restricted tendering process is not bound to the bidding and there should be no delay as it is an important issue; because of that, the Independent Election Commission had recommended the process be approved by the National Procurement Authority," said Bakhtyar Najman, NPA's anti-corruption expert.

According to the IEC, foreign experts had identified these companies as top companies four months ago, but the letters were only sent to each company last month.

"The commission recommended 13 companies and gave them 22 days and during this period, the companies shared their offers, ideas and recommendations with the National Procurement Authority; the process ended on Tuesday," said Imam Mohammad Warimach, head of the IEC secretariat. Sources within the IEC have said that if Prologix company fails to meet the criteria, it will not be the winner of the contract which will then be put out for public tender. But the question remains as to why the IEC and NPA took such a hasty decision in terms of calling for quotes for the equipment.

"Why is the program removed from the process and changed into a closed process despite the fact that the commission had enough time for it (to be put out to tender); we needed to move forward with the procurement process over the past several months in order to avoid controversy," said Yusuf Rashid, head of The Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan.

Experts to Govt: Work on Reforms Not on Equipment

Meanwhile, election monitoring groups have criticized government over its approach in bringing reforms in the election commission.

They said government is thinking of purchasing equipment for the IEC instead of spending time on capacity building and implementing reforms in the election commission.

"This process will pave the way for political corruption in future elections," said Jandad Spinghar, head of the Afghan Civil Society Election Network.

According to election monitoring groups, up to now systematic reforms have not been put in place in the electoral commissions and the capacity within the election management bodies is not adequate in terms of ensuring transparent elections.

Experts say that government delayed holding parliamentary elections for two years, but now it is making symbolic and hasty decisions. (Tolonews)

(2) Poverty Drives...

among other things, to "dry up" militant recruitment.

But experts say poverty is a significant driving factor, with parents unable to provide for their children delivering them, often unknowingly, into the hands of abusers and extremists.

AFP spoke recently with several of the children rescued at an orphanage in southeastern Ghazni province, where they had been placed as officials tried to track down their parents.

"They talked to my father and he had no objection," said nine-year-old Nabiullah, sobbing as he recalled being taken from his home by recruiters.

Another child, who told AFP he was eight, said: "Two Taliban came saying they wanted to take us to a madrassa in Quetta. I didn't know more until the men were arrested."

Officials said they had saved the children, most aged between four and 14, from what Mohammad Aref Wahidi, deputy governor of Ghazni, described as "kidnapping gangs" taking them to Pakistan.

The children were "given drugs by their abductors that made them dizzy and confused", provincial police chief Moham-

mad Mustafa Mayar told AFP, adding that among those freed were 13 youngsters allegedly trained as suicide bombers.

They were later paraded in front of media, with many crying as they stood beside the traffickers.

Afghan elders have denied they intentionally send youngsters to join the Taliban's nearly 16-year insurgency.

"I admit that children are being sent for religious studies in Pakistani madrassas, but I don't think they are trained to become suicide bombers," Haji Mohammad Sharif, a tribal elder from Paktika province which borders Ghazni, told AFP.

The insurgents also deny the claims.

But Afghan authorities routinely report intercepting child soldiers, and Human Rights Watch issued an extensive report on the issue last year, stating that indoctrination begins as young as six.

"According to relatives of boys recruited by the Taliban, by the time they are 13, Taliban-educated children have learned military skills including use of firearms, and the production and deployment of IEDs," the report said.

For Ahmad Shaheer, an expert on Pakistani madrassas at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, poverty is the tinder.

"Many poor families hand over their children to strangers to be trained in Pakistani madrassas because they can't afford to pay for their education," he told AFP.

The HRW report noted the poverty-driven trend has also been increasing at madrassas in Afghanistan, particularly in Kunduz province, and said the Taliban refuses to return children once the parents figure out what is going on.

In June this year officials in Kunduz said they had detained an 11-year-old boy who intended to attack police after being taught at a local madrassa that government forces were a legitimate target as they were either "infidels or serving the infidels".

In his speech last month, Trump said the US was "not nation-building again. We are killing terrorists", and placed responsibility for Afghan society squarely on Afghans.

But absolute poverty in the country is increasing, according to a report issued by the World Bank and the Afghan government in May this year, which said that 39 percent of Afghans are unable to meet their basic needs.

That suggests the trend noted by Shaheer and HRW could continue.

Shaheer estimates that 10,000-20,000 Afghan children have passed through Pakistani religious schools. Once they are cut off from their families the indoctrination begins.

"Life is very hard for them there. They are not given anything to eat and the madrassa becomes like a jail," said Shaheer.

"Step by step they start hating their family... Hatred is fueled and they feel they have no future in life." (AFP)

(3) Unity is Key ...

annoying the people, or if someone wants to upset the day, it is government's responsibility to prevent such incidents," he added.

Massoud Day is marked every year by cultural and religious gatherings across the country. However, a number of people take to the streets in cars, especially in Kabul, flying banners and pictures of Massoud.

"The ethics and character of Amir Sahib (The Boss - a nickname given to Ahmad Shah Massoud during jihad) does not allow such acts during the commemoration day. No one should be hurt. His supporters should mark the day with religious and cultural events," said Ahmad Mahmoudi, a resident of Kabul.

"We are against moves taken by those who say they are followers of Amir Sahib Massoud but who walk out to the streets and disturb the people. We are firmly against it," another resident Sayed Jamal Khorshid said.

Ahmad Shah Massoud was killed in a suicide bombing in Khwaja Bahawuddin district in the northeastern Takhar province on September 09, 2001. (Tolonews)

(4) Half of ...

Nangarhar and 405 of them had no buildings, retaining walls, drinking water and other facilities.

He said 800,000 students, including 300,000 girls, were imparted education in the province and 80,000 new students would be enrolled this year.

Sadat added 38,000 students from internally displaced families were enrolled last year and the process would continue this year.

He said the distribution of stationary, flours, boards and other necessary items had been started and requirements of all

schools would be completed.

H added 12 schools in five insecure districts remained closed while as many previously closed schools had been reopened in the past one week and efforts were underway for the reopening of other schools.

He said the closed schools were situated in Pachirawgam, Achin, Haska Mena and Nazyan districts.

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(5) Kunduz ...

couldn't cope with the current issues in Kunduz city.

Hiring more employees was effective for keeping the city clean and was an important step in reducing joblessness.

"The decades-long war has rendered people homeless and unemployed. Among the 550 new recruits, 20 percent will be women and the process will take one month to complete."

Kunduz residents say they are happy with the municipality's announcement. Aimal, a resident of Kunduz City, told Pajhwok: "Recruiting unemployed youth is a big step and we support the municipality in this regard". (Pajhwok)

(6) \$30m Earmarked...

market if the problem of electricity and raw material is addressed."

Meanwhile, officials from the Ministry of Finance said they have started the sale of scrap metal in a move to encourage iron manufacturers to invest in the country.

The campaign will cover the sale of 37,000 tons of scrap metal to factory owners, said Mohammad Ibrahim Shams, head of the Finance Ministry's Enterprises Department. "We have so far collected 40 million AFs from selling the (scrap) metal and this has satisfied the factory owners," he said.

"There are still some problems but we have plans to collect all the scrap metal in the country and sell it to the industry." (Tolonews)

(7) Retired Civil ..

the money paid to the ministry of works and social affairs quarterly. Our request from the ministry is to work on the transparency and system building," finance ministry spokesman Ajmal Abdul Rahimzai said.

This is not the first time that retirement rights are not paid at a given time but in the past also the retirees had complaints about not receiving their pensions on time. (Tolonews)

(8) Port Enterprise ...

hub where goods are imported from and exported to Central Asian and other countries.

Sher Mohammad Saighani, a trader, told Pajhwok Afghan News: "The port enterprise has put a container on the road and illegally take money from businesspeople. We would be obliged to stop our businesses here if the government pays no attention to our plight."

Amir Mohammad, another trader, said: "The enterprise doesn't have proper warehouses and it cannot provide satisfactory services. We have to keep our goods in private warehouses, but enterprise officials still fleece us. We will have to close our companies if this situation persists."

Sher Agha, who imports cement from Tajikistan, also alleged that the enterprise personnel demanded illegal gratification.

But Abdur Raouf Naseri, manager of the administrative board of the enterprise, rejected the claims and said the money received from traders was government tax.

"Our office does not receive money illegally; all our collections are according to the port's law and go to the government exchequer," he said.

Sher Khan Port enterprise belongs to the Ministry of Commerce, but traders use private warehouse due to bad conditions of government-run facilities. (Pajhwok)

(9) Pakistan Move...

territory is out of the Kabul government's control and that these areas serve as safe havens for those who are fighting against the Afghan government.

"The Afghan government does not have control over 40 percent of its territory; therefore, this percentage is a safe haven for those who are fighting the (Kabul) government," Khan said. "It means that a big part of Afghanistan is a safe haven. But why do they put the blame on Pakistan?"

Afghanistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs reacted to the remarks and said the claims were baseless.

"Problems cannot be addressed with baseless allegations. It is better that the Pakistani side eliminate the real safe havens of terrorists instead of putting the blame on us," said Shakib Mustaghni, spokesman for Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"The international community will stand against Pakistan if it does not change its policies," the defense ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri said.

Afghan analysts said Pakistan is trying to achieve the 'sympathy' of a number of countries in the region.

"Pakistan cannot make a coalition. It will try to gain the sympathy of countries. It cannot form an alliance because Russia does not want to lose India," said Nasrullah Stanikzai, analyst and university lecturer.

This comes after Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi last month said there has to be a political settlement in Afghanistan and that US President Donald Trump's new war strategy will fail.

Late in August, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson warned that Pakistan could lose its status as a privileged military ally if Islamabad does not change its approach towards insurgents enjoying safe havens in the country. (Tolonews)

(10) Multiple Challenges...

said children faced issues ranging from lacking class rooms to professional teachers, educational equipment and clean drinking water in Bamyani City, the provincial capital, and districts.

According to the report, of total 339 schools in Bamyani, 63 have no buildings while some schools' buildings are in terrible condition.

The human rights commission has warned the future of thousands of children is in danger in case the issues they face are neglected.

Figures with the Education Department show there are 339 high and higher secondary schools in Bamyani where 73,020 boys and 63,235 girls are taught by 3,476 teachers, including 805 female teachers. Another 1,600 teachers are required to fill the gap.

Mohammad Ayub Amiri, Bamyani's acting provincial education director, confirmed AIHRC regional office's findings as 'reality', saying the education department couldn't solely cope with these problems. (Pajhwok)

(11) Herat's Zandajan ...

silkworms. Fatima said: "I brought up a bundle of silkworms in one month and sold them against 11,000 afghanis and then we bought two sheep with that money and sold them when they got fat and healthy."

Lailuma said she has been associated with the sericulture for the past 40 years and was living a happy life doing this. (Pajhwok)

(12) US Army Apologises ...

Meanwhile, Maj. Gen. James B. Linder, commander of Special Operations Joint Task Force-Afghanistan (SOJTF-A), apologized for the distribution of the provocative leaflets.

A statement from SOJTF-A said: "On September 5, US forces conducted a leaflet drop in Parwan. The design of the leaflets mistakenly contained an image highly offensive to both Muslims and the religion of Islam. (Pajhwok)

(13) Pak-Afghan ...

underlined Pakistan's support for Afghan owned and Afghan led peace process for bringing lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The two foreign ministers agreed to remain engaged for building closer cooperation between the two countries and agreed to meet on the sidelines of UNGA in New York, later this month. (APP)

(14) No School ...

Baghran district.

He added most of the closed schools were situated in areas where the Taliban have strong control.

The governor informed that no school in Baghran district could be reopened because of the Taliban's threat.

"The Taliban have created hurdles for education and they do not allow students to go to schools," he said. (Pajhwok)

(15) Razaq to Play ...

participating in the league.

Afridi has approached the PCB for an NOC regarding the Big Bash League, not the Afghan League.

Among others, Umar Akmal, Kamran Akmal, Babar Azam, Sohail Tanvir and Ruman Raees are also expected to play in the Afghan League.

All matches will be played in Kabul in September. PCB has decided not to issue NoCs to the Pakistani cricketers to deter them from participating in the league. (Pajhwok)

(16) Samangan Farmers...

Sarajuddin, a resident of Shalako area of the provincial capital, said: "I and my son collected 147 kilograms of pistachio and we prepared a total of 28 kilograms and each seven kilograms were sold for 1160 afghanis."

He said his wheat farm yielded nothing due to drought this year but the money he earned from pistachio would help meet his family needs for some time.

Sarajuddin said he had collected a lesser amount of the fruit last year and was also cheaper in price. (Pajhwok)

(17) Commander ...

stoking tensions between Mangal and Moqbil tribes.

In fighting conflict between the two tribes, heavy weapons were used every day, forcing dozens of families to flee their homes. The Taliban have not yet commented on the drone strike. (Pajhwok)

(18) 6 People Injured...

Lal Mohammad, a shopkeeper in the bazaar, had the same view. But governor's spokesman, Naser Mahri, rejected allegations that police injured anyone.

He said police fired into air after the bus did not stop to the police checkpoint. (Pajhwok)

(19) Bagram Airbase...

contained an image highly offensive to both Muslims and the religion of Islam," Major General James Linder said in a statement.

"I sincerely apologize. We have the deepest respect for Islam and our Muslim partners worldwide," he said, adding that an investigation would be held "to determine the cause of this incident and to hold the responsible party accountable." (Tolonews)

(20) 'Ghor NDS ...

provincial council, who attended the protest gathering, said: "We besides condemning the detention of the education head also ask the central government to immediately sack the NDS head."

He accused the provincial top intelligence officials of "conspiring" and called him "a conspiracy maker" and of no help to the security of the province."

Mohammad Hashim, a provincial council member, said the NDS head had violated the law by arresting the education director. (Pajhwok)

(21) Camels Laden ...

province and the smugglers were apparently looking to smuggle to a southern province.

Gen. Raziq also added that the seized Hashish will be burnt in the presence of the government officials once the security forces complete their formalities.

It is yet not clear if any suspect was arrested in connection to the smuggling of the Hashish or not. (KP)

(22) Ghazni: ANA ...

News the incident took place at about 3pm. He said the copter's one blade was broken in the crash.

But a Taliban spokesman Qari Yousaf Ahmadi claimed the fighters shot down the helicopter in Ghazni, killing all the crew.

The police chief also confirmed the crewmembers came under attack near simultaneously with the crash from Taliban militants, but the attackers fled as the Special Forces arrived at the scene. (Pajhwok)