

**NA panel for making ISI, MI nod mandatory for CNIC, passport**

ISLAMABAD: Convener of the subcommittee of Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the National Assembly has proposed making clearance by the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Military Intelligence (MI) mandatory for issuance of computerised national identity card (CNIC) and passport.

The subcommittee headed by MNA Noor Alam Khan of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) was discussing on Tuesday an audit para related to the destruction of over 0.8 million rejected passports which caused a loss of Rs280.6 million to the national exchequer.

Sharing his personal experience with the subcommittee, Mr Khan said that due to negligence and corruption in the Passport Office and National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) Afghan citizens had procured many CNICs and Pakistani passports.

He said that corrupt people were giving a bad name to Pakistan while organisations like the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and Directorate General of Immigration and Passports were doing nothing.

Subsequently, Mr Khan suggested that CNICs and passports should not be issued without the clearance of the ISI and MI as the foreigners, after obtaining Pakistani passports, tried to defame the intelligence agencies.

While defending his ministry, Interior Secretary retired Major Suleman Azam Khan asked the head of the subcommittee to have faith in the institutions as they are also Pakistani and equally loyal to the country. He said that the ministry would hold an inquiry into this matter.

Taking up another para related to the procurement of food items for South Waziristan Scouts, the subcommittee asked SWS representative Major Adnan as to why he did not provide relevant documents to the audit officials.

The interior secretary informed the meeting that his ministry intended to hold an inquiry into this matter.

The SWS management purchased fresh vegetables, fruits and meat worth Rs397.2m in 2015-16 and Rs414.8m in 2016-17. The audit observed that procurements were made without an open competition.

When Major Adnan tried to explain the situation, Mr Khan said that he knew the state of affairs and how things were done.

Mr Khan remarked that if the prime minister and MNAs could face inquiries why not these people? He directed the ministry to submit an inquiry report on the matter to the sub-committee.

Mr Khan expressed displeasure over non-implementation of the PAC directive regarding Rs23 overcharging for the passport fee. As per audit para, the ministry of finance allowed Rs2 as bank commission on collection of passport fee.

However, the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) started charging Rs25 as commission on receipt of passport fee.

In December 2009, the PAC had directed the NBP to stop overcharging, but the directive has yet to be complied with.

Mr Khan directed the interior secretary to probe the matter and fix responsibility.

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter