

'Rigged Bid' Spotted by Navalny

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Prominent lawyer and whistle-blowing blogger Alexei Navalny accused the Federal Consumer Protection Service on Tuesday of rigging a tender worth 5 million rubles (\$165,000) to create a web site for the agency.

The tender, held in October, had a requirement to create the web site in less than 10 days, which Navalny said is impossible unless the work was done in advance. He speculated on his blog that unspecified officials at the watchdog must have received kickbacks from Lanit, the winner of the tender, and that the other two participants in the tender were probably dummy companies.

The new web site is very similar to the previous one and actually costs a mere \$30,000 to produce, Navalny added.

"I think it is clear to all of us that head of Federal Consumer Protection Service [Gennady] Onishchenko must be dismissed, those directly responsible for announcing the tender must go to the prisoner's box, and Lanit must compensate the money to the budget and be added to

the registry of unfair suppliers," Navalny wrote in an earlier blog post Monday.

No officials commented on the report. Inquiries submitted to the watchdog and Lanit on Tuesday afternoon went unanswered.

In October, Navalny leveled similar charges against the Health and Social Development Ministry, which announced a tender to build a social networking site for doctors within 16 days for a price not to exceed 55 million rubles (\$1.8 million).

After Navalny's exposure the tender was canceled, and the official who ordered the tender filed a resignation request.

Navalny's biggest whistle-blowing success was scored in November, when he leaked an Audit Chamber report on the construction of the East Siberia-Pacific Ocean pipeline by state-owned Transneft. The report indicated that up to \$4 billion might have been siphoned from the project.

Following this, Navalny opened a web site in December, Rospil.info, to track corruption in state tenders.

Meanwhile, the blogger complained Tuesday that his Google mail account was hacked into, RIA-Novosti reported, but he later said he regained control over his mailbox.

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