**A real change?**

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After months of political drama, the disgruntled leaders of the Balochistan Awami Party forced CM Balochistan Jam Kamal to step down in October just a day ahead of a no-confidence motion. Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo was sworn in as the new CM, now holding the top post twice.

Forty-seven-year-old Bizenjo hails from Balochistan's most troubled Awaran district. Since 2000, the junior Bizenjo has dominated Awaran politics. Former chief minister Jam Kamal's family has been at the helm for 50 years. Somehow, the same length of time goes for the Bizenjos of Awaran. The Jams of Lasbela are feudal in a way the Bizenjo have never been. However, the abject poverty, low literacy rate, bad governance, and poor infrastructure of Awaran and Lasbela mirror their corrupt political practices.

Like Jam Kamal's father Jam Yousuf and grandfather Jam Ghulam Qadir who held the office of the CM in 1970, 2000, and 2018, Quddus, his father Majeed Bizenjo, and grandfather Abdul Kareem Bizenjo have represented Awaran too and held important portfolios in the 1990s, early 2000, 2013 and since 2018. Like Jam, Bizenjo enjoys political power that no other Baloch leader has.

Three years after Jam Kamal was sworn in as chief minister, the troubled province's political, security, economic, social, and human rights situation worsened. Projects under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) slowed down while violence increased. In three years, Balochistan witnessed increasing cases of targeted killing of civilians, forced disappearances, and targeted attacks on Shia Hazaras and security forces.

Three civilians were killed in October in Hoshab and Buleda in Mir Zahoor Buledi's constituency, who is BAP's acting president, the province's finance minister, and a frontline leader of the anti-Jam group. Neither Jam Kamal nor Mir Zahoor Buledi visited the protest camp of the families protesting with two dead bodies outside the governor house for more than a week in the freezing temperature of Quetta in October. The sit-in participants from Hoshab were really disappointed with the behavior of their elected representative Mir Zahoor Buledi.

Earlier, a suicide attack in Gwadar on a Chinese convoy in August killed two, further slowing down CPEC related projects. At the start of the year, Islamic State (IS) militants killed 11 Hazara coal miners in Mach.

In 2020, Balochistan remained Pakistan's second most volatile province, with 215 fatalities in terror-related incidents, according to the South Asia Terrorism Portal. Balochistan's Makran division and nearby Awaran remained most volatile. Between 2018 and 2021, Balochistan witnessed more than 500 fatalities in terror-related incidents. Overall, a 30 percent increase in terrorism was witnessed in three years. It is a fact that Jam's poor administrative policies and bad governance increased terrorism. But if the province witnessed more poverty and insecurity, it wasn't just his responsibility to curb it.

Quddus Bizenjo, Mir Zahoor Buledi and Sardar Abdul Rahman Khetran, the anti-Jam group, had an equal responsibility to do better in their respective constituencies at least as they held very important portfolios in the Jam-led government. Instead, the people of Awaran, Buleda, and Barkhan have become more alienated. More than 70 percent of Awaran lives below the poverty line. The area faces extreme deprivation, drought, food insecurity and doesn't meet any UN Sustainable Development Goals despite the Bizenjo family having remained in power for decades. Covid-19, severe drought, locust infestation, and natural disasters have also caused a livelihood crisis in the province.

The pandemic had led to an increase in food shortage and lack of business opportunities, especially when Balochistan's frontiers with Iran and Afghanistan closed down. UNDP ranked Balochistan Pakistan's poorest province in 2020. The province has the lowest Human Development Index (HDI) value in Pakistan. Data from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) showed that the province suffered huge setbacks in terms of food security in 2020. Though Jam did not have a good policy to improve Balochistan's security, economic, and social conditions, an overnight political change in a province facing a human catastrophe could result in a governance vacuum, which sadly has become part of Balochistan's political culture now.

Since 2013, this is the third time Balochistan is changing the face at the helm of the chaos. Jam's performance in tackling Covid-19, regulating Balochistan's borders, improving security, and enhancing job opportunities can be criticised. And these are some factors that played against him, but a development journey needs enough time -- which Jam couldn't get.

With Quddus Bizejo, a leadership that has been in power for decades will lead the province now. But during this political circus, the role of the Baloch nationalist parties, especially the Balochistan National Party (BNP) Mengal, has been surprising and very disappointing for many. Mengal's BNP played a key role in derailing the democratically elected government of Zehri in 2017.

With Quddus, BNP President Akhtar Mengal moved a no-confidence motion against Zehri. That also resulted in a structural break of the PML-N in Balochistan and the formation of BAP. Later Mengal accused BAP of snatching his mandate during the general elections and termed it the "orphan of politics" accusing it of having been created by undemocratic forces. It was difficult to understand why Mengal stood with a group of people he had once accused of being stooges of the powers that be.

The question that arises in everyone's mind is: by changing Jam, will Balochistan's security, economic and social problems change? Jam's resignation hasn't brought any new promising leaders but the same old lot who have been in power for decades and held key ministries in Jam's government. CanQuddus Bizenjo control the province's corruption, inflation, and human rights violations? If not, then why this change, and what did the BNP or JUI F get out of it?

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