**Top Balochistan separatist leader arrested**

**The arrest will result in a positive impact on the morale of LEAs and intelligence agencies.**

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The arrest of the top Balochistan Separatist leader Gulzar Imam alias Shambay on April 7, this year, the founder of the banned outfit Baloch National Army (BNA) is a big setback to the terrorist outfits and their handlers in the Balochistan province. Imam’s arrest is also a big success for Pakistani intelligence agencies— Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs)—the sequel to an excellent intelligence operation by the country’s primary intelligence agency ISI which captured this key terrorist who was living under the wings of hostile foreign intelligence agencies.

Balochistan terrorism landscape is a diverse-a number of Baloch anti-state anarchist groups, sponsored by Hostile Intelligence Agencies (HIAs) are involved in militants’ terrorist activities. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has an inconsequential presence in Northern Balochistan whereas Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and Balochistan Republican Army (BRA) have been carrying out terror attacks and extortion in Quetta-capital of the province, and surrounding areas, while Gulzar Imam has remained very active in Southern Balochistan and executed terrorist acts against the LEAs. After the formation of BNA, Kech and Noshki were impacted. Scattered pockets and sleeper cells of the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) have been also effective in Quetta and North East Balochistan, but with very limited potency. BNA was one of the major contributing organisations in Baloch Raj Aajoi Sangar (BRAS) which was formed on November 10, 2018. Gulzar Imam alias Shambay head of BNA was one of the major operation commanders for terrorist activities in Balochistan. Gulzar remained deputy to Brahamdagh Bugti in BRA till 2018. Later, after the creation of BRAS, he formed a new militant outfit BNA.

[Imran will be voted into power, says Rashid](https://www.nation.com.pk/16-Apr-2023/imran-will-be-voted-into-power-says-rashid)

However, he was an ideologue, who was a staunch believer in independent Balochistan and was in contact with the HIAs. He visited India on fake documents in December 2017.

Upon shifting of militancy leadership from feuds to commoners, Gulzar Imam emerged as an influential character in BRAS due to links with HIAs. He also remained the operational head of BRAS before his arrest.

As regards the arrest of Gulzar, highly trained intelligence operators were employed at various geographic locations to verify the digital information. Upon his positive confirmation, he was approached under the guise of agents from HIAs. After necessary rapport building, he was gradually lured in through offers for financial and technical assistance.

Owing to different geographic contiguities, this complex case of intelligence history was undertaken through the creation of fictitious characters and the preparation of required supporting documents, which ultimately facilitated engagement and strengthened the bond with Gulzar.

[Punjab Assembly elections won't be conducted on May 14, tells Sanaullah](https://www.nation.com.pk/16-Apr-2023/punjab-assembly-elections-won-t-be-conducted-on-may-14-tells-sanaullah)

The operation was spread over months. However, its climax/execution was carried out in a professional and calculated manner, sketching a complex web of militant outfits of Balochistan and establishing their links with HIAs.

In this respect, playing the main role, ISI successfully broke into the web of terrorist outfits. The arrest of Gulzar Imam alias Shambay indicates that the state, LEAs and intelligence agencies (especially ISI) are in the full grip of the landscape through the suppression of such militancy.

In this connection, his arrest will break the backbone of BNA and will have significant effects on the actions of his group. Besides, other sub-national groups, particularly BLA (Majeed Brigade) and Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) will also be affected by this highprofile arrest. It will adversely impact the morale of other militant outfits.

It is mentionable that the ink on Pak- China agreements related to the China- Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which is part of China’s One Belt, One Road(OBOR) initiative or BRI was barely dry when especially American CIA, Indian secret agency RAW and Israeli Mossad had accelerated playing up the Baloch insurgency. Malicious propaganda against the CPEC coincided with the terror attacks in Pakistan’s various regions, particularly in Balochistan.

[PTI Sindh opposes alliance with Jamaat-e-Islami at local level](https://www.nation.com.pk/16-Apr-2023/pti-sindh-opposes-alliance-with-jamaat-e-islami-at-local-level)

Notably, India was openly opposing the CPEC and China’s OBOR or BRI; the US also joined New Delhi.

Besides, energy projects, CPEC will open new doors of development relating to various fields, as the national economy of the country will grow fast, leading to the creation of new job opportunities, poverty reduction, and development of the transportation sector—boosting agricultural and industrial growth, including exports.

The Gwadar seaport project which is the backbone of the CPEC will uplift the impoverished people of Balochistan, including developments in other backward areas of the province by redressing their grievances which the hostile elements, supported by the US, India and Israeli do not want.

While under the former army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa’s command, the fencing along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, which also entails the Pak- Afghan border of Balochistan started in June 2017 by the Pakistan Army to improve the security situation and has been almost completed.

[Fawad calls for a commission to investigate Maulana Fazlur Rehman's revelations](https://www.nation.com.pk/16-Apr-2023/fawad-calls-for-a-commission-to-investigate-maulana-fazlur-rehman-s-revelations)

Army also contributed a lot to the socioeconomic development of Balochistan besides giving military training to the youth, while protecting megaprojects and the CPEC staff.

And country’s armed forces and ISI have successfully broken the backbone of the foreign-backed terrorists. Besides other vulnerable provinces, peace has been restored particularly in Balochistan. But, in the recent past, terrorist attacks especially in Balochistan show that these external intelligence agencies are destabilizing Pakistan and want to damage the CPEC.

It is mentionable that RAW is also using some terrorist outfits such as ISIS, BLA, BNA etc.-their linked groups like Majeed Brigade which claimed responsibility for several terrorist assaults on workers and labourers, working for the CPEC projects in Balochistan. These terror entities also abducted and killed many Chinese nationals.

In this connection, the military’s media wing ISPR in a statement on April 7, 2023, said: “The leader and founder of the banned Baloch National Army, Gulzar Imam alias Shambay was arrested in a high-profile intelligence-based operation by the security forces….[BNA] which came into being after the amalgamation of Baloch Republican Army and United Baloch Army.”

[Woman died in Muzaffargarh after procuring flour](https://www.nation.com.pk/16-Apr-2023/woman-died-in-muzaffargarh-after-procuring-flour)

The ISPR statement elaborated: “The BNA has been responsible for dozens of violent terrorist attacks in Pakistan, including attacks on law enforcement agencies…His visits to Afghanistan and India are also on the record; his linkages with Hostile Intelligence Agencies are being investigated…which tried to exploit Gulzar Imam to work against Pakistan and its national interests”. ISPR further pointed out: “He was apprehended after an innovatively conceived, carefully planned and meticulously executed operation, spanned over months over various geographical locations… apprehension of a militant leader of this stature demonstrates the capability and resolve of LEAs to uproot the menace of terrorism” and “speaks volumes about the successes garnered through supreme sacrifices of unsung heroes”.

Nonetheless, the arrest of the top separatist leader of Balochistan will result in a positive impact on the morale of LEAs and intelligence agencies.

Now, Baloch people must think that the so-called militant or sub-national leaders are living abroad, enjoying luxurious lifestyles, whereas ordinary Balochs are facing hardships in mountains and fighting a futile battle against the state.

Hence, BNA and other separatist groups must reconcile and surrender for ultimate integration into the society, which can lead to the development of Balochistan and Pakistan. So, peace will afford better socio-economic (health, education, societal) opportunities for Balochistan.

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