**Nabbing of Shambay**

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The ISPR disclosed on 7th April about a high-profile and successful intelligence operation where the lead intelligence agency apprehended a high-value target, Gulzar Imam alias Shambay. This is being considered as a major breakthrough after the arrest of Indian Research and Analysis Wing(R&AW) blue bird Commander Kulbhushan Yadav.

The terrorist landscape in Balochistan is varied. A number of anti-state sub-nationalist, anarchists and terror outfits that are supported by hostile intelligence agencies (HIAs) engage in militant and terrorist actions. While the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) has approximately 575 to 700 members and has been conducting assaults and engaging in extortion in Quetta and the surrounding areas; Baloch Republican Army (BRA) has continued to be quite active in Southern Balochistan and executes terrorism against LEAs. Kech and Noshki were impacted once the Baloch National army was formed with strength of less than 300. ISKP’s dispersed pockets and sleeper cells have had some success in Quetta and North East Balochistan, although their effectiveness has been quite weak.

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

BNA was a significant contributor to the formation of the Baloch Raj Aajoi Sangar (BRAS) on November 10th, 2018. One of the primary operational commanders for terrorist activities in Balochistan was Gulzar Imam Shambay who heads BNA. Before joining this terrorist organisation in 2009, he worked as a contractor and a correspondent for a local newspaper. He also remained Brahamdagh Bugti’s deputy in BRA till 2018. Later, following the formation of Baloch Raj Aajoi Sangar (BRAS), a new terrorist group known as the Baloch National Army was founded. (BNA).

Shambay was an ideologist who continued to play a key role in directing terrorist actions in South Balochistan, in particular. He was in touch with HIAs and a fervent supporter of an independent Balochistan. In December 2017, using forged Afghan passports, he travelled to India. Due to his connections to HIAs, Shambay became a significant figure in BRAS after the military command transitioned from feudals to commoners. Prior to his imprisonment, GIS continued to lead the BRAS operationally.

[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)

Following a superb intelligence operation by the ISI, law enforcement agents (LEAs) were able to arrest Shambay. The sting operation took months of high-tech surveillance and penetration of the terror network. Through continued investigations and resident moles planted into several militant organizations, initial clues to the hierarchy and leadership of the militant groups were identified. Utilizing cutting-edge digital tools and software, the leads were verified and reviewed again by breaking into secure networks utilized by adversarial actors. A number of terrorist networks were identified, and linkages to HIAs and other supporting organizations were formed. This allowed for the identification of the target, which took intensive work and needed encroachment into a highly sensitive and covert digital domain.

Highly trained intelligence operators were used in many different geographic locations to verify the digital data. Due to various geographic contingencies, it was necessary to undertake this complex case of intelligence history through the development of fictional characters, the preparation of the necessary supporting materials, and the routing/delivery of funds through failsafe unidentifiable means, which ultimately facilitated engagement and strengthened the connection with Shambay. The procedure took several months to mature; however, it had a competent and well-planned execution that took place in less than 12 hours.

[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)

The arrest of Shambay shows that the state, LEAs, and intelligence services (particularly ISI) have complete control over the terrain; however it takes time and good governance to put an end to such militancy. Arresting Gulzar Imam Shambay will weaken the foundation of his group (BNA) and have a huge impact on what they do. Empirical evidence already points to a notable decline in militant attacks and their profile.

This high profile arrest will also have an impact on other factions, particularly BLA (Majeed Brigade) and BLF. It will have a negative effect on militant groups’ morale and positive effect on the morale of intelligence agencies and LEAs. The message to sub-nationalist groups and those pursuing the path of militancy is clear; leave the gun and join the mainstream. Balochistan is the future of Pakistan and the Baloch youth is its biggest and most important stake holder. Better socioeconomic (health, education, and societal) opportunities will be available to Balochistan as a result of peace.

[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)

So-called militant commanders live affluent lifestyles while residing abroad, while the average Baloch youth struggles in the mountains and engages in fruitless conflict with the government. What positive contributions have been made by these militant commanders flying private jets, cruising in luxury boats and wining and dining with their paddlers in the west and India? Nothing.

Gulzar Imam Shambay’s arrest and busting of BNA network is as important as dismantling of Commander Kulbhushan Yadav’s enterprise, it’s a big jolt to RAW’s nefarious designs against the people of Balochistan. While his arrest is critically important, the trove of intelligence being obtained from him will help out Intelligence agencies and LEAs to unearth many other groups and sleeper cells and their linkages with Hostile Intelligence agencies operating against Pakistan.

There is also a need to acknowledge the sacrifices rendered by LEAs including Balochistan Police, levies and Frontier Corps as well as prime intelligence agencies like ISI. Their soldier and officer cadre remains alert 24/7, works round the clock in far flung areas and operates in inhospitable terrain to make Baluchistan a safer place. While they get flak from general public for sneak attacks by terrorist outfits, they don’t get much credit for thwarting hundreds of terror attacks every year. We salute all the brave hearts of ISI and LEAs for doing a commendable job.