

Pakistan bans two militant groups for involvement in terror activities

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Islamabad: Pakistani government has banned two militant outfits for their involvement in terrorist activities across the country.

Representational pic - Pakistan bans two militant groups

A spokesman for the Interior Ministry confirmed the development and said that the decision was made a few days ago.

According to Pakistan's news website, Dawn, the move to ban Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, a splinter group of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan and Lashkar-i-Jhangvi Al-Alami came after recent deadly attacks in Balochistan and Sindh provinces, including last week's assault at a sufi shrine in Balochistan that killed over 50 people.

Referring to a revised list of banned groups available on the website of the National Counter Terrorism Authority, a top official in Sindh's security establishment said, "The two outfits were added to the list on November 11."

A security official said the government banned them once it became clear that they were not ready to shun violence.

The list also shows that Jamaat-ud Dawa has been listed since January 17, 2007 as group "under observation", which means its status can be changed as "banned" if there was enough evidence that it was involved in violence.

However, both Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad have been listed as banned entities since January 14, 2002.

The LeJ, a Sunni terrorist outfit, has roots in Punjab province and has a history of carrying out sectarian attacks in Balochistan, particularly against the minority Shias.

The group recently claimed that it killed 61 people, mostly young cadets, during an attack on a police training centre in Quetta, the capital of the restive Balochistan province, in one of the deadliest terror attacks in Pakistan.

Two LeJ militants were recently arrested for killing Amjad Sabri, one of Pakistan's finest Sufi Qawwals, in a sectarian attack in June.

Jamaat-ul-Ahrar had claimed responsibility for a suicide attack at the government-run Civil Hospital in Quetta in August that had killed at least 75 people, mostly lawyers, and injured 115 others.

- With PTI Inputs