

Former Pak Army chief Raheel Sharif appointed head of Saudi-led Islamic military coalition

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Islamabad: Retired Pakistan Army chief Gen. Raheel Sharif has been appointed as the head of Saudi Arabia-led 39-nation Islamic military coalition formed to combat terrorism.

File pic of former Pak Army chief Raheel Sharif

Confirming the news, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Friday said that the decision was taken after taking the incumbent government into confidence and it was finalised here first.

The headquarters of the new Saudi-led coalition will be based in Riyadh.

The Defence Minister said that any such assignment or posting requires proper clearance from both the government and General Headquarters and confirmed that due process was followed before finalising the agreement.

"This thing was in the pipeline for quite some time and the prime minister was also part of the deliberations," Asif said.

He was of the opinion that the formation of such an alliance was a good step as the "Muslim Ummah is in a spot of bother right now and needs unity among its ranks".

Pakistan had initially found itself in the crosshairs of Middle Eastern politics as Saudi Arabia named it as part of its newly formed military alliance of Muslim countries meant to combat terrorism, without first getting its consent.

However, after initial ambiguity, the government had confirmed its participation in the alliance, but had said that the scope of its participation would be defined after Riyadh shared the details of the coalition it was assembling.

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