

Nawaz Sharif, Army chief discuss Afghanistan situation amid Taliban rift

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Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff Gen Raheel Sharif on Monday held discussions over the emerging Afghanistan situation amid a reported rift between different Taliban factions over succession after Mullah Omar's death.

According to official sources, Pakistan is worried over the new developments, prompting Raheel to brief the Prime Minister on the latest security situation in the region and its impact on Pakistan.

Director-General of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Rizwan Akhtar, Interior Minister Chaudhary Nisar and Finance Minister Ishaq Dar also attended the meeting. Akhtar briefed Sharif on the regional and internal security situation.

The civil-military leaders discussed the overall security situation prevailing in the country and also reviewed the progress of the operation Zarb-e-Azb, Radio Pakistan reported.

Pakistan has played a major role in bringing the militants and Afghan negotiators on table, facilitating the ice-breaking meeting between the two sides on July 7 in the hill resort of Murree near capital Islamabad.

The peace efforts got a jolt after confirmation of Mullah Omar's death just days before the second round of talks were scheduled for July 31 in Pakistan.

It is not clear so far who derailed the peace process by leaking the news of Mullah Omar's death.

The appointment of new Taliban chief Mullah Mansoor has created a rift as some of the commanders have refused to owe allegiance to him, creating fears of a civil war involving rival militant factions.

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