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Heart of Asia

Your Gateway to Afghanistan & the Region

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Loya Jirga: Afghanistan to free 400 Taliban to start peace talks



Taliban left with no excuse to delay dialogue

The Loya Jirga's decision on releasing the remaining militant prisoners has left the Taliban with no excuse for delaying intra-Afghan peace negotiations, the grand assembly chairman said on Sunday.

Dr. Abdullah, who welcomed the grand tribal assembly's resolution issued on day three, believed the government and the Taliban were "on the verge" of long-awaited peace parleys.

After three days of deliberations, the Loya Jirga, featuring thousands of delegates, approved the release of the 400 Taliban prisoners the government was reluctant to free.

Abdullah hailed the jirga's decision as a historic move, promising the recommendation of the assembly would be implemented. ... **P2**



Calls for Justice as Prisoner Release Approved

Family members of a young man who lost his life in a truck bombing in downtown Kabul in May 2017 said they want justice, just as the Loya Jirga, the grand assembly, approved the release of 400 high-value Taliban prisoners. Some perpetrators of the explosion are among these prisoners.

The father of Aziz Nawin said justice should not be violated for the sake of peace in the country and that perpetrators of the Zanbaq Square explosion should be punished.

The explosion that happened near the Germany embassy in Kabul left over 150 people dead and over 600 others wounded.

Aziz Nawin, 24, was the youngest son of the family.

"The 400 prisoners are foreign citizens. All are members of the Haqqani network. We would have agreed on their release if it helped bring a real peace and stability for the people, but it will not happen," said Juma Khan Haidari, Nawin's father. Nawin's father, who is a former employee of the Defense Ministry, said that ... **P3**



The Afghan president, following a recommendation by a traditional Afghan council, pledged on Sunday to release the remaining 400 Taliban prisoners to pave the way for peace talks aimed at ending the nearly two-decade-long war.

"The Taliban must demonstrate they are not afraid of a comprehensive ceasefire... there is

no great bravery required for war, but for peace," Ashraf Ghani told the Loya Jirga, which began on Friday. He promised to free the remaining prisoners on Aug. 19, Afghanistan's Independence Day.

Over 3,000 public figures, who assembled in the capital Kabul, approved the release and called for an immediate start to negotiations,

a cease-fire, and international guarantees that the insurgents would not resort to violence again. The prisoner exchange — the release of 5,000 Taliban prisoners in return of 1,000 captive security forces — was agreed in a landmark deal between Washington and the Taliban in February.

Under the deal, the US committed

to withdrawing all foreign forces from Afghanistan by July 2021.

In return, the insurgents pledged to prevent terrorist groups from using Afghan soil for attacks and to seek reconciliation with other Afghan groups through a dialogue process. Kabul had freed all but balked at the release of the last 400 "hard-core" prisoners.

The announcement was welcomed by Pakistan, which, among other actors, facilitated Washington's peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad in negotiating the deal with the Taliban.

"Pakistan welcomes the Loya Jirga recommendation to President Ashraf Ghani to release the remaining Taliban prisoners from their list of 5,000 prisoners," Mohammad Sadiq, Pakistan prime minister's special representative for Afghanistan, tweeted. "A major hurdle in the way of Intra Afghan Negotiations will be removed with implementation of this recommendation."

Negotiations between the Taliban and Kabul's political leadership are expected to begin soon, and most likely in Qatar, where the insurgents have a political office.

Intra-Afghan negotiations to begin soon: Karzai

Intra-Afghan peace talks will begin in two to three days after the release of the 400 Taliban prisoners, former president Hamid Karzai said on Sunday.

Addressing the concluding session of the three-day Loya Jirga, Karzai said: "This is a very happy day. Based on my information, the talks will begin in Qatar..."

He said the Loya jirga decision was consistent with people's aspirations. "Peace will make life beautiful. All Afghan children, boys and girls, will go to school." ... **P2**



Taliban Ready to Begin Peace Talks in A Week: Spokesman

The Taliban is ready to begin intra-Afghan negotiations within a week if the prisoner release is completed, said spokesman Suhail Shaheen in an interview with BBC Pashto.

Shaheen said the first round of talks will be led by Abbas Stanikzai, the former chief negotiator of the Taliban during their talks with the United States.

His remarks come hours after the Loya Jirga with 3,400 delegates approved the release of 400 high-value Taliban prisoners, a decision that was deemed a key hurdle to the start of the intra-Afghan negotiations.

The first round of the negotiations is expected to be held in Doha, Qatar.

In response to a question on the Taliban's willingness for a



ceasefire, which was called for at the Jirga, Shaheen said: "The ceasefire is part of the intra-Afghan negotiations agenda that will be discussed there. It has been mentioned in the Doha agreement."

He said that the Taliban has not attacked major provinces and has not tried to capture centers of provinces, referring to a question on reduction in violence.

"We also have not attacked the capital, Kabul. We have reduced violence," he said.

Shaheen said the group has the will for peace, and cited its opening of the Qatar office as an example. He criticized a delay in the completion of the prisoner release and said the group will continue to implement its commitments to the agreement they signed with the US in Doha back in February.

Mahinda...

bombings of churches and hotels on Easter Sunday that killed 269 people.

However, Mahinda is unlikely to cede any of his powers as he works on promoting his son Namal as heir.

Namal and three other members of the family are likely to control key functions in the new administration.

The landslide victory also raises fears of weakening government institutions such as independent commissions.

Intra-Afghan...

In a resolution at the end of the grand tribal gathering, the participants approved the release of the contentious 400 Taliban prisoners, whom the government did not want to free.

Taliban left...

"The decision has removed the last excuse and obstacle to the start of peace negotiations," remarked Abdullah, who also heads the High Council for National Reconciliation.

Macron urges...

was aware of the arrival of a ship carrying chemical materials to Beirut were "false and bare of truth."

Earlier, media reports suggested that a Lebanese court had ordered the ship to unload its cargo at the Beirut port when Salam was the prime minister. Salam, who served as a prime minister from Feb. 2014 to Dec. 2016, renewed calls for forming an international commission to probe the devastating explosion in which at least 158 people were killed and over 6,000 injured.

By Mujib Mashal and Fatima Faizi

Afghanistan to Release Last Taliban Prisoners, Removing Final Hurdle to Talks

President Ashraf Ghani of Afghanistan on Sunday said his government would release a last batch of Taliban prisoners, removing the final hurdle in the way of direct negotiations with the insurgents to end the country's long war.

His announcement came after a consultative assembly where he had been advised by thousands of representatives from across the country.

The release of 5,000 Taliban prisoners, which the United States agreed to in a February deal with the insurgents that also began the phased withdrawal of American troops, faced opposition from the Afghan government, which is holding the prisoners. After prolonged pressure from the Trump administration, Mr. Ghani released 4,600 prisoners from a list provided by the Taliban but called for consultations over 400, who he said were accused or convicted of major crimes, including murder, that were beyond his authority to pardon.

At the start of the consultative assembly, on Friday, more than 3,000 delegates crammed themselves under one tent in the capital, Kabul, despite fears of the coronavirus. Mr. Ghani said his government was at a crossroads.

"The Taliban have said that if the 400 prisoners are released the direct talks between our negotiating team and the Taliban will start three days later," he said in his pitch to the delegates, seeking their advice. "In the meantime, they have threatened that if they are not released, not only they will continue their war and violence but they will escalate it.

On Sunday, after two days of deliberations spread across more than 50 committees, the assembly released a declaration calling for the release of the prisoners. The mood in the hall was often tense. One delegate, a member of Parliament who carried a sign that read, "Giving into Taliban bullying is treason," was violently pushed out of the hall and tackled by a staff member when she resisted.

President Ghani said he would sign the decree on Sunday freeing the 400 prisoners.

"We faced a choice, and our decision was made easier today," he said.

In a statement presented to the participants of the assembly, the American secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, said that the Taliban have committed to beginning direct negotiations after the prisoners are released and have pledged to reduce the level of violence during the talks, during which a permanent



cease-fire will be discussed.

"The United States intends to hold the Taliban to these commitments," Mr. Pompeo said.

Many delegates said it appeared that the Afghan government had already given in to U.S. pressure to release the remaining prisoners. The assembly, convened solely for consultation and with no executive power, was a way for Mr. Ghani to share political responsibility, they said. Representatives from several committees added that they were asked to give affirmative or negative recommendations on the release of the 400 prisoners without being provided details of what the prisoners were accused or convicted of.

Over the past couple of months, officials gave varied reasons as to why they could not release the remaining prisoners. Some said the group included foreign citizens convicted of murder and the government did not have the authority to offer forgiveness on behalf of victims' families. Other officials said some of the prisoners were drug dealers or members of organized-crime gangs, unaffiliated with the Taliban. Those criminals, however, were included on lists of prisoners whose release the Taliban demanded.

A government document left some question as to the crimes of the named prisoners. It said 156 of the 400 prisoners had been sentenced to death, 105 were convicted of homicide, 34 of kidnapping and 51 of narcotics trafficking. A handful were convicted of rape. But it also said that 44 had been "blacklisted" by the

Afghan government and its partners. The crimes of four prisoners were listed as "unidentifiable."

Mohammad Ali Akhlaqi, a member of Parliament who was a delegate, said that in the committees the delegates were given a clear choice: that the only obstacle blocking direct negotiations with the Taliban was the release of the remaining prisoners. The Taliban had committed to beginning the talks right away if the prisoners were released, or ratcheting up the violence if they were not.

"Obviously, people want the bloodshed to be stopped," Mr. Akhlaqi said. "The question is misleading. As the president himself said, he is not authorized to release these 400 prisoners because they have committed major crimes and they already have been sentenced." "When the president can't release them, how can the Jirga release them?" he added, referring to the consultative assembly. "The Jirga isn't above our Constitution."

Mr. Ghani's government has found itself in an unenviable position, with his officials feeling that the United States has lent legitimacy to the Taliban with a rushed peace process that has deeply undermined the Afghan government. American diplomats, driven by President Trump's urgency to get out of Afghanistan, were clamoring for a deal to avoid the threat of Mr. Trump pulling out without one. They agreed to the withdrawal of the remaining U.S. troops from Afghanistan over 14 months and the release of the 5,000 prisoners in talks that had excluded ... **P3**

By JUSTIN WISE

Esper says US troop presence in Afghanistan will be 'less than 5,000' by November

Defense Secretary Mark Esper said in an interview broadcast late Saturday that no more than 5,000 U.S. troops would remain in Afghanistan by the end of November, as the Trump administration looks to move forward with a reduction of forces in the region.

"We're going down to a number less than 5,000 by the end of November. We need to brief Congress [about] what that looks like," Esper said on Fox News's "Justice with Judge Jeanine."

Esper cautioned that the troop reduction would be "conditions-based" and carried out as long as the Pentagon felt it could proceed with missions in the region with fewer troops.

"Right now, we think that we can do all the core missions, first and foremost being

ensured the United States is not threatened by terrorists coming out of Afghanistan," he said. "We can do those at a lower level."

"In the meantime, we see the Afghan peace process — it's not perfect, but it's moving forward, slowly," he added. "You know, it's a windy road. It's a rough road."

The Trump administration and the Taliban earlier this year signed a historic deal with the ultimate goal of ending the U.S. presence in Afghanistan. The deal called for the U.S. to withdraw troops in the region in exchange for a commitment from the Taliban that it will not engage in terrorism against the U.S.

The U.S. is expected to withdraw completely from Afghanistan according to the deal, which also includes intra-Afghan negotiations

and commitments on counterterrorism. But those negotiations have faced setbacks due to continued attacks by the Taliban. The Pentagon has also said that the Taliban has yet to break its ties with al Qaeda.

In July, the Pentagon announced that the U.S. had withdrawn from five military bases in the country and that its troop level remained in "the mid-8,000s."

Trump said in an interview with Axios last week that he expected that figure to be below 5,000 by the 2020 presidential election. Though he did not offer any specific timeline.

"We're going down to 4,000, we're negotiating right now," Trump said. "I don't want to tell you [when]. But I've always said we will get largely out."

Afghan war victims say hope for peace comes at a price: forgiveness

On Sunday, Jafar said he made peace for a second time after he heard about the government's decision to release 400 Taliban prisoners accused of conducting some of the bloodiest attacks on civilians, including the deaths of his brothers.

"This idea to forgive and forget war criminals is very depressing for me," Jafar told Reuters after the decision by the Loya Jirga, a grand assembly of more than 3,200 Afghan community leaders and politicians, to approve the release of Taliban fighters. It was a step toward peace talks with the Islamist group aimed at ending two decades of war. Jafar's decision to marry his brothers' wives and care for a combined 10 children on his monthly income of \$300 - and similar decisions by families of some of the more than 100,000 Afghan civilians thought to have been killed or injured in the last decade - was key to Kabul's controversial decision to release the prisoners and seek peace.

Although the Loya Jirga resolution did not mention forgiveness, the council had suggested on its opening day, Friday, that the government reach out to those affected by Taliban violence, take them into confidence and get their approval for the release of the insurgents. In many interpretations of Islamic sharia law, only the family of victims can

forgive killers.

The government and Taliban were under pressure from the administration of President Donald Trump, who is keen for progress toward peace so he can bring more U.S. soldiers home before the November U.S. presidential election, where he is trailing in the polls.

Jafar and others asked to forgive the killers of their loved ones were under a different kind of pressure.

Eight survivors of some of the most brutal Taliban attacks told Reuters they feared clashes would intensify if Taliban prisoners were not released.

"Honest, simple Afghans are still expected to pay a price for peace. We have been told to forgive Taliban," Jafar said, adding that civilians are expected to pretend nothing ever happened in order to get on with their lives. Seven of Jafar's children belonged to his deceased brothers in Gerdaw, 280 km (170 miles) east of the capital Kabul and near the border with Pakistan. The remote mountain village is the only place where he feels secure as clashes between the government and Taliban drag on across the war-torn country. On Sunday, Jafar said he made peace for a second time after he heard about the government's decision to release ... **P3**

World Bank Approves \$380M for Afghanistan

The World Bank Board of Executive Directors Tuesday approved two grants totaling \$210 million from the International Development Association (IDA), as part of a larger financial package of \$380 million, to help Afghanistan.

The aim of the package is to help Afghanistan "cushion the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Afghan households, support critical food supply chains, and provide emergency support to farmers," the World Bank said in a statement.

The \$280 million grant will fund the COVID-19 Relief Effort for Afghan Communities and Households (REACH) Project, the statement said, adding that the total grant amount is comprised of \$155 million from IDA—the World Bank Group's fund for the poorest countries—and will be complemented by \$125 million from the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), managed by the World Bank on behalf of 34 donors.

The project is intended to help some "2.9 million households" across Afghanistan. The REACH project will complement a parallel relief effort organized under the Citizens' Charter Afghanistan Project.

Together, both will cover 90 percent of households in the country under the government's "Dastarkhan-e-Milli" program, benefitting an estimated 4.1 million households with incomes of \$2 a day or less, according to the statement.

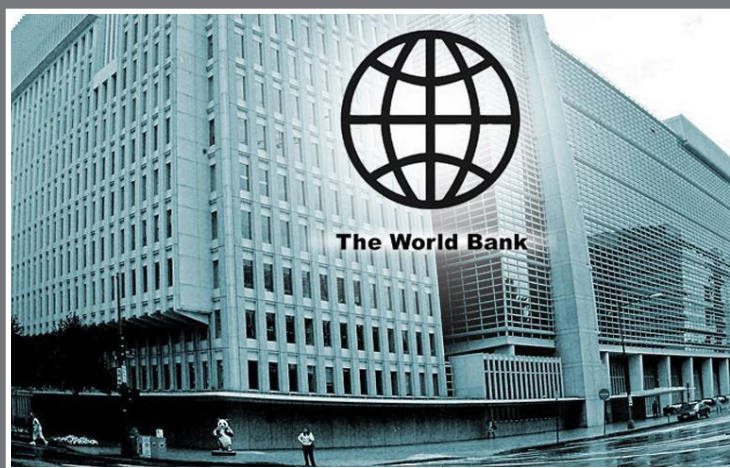
A \$100 million grant will fund the Emergency Agriculture and Food

Supply Project (EATS). The grant is comprised of \$55 million from IDA and will be complemented by \$45 million from the ARTF. The project aims to improve food security by increasing local food production and strengthening critical commercial food supply chains, especially wheat, which is the staple crop for over 70 percent of the Afghan population.

The project is intended to provide short-term employment in rural areas in the development of productive assets such as irrigation schemes. The statement notes: "In rural areas, measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 have disrupted farming, leaving Afghan farmers unable to sow their crops on time, while in urban areas food prices are rising with shortages of food supply becoming more urgent."

"The living conditions of millions of Afghan families have severely worsened due to the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak," said Henry Kerali, World Bank Country Director for Afghanistan. "These grants will help the Government of Afghanistan address the urgent needs of most households and ensure that Afghan farmers can continue to produce food at a time when imports and exports are severely disrupted. This will extend economic opportunities and create jobs for the wider rural population."

The COVID-19 Relief Effort for Afghan Communities and Households Project will be implemented through the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), the



Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG), and the Kabul Municipality.

It will help provide relief to Afghan households through grants to Community Development Councils (CDCs) to purchase food and sanitation packages for households in their respective communities, the statement said.

"By directly procuring these goods from local wholesalers and retailers, the communities will also help support small businesses in their localities," says the World Bank statement, adding: "The new assistance will help the government enhance community service delivery through CDCs under the Citizens' Charter program and reduce the immediate impacts of the pandemic on households across the country."

The Emergency Agriculture and Food Supply Project, implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation

and Livestock (MAIL), will support emergency wheat seed distribution to farmers and provide technical assistance to small and medium enterprises to address supply chain disruptions, the statement said.

The project is intended to create short-term employment opportunities in rural areas, which will contribute to COVID-19 emergency relief efforts.

The World Bank also mentioned the Citizens' Charter Afghanistan Program, which "aims to improve the delivery of core infrastructure and social services to participating communities through strengthened CDCs."

The Citizens' Charter is set up as an inter-ministerial program to deliver grants to CDCs that support basic services. The MRRD implements the Citizens' Charter program in rural areas, while the IDLG is responsible for the four major cities of Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar, and Mazar-e-Sharif, the statement said.

Exchange Rates

76.7	\$	76.8
87.6	€	87.7
95.4	£	95.5
454	Rp.	455
20.45	دراهم	20.55
1070	₹	1080

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- Ata Turk Hospital
0202500312
- Corona call center - 166

Calls for Justice...

he faced paralysis in half of his body (hemiparesis) due to the shock he faced after the death of his son.

Nawin's mother Rahima Panahi said that she will never forget the killer of her son.

"Who has forgiven a murderer that I pardon my son's killer. All these prisoners are killers," said Pahani.

Nawin's bother Bashir Nawin said he also criticized the decision to release the prisoners.

"By the release of the prisoners they will violate the people's rights. Those who were sentenced to death should have been hanged and those who were sentenced to imprisonment, they should have remained in prison," said Bashir Nawin.

The Jirga delegates on Sunday issued a 25-article resolution in which they approved the release of the 400 Taliban prisoners but asked the group to agree to a ceasefire and start the intra-Afghan negotiations.

According to government data, 156 of them have been sentenced to death, 105 of them are accused of murder, 34 of them are accused of kidnaping that led to murder, 51 of them are accused of drug smuggling, 44 of them are on the blacklist of the Afghan government and its allies, 6 of them are accused of other crimes, 4 are unknown.

Afghan war...

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Afghanistan to...

the Afghan government.

The February agreement called for the release of the Taliban prisoners within 10 days. Mr. Ghani has used his control over the fate of the inmates as a way of showing the Taliban that his government will not be pushed around. But the delay in getting to the negotiating table has raised concerns that the Americans will complete their withdrawal before the two Afghan adversaries come to an agreement over a future system of governance and power-sharing.

On Saturday, Mark Esper, the U.S. defense secretary, said that

the number of American troops in Afghanistan will be reduced to below 5,000 before the end of November, down from a little over 12,000 at the time of the agreement's signing in February. The Afghan government's gathering of more than 3,000 people under one tent was criticized by health experts who feared the breach of coronavirus restrictions would fuel the pandemic's spread.

Just before the assembly, at least 17 representatives tested positive and were taken to hospitals, the Health Ministry said. Khushal Nabizada, the director of public health for Kabul, said the results

of the delegates' tests had come in before the first meeting, and that the delegates had been sequestered away from the assembly.

Although Afghan officials said all delegates were tested before being allowed to participate, many of the delegates said they were never tested. Some of the 17 who tested positive may have also mingled among other delegates during a check-in process.

"There are 70 people in our committee," said Masuma Bahar, a delegate. "I asked two women next to me and both said they hadn't been tested."

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Macron urges quick aid to blast-stricken Lebanon

French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday called for accelerating aid delivery to Lebanon in the wake of Tuesday's explosion at the Beirut port.

"Aid should go directly to the people on the ground," Macron said at the opening of a virtual emergency donors' conference for Lebanon.

"We must act quickly and efficiently so that the aid goes directly to where it is needed," he said. "Lebanon's future is at stake... we must establish an International response under the UN coordination."

The French leader went on to call on the Lebanese authorities to respond to the people's demands but also warned that "violence and chaos must not prevail."

At least 158 people were killed and over 6,000 injured when a massive explosion rocked the Beirut port, causing a vast trail of destruction

across the city.

Following the blast, Macron visited Beirut on Thursday where he met with top Lebanese officials and vowed to provide assistance to Lebanon.

Several Lebanese politicians and parties have called for an international investigation into the blast.

The government has formed a committee to probe the incident, which happened as Lebanon was reeling under its worst economic crisis, as well as dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. Former Lebanese premier Tammam Salam has denied receiving correspondence or information about the arrival of hazardous chemical materials shipment in Beirut, which allegedly caused a deadly blast in the capital on Tuesday.

In a statement on Sunday, Salam's media office said reports alleging that he ...

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A look at the world

Lebanon's information minister resigns amid violent protests

Lebanon's information minister Manal Abdel Samad announced on Sunday she is stepping down amid violent protests erupted after a blast that killed over 150 people in capital Beirut on Tuesday.

"After the enormous disaster in Beirut, I present my resignation from the government," she said in a brief televised address. "I apologize to the Lebanese, we were unable to meet their expectations.

It comes after anti-government protesters



stormed Lebanese government buildings on Saturday evening, including the foreign ministry.

Police fired tear gas and clashed with the thousands of protesters who gathered in the centre of the Lebanese capital.

The Lebanese Red Cross said on Sunday morning that at least 65 people had been transported to nearby hospitals and another 185 were treated at the scene.

According to AFP, at least one police officer has died in the clashes.

Meanwhile, Lebanon's prime minister said he would introduce legislation proposing early elections, calling on political parties to put aside disagreements.

Protesters widely blame government negligence and corruption for the explosion that killed more than 150 people and injured thousands earlier this week.

Officials have said the blast in Beirut was in part due to 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate that was housed for years in a warehouse by the port.

Mahinda Rajapaksa sworn in as Sri Lanka's PM after record victory



Former Sri Lankan president Mahinda Rajapaksa has been sworn in as the country's prime minister for the fourth time after his party secured a landslide victory in parliamentary elections that cemented his family's hold on power.

Mahinda took oath on Sunday before his younger brother, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, at a prominent Buddhist temple on the outskirts of the capital Colombo.

Mahinda served as the island nation's president from 2005 to 2015 and is highly popular among the ethnic majority Sinhalese for ending the country's 25-year civil war with Tamil rebels in 2009.

He was first elected prime minister in 2004 and again appointed for brief periods in 2018 and 2019.

Sri Lanka People's Front, the party led by the Rajapaksa brothers, won 145 seats in the 225-member parliament in the election last Wednesday.

Its main opponent, the SJB, obtained 54 seats. A party representing ethnic minority Tamils won 10 seats, and 16 others were split among 12 small parties.

The victory brought the Rajapaksa brothers very close to the two-thirds majority required to make constitutional changes that could strengthen dynastic rule in the country.

Five members of the Rajapaksa family have been elected as MPs.

In addition to the PM, his son Namal, the eldest brother Chamal and his son Sashindra, and a nephew, Nipuna Ranawaka, will be in Parliament.

The brothers need 150 seats to be able to change the constitution. At least four small parties collaborate with the Rajapaksa's party, so they appear to have mustered that support. Sri Lanka had been ruled by powerful executive presidents since 1978. However, a 2015 constitutional amendment strengthened the parliament and prime minister and put independent commissions in charge of judiciary appointments, police, public services and the conduct of elections.

Gotabaya was elected president last November after projecting himself as the only leader who could secure the country after the ...

P2

British policy towards Russia consists of 95% of deterrence and 5% of dialogue, envoy says

The policy of "deterrence and dialogue" towards Russia chosen by NATO and Britain consists of 95% of deterrence and only 5% of dialogue, Russia's Ambassador in the UK Andrei Kelin said in an interview with the Chinese TV channel CGTN on Saturday.

"NATO has taken a position as a leader of the western world - a policy of deterrence and dialogue towards Russia, and London would like to be a leader in these efforts.



But there is 95% deterrence and only 5% of dialogue," he said, adding that the Russian side is worried about another wave of accusations against Moscow "in the recent days in the media here and Britain." "It of course provides little appetite in Moscow to develop dialogue," he noted.

The ambassador referred to the state of relations between the UK and Russia as difficult. "Political contacts are close to being frozen. And this is very bad. I have seen some expression of intentions to review this policy to restart a relationship in the political field. But all of this is being damned by this attack once and once again," he said.

"The government in London should be realistic. It should understand the benefits of cooperation and working with Russia but not against Russia. Deterrence is the policy that has been, as I said, taken up against Russia, and of course it is not a cooperation that we have all envisaged," Kelin emphasized.



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