

## 'India shouldn't meddle with our political affairs'

India can have the biggest political impact on Sri Lanka's election, former President Mahinda Rajapaksa has said, adding that he hoped India will not "meddle with" Sri Lanka's internal political affairs. He made the comment in an interview to *The Daily Mirror* on Thursday, responding to a question on the possible influence of the West and India on the Sri Lankan presidential election, likely to be held by the end of 2019. "It is not that big," Mr. Rajapaksa said, on the West's ability to determine poll outcomes.

### India's role in 2015

Following his election defeat in January 2015 to an eclectic coalition led by his former Cabinet colleague Maithripala Sirisena, Mr. Rajapaksa has, on different occasions, alluded to India's role in toppling his government. In an interview to *The Hindu* in March 2015, he said "it was very clear" that India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), possibly along with Western agencies, backed the opposition alliance that unseated him.

Clarifying that he was not accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had been in power for less than a year then, he said it was part of India's "long-term plan", as New Delhi had "misunderstood" him "over the Chinese question".

Thursday's interview comes in the wake of recent speculation over the candidate that the Rajapaksa camp might field in the presidential election.

While the ruling coalition is fractured and perceived to be weak, Mr. Rajapaksa himself cannot contest a third term. The 19th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution adopted in 2015 puts a two-term limit.

While it is strongly rumoured that the candidate could be someone from his own family, Mr. Rajapaksa said: "We will decide at the right time".

END

Downloaded from [crackIAS.com](http://crackIAS.com)

© **Zuccess App** by [crackIAS.com](http://crackIAS.com)