

PRESS RELEASE

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TO CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Dalreen Barthelot
Email: dalreen `at` ihp.lk

TO CONTACT LEAD INVESTIGATOR

Dr. Ravi Rannan-Eliya
Email: ravi `at` ihp.lk Twitter: @ravirannaneliya

Sri Lankans continue to hold unfavourable views of all political party leaders

SLOTS polling shows public maintains unfavourable and worsening views of all, although President Wickremasinghe had the least negative ratings in November

The latest Sri Lanka Opinion Tracker Survey (SLOTS) polling shows that the public continue to have deeply unfavourable views of all major political party leaders. President Ranil Wickremasinghe, leader of the UNP, has the least negative favourability ratings, although by a small margin. The past three months have seen a fresh decline in favourability for most, giving back some modest gains since August.

In November, President Wickremasinghe was viewed unfavourably by a net 46% of Sri Lankans, but this was still marginally better than other party leaders.

Opposition Leader and SJB leader Sajith Premadasa had a net negative rating of 57%, not significantly different to that of AK Dissanayake, NPP and JVP leader, who had a net negative rating of 55%.

Recent interviews suggest that Gotabaya Rajapaksa's ratings may have started to recover from the deep lows (-80%) they maintained for most of the year, with his favourability rating recovering to a net negative 51% in November.

SLOTS has been tracking favourability of leading politicians daily since August 2021. Through the end of 2021, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, leader of the SLPP, maintained an edge in favourability over Opposition Leader, Sajith Premadasa. The economic and political crisis that hit at the start of the year then collapsed President Rajapaksa's favourability and dragged down the favourability ratings of all politicians SLOTS tracks, with the public expressing unfavourable views of all by April 2022. From June, the favourability of the other party leaders began to recover but remained deeply

negative through October, after which the latest interviews suggest the public is becoming more negative in their views.

Background details

Full report

Institute for Health Policy, December 2022, “Sri Lankans continue to have unfavourable views of all political party leaders”, SLOTS Report #2022-14. *Available at* <https://www.ihp.lk/publications/docs/SLOTSReport202214.pdf>.

Related reports

Institute for Health Policy, April 2022, “SLOTS Favourability Ratings: Methodology for tracking public favourability”, SLOTS Report #2022-03. *Available at:* <https://www.ihp.lk/publications/docs/SLOTSReport202203.pdf>.

Institute for Health Policy, April 2022, “Economic crisis results in growing public disaffection with politicians, but particularly with President Rajapaksa”, SLOTS Report #2022-03. *Available at:* <https://www.ihp.lk/publications/docs/SLOTSReport202204.pdf>.

About IHP

IHP is an independent, non-partisan research centre based in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The SLOTS lead investigator is Dr Ravi Rannan-Eliya of IHP, who trained in public opinion polling at Harvard University, and who has conducted numerous surveys over three decades.

Methodology

SLOTS surveys a national sample of adults (ages 18 and over) reached by random digit dialling of mobile numbers, and others coming from a national panel of respondents who were previously recruited through random selection. SLOTS tracks favourability by asking respondents if they have a favourable or unfavourable opinion of a public figure or institution: net favourability being the average of the positive (+100) and negative (-100) responses. All estimates are weighted to match the national population with respect to age, sex, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sector, province, and past voting preference. Monthly estimates are based on samples of 1,000+ interviews pooled from interviews in each month and from weeks before and afterwards.

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